

Experiencing Identity: British-Canadian

Women in Rural Saskatchewan

1880 - 1950

by

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A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
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EXPERIENCING IDENTITY:  
BRITISH-CANADIAN WOMEN IN RURAL SASKATCHEWAN  
1880 - 1950

BY

AILEEN C. MOFFATT

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

DOCTOR OF PHILSOPHY

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Dominant cultural patterns and social identities imported from Britain and English-speaking Ontario that delineated "separate spheres" for men and women were widely accepted by persons of British heritage who relocated to the North West Territories after 1880. Once these men and women settled into their new rural locale, however, a different social landscape began to emerge. Imported identities, particularly those associated with "proper" roles for women and men, were redefined into identities that blended actual lived experience on the Canadian prairie with traditions, myths and practices brought from home. For British-Canadian females living in what would become rural Saskatchewan, the new identity of "Woman" gave them greater flexibility and a wider range of "appropriate" female behaviours and roles that were considered socially acceptable and even desirable. It was launched in locally-run institutions, including schools, churches, and organizations, and coincided with a growing international movement of single women working for wages.

In Indian Head and Rosetown, the two communities examined here as case studies, definitions of womanhood were heavily influenced by four factors that worked together in the creation of "Woman". First, inherited British-Canadian models of domesticity, femininity, and womanhood (particularly "Woman" as white, English-speaking, educated, middle-class, and of British heritage) established a foundation from which all subsequent female identities grew. Second, the mythology that western Canada would be an extension of all that was best in the English-speaking Empire (especially as understood in its previously dominant Canadian version, that of Ontario) provided an environment conducive to the import of English-Canadian paradigms associated with popular ideals of

womanhood. Third, women's actual lived experience in British-Canadian communities in rural Saskatchewan led women to reinterpret/renegeotiate imported female identities into a new identity that recognized the work rural women actually did as opposed to that which they "properly" should do according to popular conventions. And fourth, the culmination of the process set in motion by the previous three factors was the development of a relatively autonomous and self-regenerating "culture" sustained by such locally-run institutions as the schools, the churches (especially those affected by social gospel theology), the political parties, the farm organizations, and the agencies that were spawned by "agrarian feminist" social thought.

"Woman" was, therefore, in the Indian Head and Rosetown example, an identity created out of imported British-Canadian cultural patterns that were redefined and renegotiated into a uniquely western Canadian female identity. Moreover, "Woman" became the standard or ideal against which other rural women were measured. It was, therefore, an identity -- an experience -- that was both inclusive and exclusive; inclusive in that it accommodated the work that rural women actually did, and exclusive because in order to have the requisite experience to qualify as a "Woman", one had to be white, educated, middle-class, English-speaking and preferably protestant. In the final analysis, however, "Woman" clearly reconciled tradition, myth and lived experience and in the process opened the door for further reinterpretations of rural women's identities.

## Acknowledgements

This study is in memory of Margaret and Lefty Moffatt, and Nan Frame. I know that they know, and that they are proud.

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Joan Champ introduced me to Indian Head and Rosetown as possible sites of inquiry for my study. She was, of course, right on the money. Joan Skinner Halford was my tour guide and introduced me to her friends and neighbours in Indian Head. Without her help this would have been a very different project. In Rosetown Ivy Buttar and Frank Glass were wonderfully helpful with local archival material and in helping me set up interviews. To my many friends in Indian Head and Rosetown, thank you for being so generous with your time and your memories, and for welcoming me into your communities.

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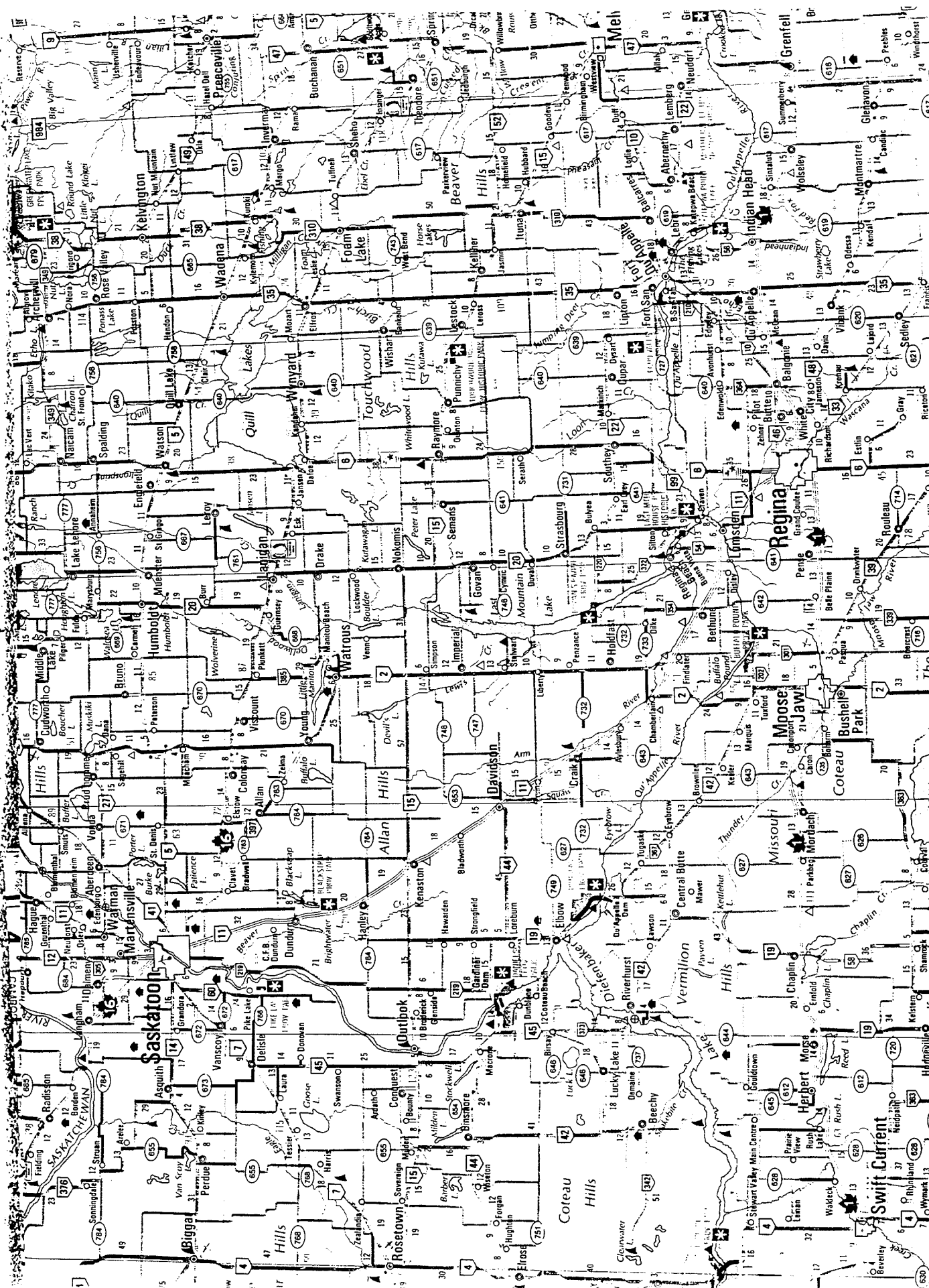
Most of all, I would like to thank my immediate family -- Morag, John, and Steven -- and my extended family -- Susan, Penny, Caroleen, Les and Diane -- even though they didn't always understand what I was up to. Life in the fast lane ...

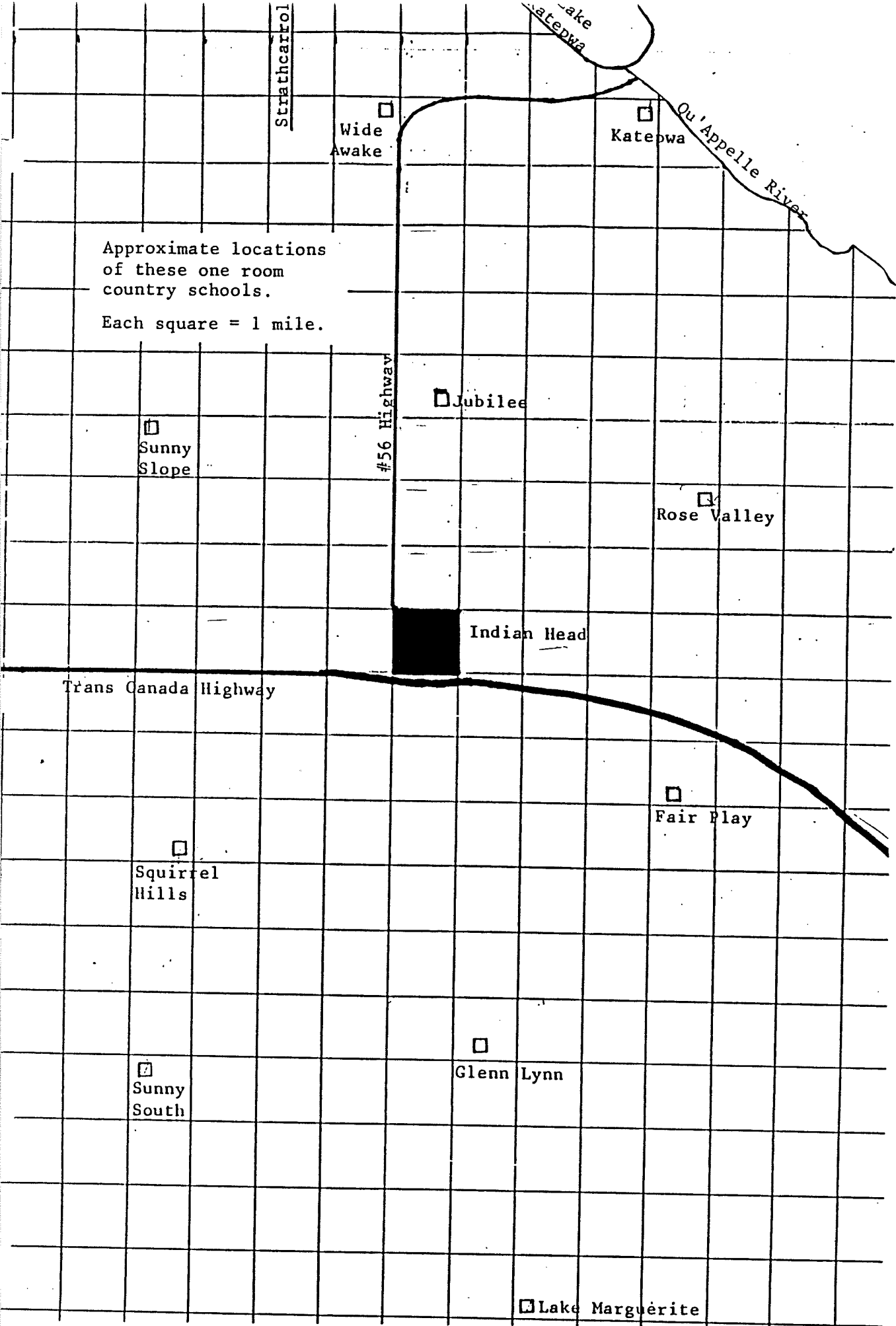


## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	vi
Maps	viii
Chapter I: Identity, Experience & Theorizing "Woman"	1
Part I: Introducing "Woman"	2
Part II: Theoretical Implications and Perspectives	12
A. International Perspectives	12
B. Selected Canadian and Rural Perspectives	33
C. Saskatchewan Perspectives	39
Part III: Stereotypes, Romance & Landscapes	51
Chapter II: Introductions: Characterizing Indian Head & Rosetown	56
Part I: Oral History as Evidence	56
A. The Oral History Project	56
B. Selection of Case Study Sites	59
Part II: Settling In: Community and Characters	61
A. Community	61
B. Characters	92
i) Nora H., Indian Head	93
ii) Glenda T., Indian Head	97
iii) Jean L., Rosetown	99
Chapter III: Recreating Domestic Identities: Tradition, Myth & Lived Experience	103
Chapter IV: Learning to be "Women" at School & Church	143
Part I: Learning to be "Women" at School	147
Part II: Learning to be "Women" at Church	165
Part III: Educating "Women"	176
Chapter V: "Women" & Waged Work	177

Chapter VI: "Women's" Organizational Identities	222
Conclusion: Experiencing "Women"	262
Appendices:	
Appendix I: Population of Indian Head and Rosetown	269
Appendix II: Birthplace of residents of the Territories/ Saskatchewan	270
Appendix III: Occupations of women in the Territories/ Saskatchewan	271
Appendix IV: Percentage of working women to total Territories/Saskatchewan population	273
Appendix V: Territories/Saskatchewan population by rural/urban division	274
Appendix VI: Sample of teachers and salaries, Rosetown and Indian Head	275
Appendix VII: Percentage of students attending school for any period of time aged 7-14	281
Appendix VIII: Percentage of students attending school for any period of time aged 15-19	282
Appendix IX: Population by major religions for Saskatchewan and percent to total provincial population	283
Appendix X: Population by major religions for Indian Head and percent to total town population	284
Appendix XI: Population by major religions for Rosetown and percentage to total town population	285
Appendix XII: Persons interviewed	286
Bibliography	287





Approximate locations  
of these one room  
country schools.  
Each square = 1 mile.

Trans Canada Highway

#56 Highway

Strathcarroll

Wide  
Awake

Katepwa

Ou'Appelle River

Jubilee

Sunny  
Slope

Rose Valley

Indian Head

Fair Play

Squirrel  
Hills

Sunny  
South

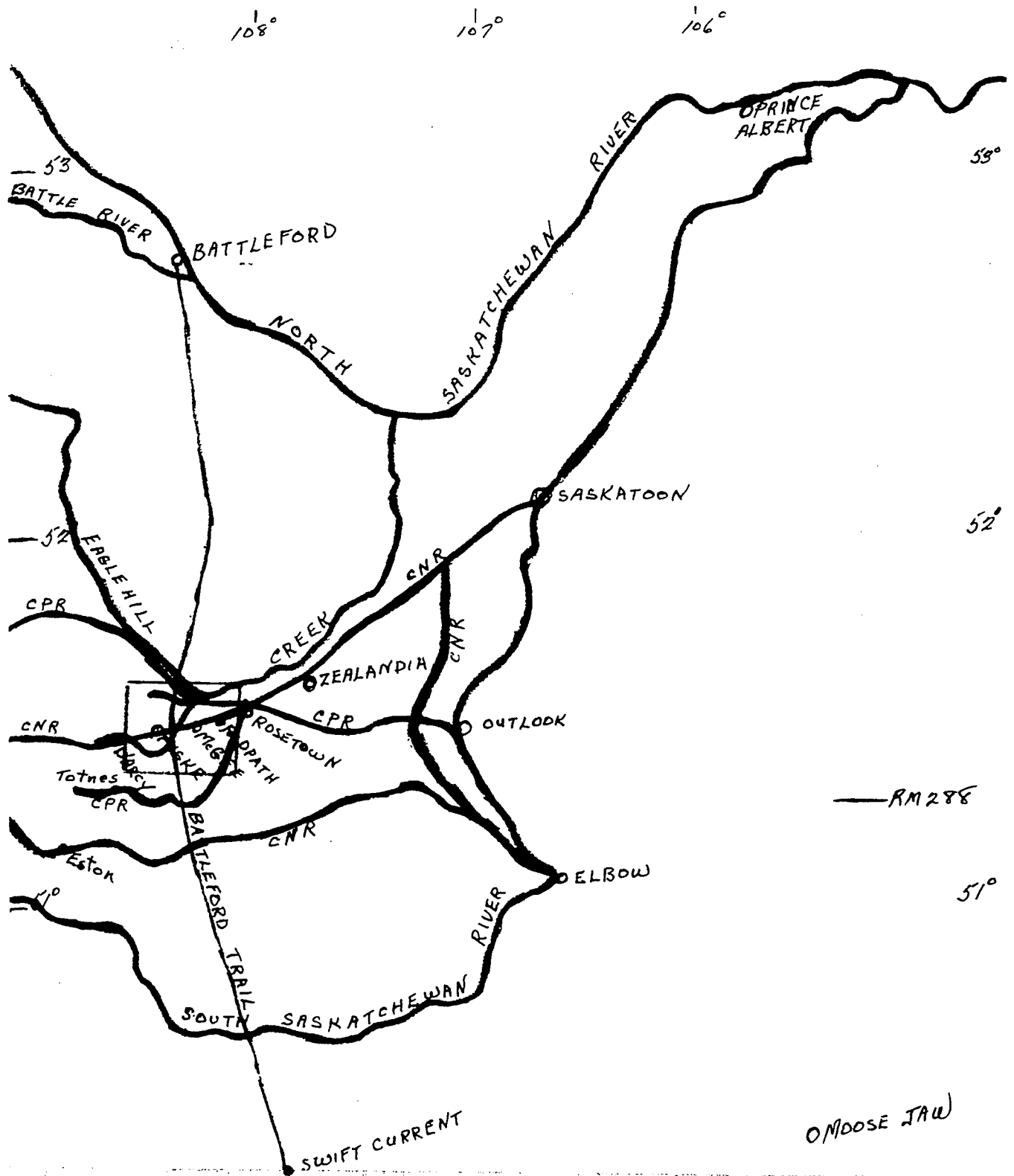
Glenn Lynn

Lake Marguerite

one square  
= one mile

by Arnold Dales  
Indian Head

# The R.M. in the province



## CHAPTER I: Identity, Experience & Theorizing "Woman"

Dominant cultural patterns and social identities imported from Britain and English-speaking Ontario that delineated "separate spheres" for men and women were widely accepted by persons of British heritage who relocated to the North West Territories after 1880. Once these men and women settled into their new rural locale, however, a different social landscape began to emerge. Imported identities, particularly those associated with "proper" roles for women and men, were redefined into identities that blended actual lived experience on the Canadian prairie with traditions, myths and practices brought from home. Creating and recreating identities was an ongoing, self-sustaining process of adapting what was familiar to a new situation. For British-Canadian females living in what would become rural Saskatchewan, the new identity of "Woman" gave them greater flexibility and a wider range of "appropriate" female behaviours and roles that were considered socially acceptable and even desirable.<sup>1</sup> "Woman" was a fluid identity that combined elements of the old and the new and, therefore, contained both continuity with the past while remaining solidly based in the present. As will be discussed in the following chapters, "Woman" was launched in locally-run institutions, including schools, churches, and organizations, and coincided with a growing international movement of single women working for wages.

In order to understand how "Woman" was developed and cultivated, I determined that it was essential to design a research strategy based on oral history as a technique within a local study. Women's identities, when discussed at all in official documents, newspapers and

---

<sup>1</sup>. The social construction "Woman", that which is specific to rural Saskatchewan and under consideration in this study, will be capitalized and set aside in quotation marks to distinguish it from other linguistic representations of the same word.

other records, were based in ideals and myths rather than reality. Oral history was the best way to get at the information I sought. In addition, I found it necessary to review the literature on women's culture and identity, separate spheres and domesticity, and gender and postmodernism in local, Canadian and international contexts so that I could place my findings into a coherent theoretical framework with reference points outside of the local. What follows is a guide to situating the emerging identity of "Woman" and a summary mapping of the paths I considered in locating it within a national and international scholarly framework.

### **Part I: Introducing "Woman"**

The idea that there was a singular, proper social identity for rural women in what would become known as the province of Saskatchewan has been popular since the nineteenth century when Canadian imperialists first envisioned the effects that white, educated, English-speaking settlers of British heritage would have on the North West Territories. The myths the imperialists created and the stories they told of the need to populate the Territories with the "right sort of people" reinforced the idea that specific social and cultural behaviours and activities would help Canadianize the Territories. Accordingly, "proper" female settlers who understood and appreciated their "traditional" role as civilizers and nurturers were just as necessary to the success of the myth as were males who would break the land and tame the landscape. Women meant family-life, stability, and community; in essence, women represented the future.

Coming primarily from Ontario, Manitoba and the British Isles, settlers of British

heritage (the largest ethnic group to settle in Saskatchewan<sup>2</sup>) brought from home very specific cultural patterns that delineated male and female roles, behaviour, and social spaces. Upon arriving in Saskatchewan these people were able, by virtue of their cultural authority, to impose their imported norms and mores on their new communities. After only a brief settling-in period, however, English-speaking women of British heritage self-consciously began a process of blending imported "traditional" beliefs with the range of myths associated with western settlement and their own lived experiences in rural Saskatchewan, into a new identity that "fit" their emerging social landscape. The result was a uniquely rural Saskatchewan female identity of "Woman".

But what did it mean to be a "Woman" in rural Saskatchewan? In Indian Head and Rosetown, the two communities examined here as case studies, definitions of womanhood were heavily influenced by four factors that worked together in the creation of "Woman". First, inherited British-Canadian models of domesticity, femininity, and womanhood (particularly "Woman" as white, English-speaking, educated, middle-class, and of British heritage) established a foundation from which all subsequent female identities grew. Second, the mythology that western Canada would be an extension of all that was best in the English-speaking Empire (especially as understood in its previously dominant Canadian version, that of Ontario) provided an environment conducive to the import of English-Canadian paradigms associated with popular ideals of womanhood. Third, women's actual lived experience in British-Canadian communities in rural Saskatchewan led women to reinterpret/renegegate imported female identities into a new identity that recognized the work rural women actually

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<sup>2</sup>. see Appendix II.



did as opposed to that which they "properly" should do according to popular conventions. And fourth, the culmination of the process set in motion by the previous three factors was the development of a relatively autonomous and self-regenerating "culture" sustained by such locally-run institutions as the schools, the churches (especially those affected by social gospel theology), the political parties, the farm organizations, and the agencies that were spawned by "agrarian feminist" social thought.

Scholars have for several generations considered the possibility of a distinct western Canadian identity.<sup>3</sup> To a lesser extent they have considered that the three prairie provinces

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<sup>3</sup>. In 1955, W.L. Morton wrote "that there has been, and is, some significant difference between the politics of the three Prairie Provinces and those of other regions of Canada is a matter of both common observation and of academic study." W.L. Morton, "The Bias of Prairie Politics", in D. Swainson (ed.), Historical Essays on the Prairie Provinces, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1970), p. 289. Over twenty years later, Gerald Friesen, following Morton's lead, stated "There is, and has been from some point in the late nineteenth century, a western Canadian identity." Gerald Friesen, "The Western Canadian Identity", paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association, June 1973. A distinct western identity naturally leads into discussions of regionalism which has become a mainstay of western historians and political analysts. Recently Friesen concluded that "the talk of a single West, of a prairie region and of prairie regionalism is, therefore, part of Canadian popular expression"(p. 1). He adds, "region has been applied to the Prairies in three overlapping ways [formal, functional and imagined] and that, yes, it has been regarded as helpful, even necessary, in discussing the prairie experience"(p. 6). Gerald Friesen, "The Prairies as Region: The Contemporary Meaning of an Old Idea", in James N. McCrorie and Martha L. MacDonald (eds.), The Constitutional Future of the Prairie and Atlantic Regions of Canada, (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1992). Theodore Binnema, in a reinterpretation of J.M.S. Careless's analysis of metropolitanism and limited identities, notes that "regionalism on the Canadian Prairies is not merely the product of a distinct physical environment, but of human perceptions of the physical environment and of the resulting judgements of the proper place of a particular community within a broader community." Theodore Binnema, "A Feudal Chain of Vassalage: Limited Identities in the Prairie West, 1870-1896", in Prairie Forum Vol.20 No.1 (Spring 1995), p. 13.

each had their own secondary identity which differentiated them from one another.<sup>4</sup> Only very recently have historians considered the possibility that identity is gendered and consequently have raised the possibility of a uniquely western Canadian female identity.<sup>5</sup> This study posits that social identities -- and in this case rural Saskatchewan women's identities in particular -- are the manifestation of traditional mentalités blended with official and popular discourses and mythologies, and lived experience.

Identity is the locus of a multiplicity of elements such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, (dis)ability, religion, and place.<sup>6</sup> Whether socially imposed or individually crafted, identities are never fixed or constant. Circumstance, experience, and place always impinge on identity. As Joy Parr in an analysis of gender, class, and community in two Ontario towns observes, "social identities are simultaneously formed from a multiplicity of elements."<sup>7</sup> Parr further argues that "we need to acknowledge that social identities and conceptions of common predicament and purpose are forged in particular spatial and temporal settings, and both these understandings and the processes and elements from which they are formed are

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<sup>4</sup>. That each prairie province might have its own identity has generally been discussed only in terms of the political culture in each province.

<sup>5</sup>. Ann Leger-Anderson, "Regional Identity and Women's History", paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association, June 1994.

<sup>6</sup>. Teresa de Lauretis, "Eccentric Subjects: Feminist Theory and Historical Consciousness", in *Feminist Studies* 16 No.1 (Spring 1990), p. 137. "Similarly, identity is a locus of multiple and variable positions, which are made available in the social field by historical process ..."

<sup>7</sup>. Joy Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns 1880-1950*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. 9. Parr cites Mary Poovey, Joan Scott, Denise Riley and R.W. Connell as scholars who agree that meaning is not fixed.

themselves changeable rather than fixed."<sup>8</sup> Social identities, therefore, are both transformative and historical. Their properties are continuously modified to support specific historical moments.

During the nineteenth century, British-Canadian women's social identities were based on women's perceived natural predisposition to domesticity,<sup>9</sup> a gender-specific construction with attached "gender-marked" activities<sup>10</sup> that supported separate spheres for women and men. Throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, the basic assumption of domesticity, that women belonged in the private sphere of home and family while men belonged in the public sphere of work and commerce, became "naturalized" as common sense

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<sup>8</sup>. Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>9</sup>. Domesticity as an ideological framework originated with the formation of the English middle-class near the end of the eighteenth century. Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall argue that although "a stress on domestic virtues, on marriage, home and children was by no means new ... from the eighteenth century there was a significant reworking of established ideas"(p.155). The industrial revolution and capitalism fostered the growth of domesticity when work-place and home were separated. Men went out to work in the contaminated male public world, while women remained at home in the female domestic haven. Davidoff and Hall contend that home became the focal point where family mediated public and private. Women's identity became family-centered as opposed to work-centered. New feminine roles were supposed to afford women a vital capacity as "angels in the house" in support of their husband's, father's or brother's work. But as Davidoff and Hall concluded, "women of the early nineteenth century provincial middle-class caught hold of that dream (a family of love), but when it became a full reality they found their sphere isolated, trivialized and often unable to give the support it had promised"(p.454). Further to this argument, Davidoff and Hall also demonstrate "that gender and class always operate together"(p.13). For example, as the middle-class embraced separate spheres and domesticity, there was a simultaneous move to remake the working classes, including rural persons, into the middle-class image of respectability, separate spheres, and female domesticity. Leonore Davidoff & Catherine Hall, Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle-class 1780-1850, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

<sup>10</sup>. Nancy Grey Osterud, Bonds of Community: The Lives of Farm Women in Nineteenth Century New York, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 9.

in every-day parlance and practice. Although some women were able to transcend separate spheres or even use it to their advantage,<sup>11</sup> the vast majority of women likely gave separate spheres little or no thought at all. It was, simply, the way things were done. Moreover, the public/male private/female spheres were entrenched in official discourses such as the legal system, the arts and medicine.<sup>12</sup> Separate spheres, therefore, not only was pervasive; it was the law.

Saskatchewan rural women were not immune to national and international cultural and ideological underpinnings of gender-based discourses, separate spheres included. In Indian Head and Rosetown eighty percent of first generation settler-women either were from Britain or English speaking eastern Canada where separate spheres reached its apex during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To these settlers it mattered little or not at all that Saskatchewan was largely unsettled and that artificial categories of public and private spheres were almost meaningless. They were settlers, not theoreticians, and they simply wanted to live life in their new Saskatchewan locale with as little disruption to what they perceived as

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<sup>11</sup>. Florence Nightingale, for example, established nursing as a profession for women by turning the doctrine of separate spheres to her advantage. Mary Poovey, Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), Chapter six.

<sup>12</sup>. Historians have recently begun to document the relationships between so-called official discourses and the dominant ideological positioning of separate spheres; for example, Wendy Mitchinson examines medical discourses; Constance Backhouse considers legal discourses as does James G. Snell. In each instance, these scholars illustrate how women often worked within the popular and official discourses of the day to secure a better position for women. Wendy Mitchinson, The Nature of Their Bodies: Women and Their Doctors in Victorian Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991); Constance Backhouse, Petticoats & Prejudice: Women and the Law in Nineteenth Century Canada, (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1991); James G. Snell, In the Shadow of the Law: Divorce in Canada 1900-1939, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

the "natural" way of doing things as was possible.

Imported feminine ideals associated with separate spheres were, however, difficult if not impossible to maintain on the developing prairie. But, rather than completely abandon familiar and popular gender roles that did not "fit" in their new Saskatchewan locale, rural women instead redefined separate spheres and its constituent middle-class female elements of femininity and domesticity into a distinctly British-Canadian rural female identity, "Woman", that reconciled rural women's day-to-day life with the traditions and myths associated with women's supposed "natural" gender roles.

Domesticity, the foundation upon which "Woman's" separate sphere was precariously balanced, proved to be more hardy than that which it represented: the supposedly virtuous, maternal female in need of protection by a male.<sup>13</sup> By definition, domesticity relied on a domestic ideal as the foundation or root of its meaning. Domestic ideals, however, are fluid and ever-changing. Accordingly, since the root of meaning (the domestic ideal) was fluid, the resulting definitions also were fluid. This flexibility of meaning allowed interpretation and reinterpretation of the ideal to be continuously adapted, refined, and modified. In the case of rural Saskatchewan women, domesticity was reinterpreted into a female identity that blended elements of what was popularly considered traditional domestic ideology, the

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<sup>13</sup>. This particular ideal was popularized after the mid nineteenth century. Denise Riley traces the various ideals associated with women (as a group) previous to this era and demonstrates how the category or definition of the word "woman" was manipulated from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries. Denise Riley, 'Am I That Name?': Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1988).

mythologized vision of western Canada as a "nation of [British] homes,"<sup>14</sup> and lived experience -- life in rural Saskatchewan as interpreted by those experiencing it. "Woman", the ideal which dominated the female landscape in rural Saskatchewan, came to represent a host of meanings which hitherto had not been associated with British-Canadian women.

Other recent studies of rural women also have concluded that traditional gender roles imported from outside locations were adapted to suit local conditions. In a study of nineteenth century rural New York women, Nancy Grey Osterud found that rural women "constructed an alternative vision of gender relations based on their experience of kinship and labour."<sup>15</sup> In a similar vein, Jane Marie Pederson argued in her study of rural Wisconsin 1870-1970, that "a distinct mentalité connected to the locality took shape, a mentalité rooted in the past and adapted to and influenced by a changing context."<sup>16</sup> In the Canadian context, Seena B. Kohl concluded of women in southwestern Saskatchewan that there was "a loosening of sex-role expectations" because "the requirements for survival necessitated the learning of new skills and the putting aside, or holding in abeyance, the traditional concepts of feminine behaviour."<sup>17</sup> These studies are a useful point of departure for this study of Saskatchewan

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<sup>14</sup>. Emily P. Weaver, Canada and the British Immigrant, (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1914), p. 275. Weaver writes: "...the fact remains that there is a need for the coming out to Canada for a good type of girls, more in proportion than at present to the numbers of the male immigrants, if the Dominion is to be, in accord with the best Anglo-Saxon ideals, a nation of homes."

<sup>15</sup>. Nancy Grey Osterud, Bonds of Community, p. 279.

<sup>16</sup>. Jane Marie Pederson, Between Memory and Reality: Family and Community in Rural Wisconsin 1870-1970, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), pp. 231-232.

<sup>17</sup>. Seena B. Kohl, Working Together: Women and Family in Southwestern Saskatchewan, (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada Limited, 1976), p. 33.

rural women. They demonstrate that traditional gender paradigms were renegotiated by North American rural women since at least the mid nineteenth century. Thus, this study of Saskatchewan rural women's response to separate spheres and domesticity becomes part of a continuum rather than just a community response to local conditions at a specific time. The women of this study can, therefore, be seen as part of a larger North American rural experience.

Historians of non-urban Saskatchewan women have commonly focused on the activities of farm women's organizations, the isolation farm women experienced, or the work-load farm women were expected to shoulder. Town women have in most instances been left out of studies of rural women. Additionally, scholars have treated the terms "farm" and "rural" as synonymous; no distinction between the two has been raised. Granted, persons living on farms are rural, but persons living in small towns or villages are not necessarily farmers. In this study, rural is defined as those areas not specifically classified as urban in the Canadian census. Although there is a growing body of literature on how rural is defined, (primarily by cultural geographers<sup>18</sup>), for the purposes of clarity, in this study rural is a demographic designation. Social representations of rural as a concept are not discussed.

The purpose of "Experiencing Identity" is to demonstrate how identities are constructed and crafted and how they are, after all, the product of specific historical moments. Identity is never only an imposed and fixed cultural dictate; rather, identity is fluid and porous and consequently is always open to reinterpretation, especially by persons in positions of

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<sup>18</sup>. For example see K.H. Halfacree, "Locality and Social Representation: Space, Discourse and Alternative Definitions of the Rural", in Journal of Rural Studies Vol.9 No.1 (January 1993), pp. 23-38.

cultural authority. "Experiencing Identity" examines in particular the identity of "Woman" assigned to females in Indian Head and Rosetown in the period 1880 through the immediate post World War II era who were in all cases white, English-speaking, educated, and of British heritage and in most cases protestant and middle-class. It posits that gender identities are the result of a continuous process or working-out of tradition, myth and lived experience.

The remaining pages of this Chapter briefly outline the theoretical and historiographical implications of the various elements of women's identity relevant to this study: domesticity and "separate spheres". In Chapter II a representative "cast of characters" is introduced and the communities of Indian Head and Rosetown, in which these women lived and built their social environment, are described. Chapter III dissects the crucial yet subtle changes in the domestic sphere and the concurrent, expanding definitions of "domesticity" which came to reflect rural women's actual lived experience and included new roles and opportunities for rural "Women". Chapter IV considers the role of education, both at school and at church, in teaching girls to be "Women". Chapter V surveys the changing profile of waged work that helped to redefine appropriate varieties of work for "Women". Chapter VI discusses "Women's" organizations in Indian Head and Rosetown and considers why balancing the various identities associated with belonging to more than one association or club was so easily managed. The Conclusion argues that an identity associated with rural women in British-Canadian communities in Saskatchewan did emerge in the settlement period and did evolve into a distinctly rural and western Canadian female identity. Although at some junctures this identity paralleled similar changes in women's roles nationally and internationally, it was in the final analysis, uniquely experienced in rural Saskatchewan.



## Part II: Theoretical Implications and Perspectives

### A. International Perspectives

Identities are self-consciously constructed from a myriad of various and shifting elements; they are not static or fixed but rather are fluid and adaptable. Identity is where public and private experiences coalesce in "systems of meaning."<sup>19</sup> Teresa de Lauretis argues that identity is self-interpretation of personal history, or in her words, "experience", which is interpreted within the meanings available at any historical moment.<sup>20</sup> Joy Parr, in a recent review of gender history further explains that "the forging of an experience was itself an outcome of social processes that made and hierarchically organized meanings."<sup>21</sup> Identities are, therefore, the manifestation of on-going cultural processes that must be historically located.

Historically locating the identity "Woman", however, is not as easy as might first be thought. Denise Riley has concluded that the category "woman" is ambiguous and historically constructed from meanings that constantly change.<sup>22</sup> "Woman" is, she states, "a volatile collectivity in which female persons can be very differently positioned."<sup>23</sup> What was "woman"

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<sup>19</sup>. Joy Parr, "Gender History and Historical Practice", in Canadian Historical Review Vol. 76 No. 3 (September 1995), p. 364.

<sup>20</sup>. Teresa de Lauretis, "Feminist Studies/Critical Studies: Issues, Terms and Contexts", in T. de Lauretis (ed.), Feminist Studies/Critical Studies, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 8-9.

<sup>21</sup>. Joy Parr, "Gender History and Historical Practice", p. 364.

<sup>22</sup>. Denise Riley, 'Am I that Name?' Feminism and the Category of History in History, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

<sup>23</sup>. Ibid, p. 2.

in the seventeenth century, for example, did not hold the same signification in the nineteenth century. Furthermore, numerous qualifiers or additional elements are often attached to the word "woman" (for example, rural woman, middle-class woman, Canadian woman) that further complicate meanings. The overall implication, however, and the theme of this study, is that there is not now, nor has there ever been, a universal "woman", an identity shared by all females across time and space.

Integral to women's history and subsequently studies of women's historical social identities, is an analysis of gender. In the view of some scholars, gender has now become the primary category in women's history. Joan Scott, in a significant study of gender and history, defined gender as "[resting] on an integral connection between two propositions: gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power."<sup>24</sup> Scott argues that gender is an historical phenomenon that changes over time. Linda Nicholson further develops Scott's argument and concludes that the word *gender* is "actually used in at least two very different and, indeed, somewhat contradictory ways. On the one hand *gender* was developed and is still often used as a contrasting term to *sex*, to depict that which is socially constructed as opposed to that which is ideologically given ... On the other hand, *gender* has increasingly become used to refer to any social construction having to do with the male/female distinction, including those constructions that separate female bodies from male bodies."<sup>25</sup> Nicholson,

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<sup>24</sup>. Joan Wallach Scott, Gender and the Politics of History, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 42. This article originally appeared in the American Historical Review, 1986.

<sup>25</sup>. Linda Nicholson, "Interpreting *Gender*", in Signs Vol.20 No.1 (Autumn 1994), p. 79.

too, argues that gender is historically constructed and, like Denise Riley, that the meaning of "woman" must be historically located. She writes: "thus I am advocating that we think about the meaning of *woman* as illustrating a map of intersecting similarities and differences."<sup>26</sup> This study of rural women's social identities supports Nicholson's conclusions.

Understanding the creation of identity, specifically rural woman's identity, is problematic. Debate surrounding women's identity can be divided into four schools. First, are radical or cultural feminists who assume woman's identity is determined by reproductive functions. Such biologism has a long tradition from Aristotle through to the present. Today cultural feminists celebrate female attributes in an essentialized female identity that venerates mothering, nurturing and caring. The notion of a separate women's culture, coming out of the separate spheres paradigm, has been, and continues to be, a popular sub-category of this school. Second, are neo-marxists who draw from marxist models to assign woman an identity-in-oppression. Third, are liberals who suggest that identity should be based in an equality of all persons. They reject biological and marxist arguments in favour of the freedom of autonomous liberal individualism that should allow each and every person a self-created identity. Fourth, are postmodern scholars who problematize the term "woman" into a plurality of differences.

The first school considers the possibility of a distinct and separate women's culture. This is one of the most popular planks of feminist studies today. Women's culture, the notion of a distinct female culture based on gender experiences, is often favoured by feminist historians as an analytic framework. Proponents of a unique women's culture suggest there

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<sup>26</sup>. *Ibid*, p. 101.

are experiences, attitudes, practices and periodization which are common to all women regardless of class, race or religion. However, scholars vary widely in their assessments of how women's experiences are influenced by separateness or differences from men.

Radical and cultural feminists assert that all women have certain feminine or female characteristics in common that have been denied or devalued by patriarchy. Mary Daly was one of the first proponents of this position. In Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism Daly argues that "we live in a profoundly anti-female society, a misogynistic 'civilization' in which men collectively victimize women, attacking us as personifications of their own paranoid fears, as The Enemy."<sup>27</sup> Daly's concern is for "the mind/spirit/body pollution inflicted through patriarchal myth and language on all levels."<sup>28</sup> Her solution is for women to "relearn what our forefathers knew,"<sup>29</sup> and "to exorcize male myths that mold women for male purposes."<sup>30</sup>

Daly's study examines the essence of being female in an overwhelmingly male world. She complains that "woman" has been defined by men who both fear and hate women. In response Daly has set a course of self-discovery for women that celebrates the femaleness she believes was previously perverted by male interpretation. Daly celebrates female energy, creativity and inherent ability to love when freed from the bonds and myths of patriarchy.

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<sup>27</sup>. Mary Daly, Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), p. 29.

<sup>28</sup>. Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>29</sup>. Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>30</sup>. Ibid., p. 3.

But, it is an essentialized woman that Daly celebrates. She believes in a strong female essence that will flourish as women rename and reconfigure their lives.

Daly's analysis of the essentialized culture of emancipated women has a certain appeal to it. Freedom to discover (or rediscover as Daly might put it) true identity and inner harmony has a very positive ring to it. Yet it is a biological identity, a predisposed identity of which she writes. As Linda Alcoff has noted, cultural feminists like Daly "have not challenged the defining of woman but only that definition given by men."<sup>31</sup> The identity inherited by Daly's woman is not historical or created through experience. It is not a self-consciously assumed visage. It is an identity in genetic composition. Alcoff insightfully concludes that cultural feminists tend "to offer an essentialist response to misogyny and sexism through adopting a homogeneous, unproblematized and ahistorical conception of woman."<sup>32</sup> For historians these are fatal theoretical errors that make a cultural feminist interpretation of history impossible to accept.

Carol Gilligan's very popular book, In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development, published four years after Daly's Gyn/Ecology, added to the possibility of a distinct woman's culture. Gilligan examines what she calls an ethic of care, women as caregivers and caretakers, as opposed to the ethic of justice that some psychologists attributed to men.<sup>33</sup> She explains, "the logic underlying an ethic of care is a

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<sup>31</sup>. Linda Alcoff, "Cultural Feminism versus Post-Structuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory" in Signs Vol.13 No.3 (Spring 1988), p. 407.

<sup>32</sup>. Ibid., p. 413.

<sup>33</sup>. In particular Gilligan is critical of Lawrence Kohlberg's work. Kohlberg outlines six stages of moral development from childhood to adulthood. He found that women's moral

psychological logic of relationships, which contrasts with the formal logic of fairness that informs the justice approach."<sup>34</sup> Further, she argues that "while an ethic of justice proceeds from the premise of equality -- that everyone should be treated the same -- an ethic of care rests on the premise of nonviolence -- that no one should be hurt."<sup>35</sup> Gilligan's theory is developed from Nancy Chodorow's work on differences in masculine and feminine personalities and roles. Chodorow, giving a new interpretation to Freudian principles of early childhood development, found these differences were not biological but largely the result of environment.<sup>36</sup>

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development remained at a lower level than that of men who went out into the world of work and commerce. He implies that if women enter the traditional male sphere their moral development would increase to a higher stage. Gilligan is critical of Kohlberg's work for a number of reasons but the most important is because Kohlberg's study was based on a study of 84 boys and no girls. However he claims universality for his stages sequence. Carol Gilligan, In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), p. 18.

<sup>34</sup>. Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>35</sup>. Ibid., p. 174.

<sup>36</sup>. Chodorow concluded that personality is formed by age three. Mothers, the primary caretakers of children, develop different bonds with boys than with girls. Boys learn they are different from their mother and develop an identity opposite to the mother's. The result is that there is a separation, an individualization that boys carry throughout their lives. Girls, on the other hand, establish a relationship of similarities with their mother and develop a bond of relationships. Hence, girls learn attachment while boys learn separation. Nancy Chodorow, The Reproduction of Mothering, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978). More recently Chodorow has refined her argument saying that "gender cannot be seen as entirely culturally, linguistically, or politically constructed. Rather there are individual psychological processes in addition to, and in a different register from, culture, language, and power relations that construct gender for the individual ... I suggest that each person's sense of gender -- her gender identity of gendered subjectivity -- is an inextricable fusion or melding of personally created (emotionally and through unconscious fantasy) and cultural meaning." Nancy J. Chodorow, "Gender as a Personal and Cultural Construction", in Signs Vol.20 No.3 (Spring 1995), p. 517.

Although Gilligan denies that her analysis is based in gender differences, this is exactly the position her evidence supports. The ethic of care is gender related as Gilligan freely acknowledges. However, she does not recognize that her own work demonstrates that identity is the outcome of differences between males and females. In a response to criticism of her work in a 1986 Signs "Viewpoint", Gilligan agreed that her study "calls attention to a different way of constituting the self and morality."<sup>37</sup> She does not concede that it is an issue of sex differences. In her opinion the care perspective is not "biologically determined nor unique to women."<sup>38</sup> Yet she assigns what she calls this different voice only to women. It is an identity of female intimacy and relationships, quite different from the identity of individual achievement and separation she presumes are male.<sup>39</sup>

The most obvious difficulty with Gilligan's work and others who support this theory is that it reinforces the separate spheres paradigm. Historian Linda Kerber notes that the idea that there are different moral imperatives in men and women -- that women define themselves through relationships and intimacy and men through self-fulfillment -- all sounds rather

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<sup>37</sup>. Carol Gilligan, "Reply by Carol Gilligan", in Signs Vol.11 No.2 (Winter 1986), p. 325.

<sup>38</sup>. Ibid., p. 327.

<sup>39</sup>. Five years later, Joan Tronto, reconceptualized Gilligan's evaluation and suggested some new directions for the ethic of care theory. Tronto states that "the equation of 'care' with 'female' is questionable because the evidence to support the link between gender difference and different moral perspectives is inadequate" (p. 646). She also cites a number of difficulties if an ethic of care is to be associated with gender difference. The primary problem is that there is a great likelihood that woman's moral perspective would continue to be measured against men's thus relegating women to the same subordinate position that more traditional psychological studies did. Tronto's solution is to develop an ethic of care that encompasses both women and men, a totally new proposal and outlook. Joan C. Tronto, "Beyond Gender Difference To a Theory of Care", in Signs Vol.12 No.4 (Summer 1987), pp. 644-663.

familiar to her. Kerber writes, "this historian, at least, is haunted by the sense that we have heard this argument before, vested in different language."<sup>40</sup>

Kerber is referring to separate spheres, a methodological framework adopted by historians of women's history in the 1960s and 1970s. However, as Kerber discovered, not all historians interpreted separate spheres in the same way.<sup>41</sup> She notes that separate spheres has been judged as both positive and negative for women. In examining American scholarship, Kerber identified three stages of development in the separate spheres paradigm. The first stage, introduced in 1966 by Barbara Welter, submitted that separate spheres made women subordinate.<sup>42</sup> Within three years both Aileen Kraditor and Gerda Lerner added class as a variable to Welter's equation, linking the industrial revolution to the development of the separate spheres ideology.<sup>43</sup> The second stage, which flourished during the 1970s, found scholars attempting to develop the separate spheres theme by incorporating the idea of woman's culture. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, for example, in 1975 reinterpreted separate spheres as being positive because she concluded that it encouraged sustaining relationships

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<sup>40</sup>. Linda Kerber, "Some Cautionary Words for Historians" in Signs Vol.11 No.2 (Winter 1986), p. 306.

<sup>41</sup>. Linda Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History", in Journal of American History 75 No.1 (June 1988), pp. 9-39.

<sup>42</sup>. Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860", in American Quarterly 18 (Summer 1966), pp. 151-174.

<sup>43</sup>. Aileen S. Kraditor (ed.), Up From the Pedestal: Selected Writings in the History of American Feminism, (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968); Gerda Lerner, "The Lady and the Mill Girl: Changes in the Status of Women in the Age of Jackson", in Midcontinent American Studies Journal 10 (Spring 1969) pp.5-15.



between women and fostered a distinct woman's culture.<sup>44</sup> The third stage of separate spheres scholarship that Kerber identifies began in 1980 in response to the dual negative/positive interpretation of separate spheres. As Kerber states, historians then set out to show how woman's sphere "was socially constructed both **for and by women**", rather than one or the other.<sup>45</sup>

Kerber argues that there are three major characteristics to the third stage separate spheres scholarship. First, that separate spheres can be applied to all eras of history and not just the nineteenth century.<sup>46</sup> Second, that separate spheres is relational and therefore assumes varying postures with changing circumstances. It could both serve women's interests and restrict their actions. Third, that historians are now examining the literal interpretation

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<sup>44</sup>. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth Century America", in Signs 1 (Autumn 1975), pp. 1-29.

<sup>45</sup>. Linda Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History", p. 18.

<sup>46</sup>. The notion of separate spheres is not only a methodological implement designed by historians. It was a plank of the patriarchal system originally exploited by the British and American middle-classes in the nineteenth century. With the rise of industrial capitalism, work became separated from the home and the two spheres of work and home became seen as mutually exclusive. Woman's so-called natural sphere was within the private and protected domestic realm, while man's sphere was the contaminated public domain of work and the economy. Historians have concluded that separate spheres helped provide the middle-class with an identity which set them apart from what they believed were the corrupt upper classes or the lazy and immoral lower classes. Some historians argue that the rise of evangelicalism in the early nineteenth century is also connected to this separate spheres paradigm and that religious virtues were adopted by this growing middle-class as part of their identity-in-difference. The desirable attributes of piety, respectability and gentility became the hallmarks of the middle-class. Today historians recognize that these were culturally defined models and therefore were not natural or imposed by the will of God as many Victorians claimed. See: Leonore Davidoff & Catherine Hall, Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle-class 1780-1850; and, John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America, (New York: Harper & Row, 1988).

of woman's sphere, or the physical space assigned to women.

As Kerber notes, there are several difficulties with the third stage historiography, most importantly that the separate spheres paradigm can be applied to all eras of history. This suggests that the model can be applied not only across time but also across geographic location with scholars factoring in class and race and other key variables as desired. Moreover, regardless of the number of variables that may be added, separate spheres in this scenario always assumes a posture of permanent dualisms, an identity-in-opposition, and the discussion becomes one of differences between women and men. Such difficulties were acknowledged by distinguished historian Joan Kelly in 1979 when she concluded that "woman's place is not a separate sphere or domain of existence but a position within social existence generally."<sup>47</sup>

Another problem with the separate spheres methodological framework is that there is little room for individual identity. Group identification subsumes independent, individual, self-determination. Identity is presumed to be completely imposed rather than created and selected.

Obviously, not all historians of women agree that the women's culture framework is the best direction from which to approach their subjects. Some insist that a distinctive woman's culture unites all women; others maintain that women are diverse (separated by class, ethnicity, religion, race, geography and any other number of variables) and thus it is impossible to write about women as one cohesive unit. The challenge for feminist historians

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<sup>47</sup>. Joan Kelly, Women, History & Theory: The Essays of Joan Kelly, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 57.

is, as Lorraine Code notes, "a matter of developing theoretical tools to understand the sameness and differences in women's lives: of acknowledging specificity and commonality."<sup>48</sup>

Identity and self-determination are defined from yet another perspective by marxist and socialist feminist scholars. This second school argues that capitalism is inextricably bonded to patriarchy and accordingly is woman's greatest oppressor. Lorraine Code outlines three forms of oppression that marxist and socialist feminists have identified. First, women in the paid work force are alienated from their work. Second, women in the labour force are commonly subordinate to men. Third, women who work in the home are further disadvantaged because their work has no recognized material value.<sup>49</sup> More recently, however, this very negative interpretation of women's oppression under capitalist patriarchy has been turned around into a feminist standpoint theory by a younger generation of marxist scholars who generally associate it with epistemologies and ways of knowing. Feminist standpoint theory asserts that the sexual division of labour affords women a unique vantage point from which to view capitalist patriarchy. As philosopher Helen Longino has summarized it, "provisionally, standpoint theory reflects the view that women (or feminists) occupy a social location that affords them/us a privileged access to social phenomena."<sup>50</sup>

Sandra Harding and Nancy Hartsock are prominent proponents of feminist standpoint

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<sup>48</sup>. Lorraine Code, "Feminist Theory", in Sandra Burt, Lorraine Code & Lindsay Dorney (eds.), Changing Patterns: Women in Canada, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988), p. 20.

<sup>49</sup>. Ibid, pp. 36-37.

<sup>50</sup>. Helen E. Longino, "Feminist Standpoint Theory and the Problems of Knowledge", in Signs Vol.19 No.1 (Autumn 1993), p. 201.

theory. Hartsock concludes "that women's life activity does form the basis of a specifically feminist materialism, a materialism which can provide a point from which both to critique and work against phallocratic ideology and institutions."<sup>51</sup> Harding explains that standpoint theory examines critical questions that do not arise from thought generated by dominant groups.<sup>52</sup> Examining women's lives from the standpoint of women instead of from the position of men's lives, will, according to Harding and Hartsock, provide insight into experience and offer new avenues of research.

Standpoint theorists have determined that social situation determines knowledge. This is in opposition to epistemologists who claim that knowledge must transcend social situation otherwise it is only considered to be opinion.<sup>53</sup> That knowledge can be historically situated and contested makes standpoint theory appear practical to historians. Yet, as Mary Hawkesworth points out, the logic of feminist standpoint theory tends to turn in upon itself. Hawkesworth argues "that if there is a distinctive women's 'perspective' that is 'privileged' precisely because it possesses heightened insights into the nature of reality, a superior access to truth, is to suggest that there is some uniform experience common to all women that

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<sup>51</sup>. Nancy M. Hartsock, "The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism", in Sandra Harding (ed.), Feminism & Methodology, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), pp. 175-176.

<sup>52</sup>. Sandra Harding, "Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What is 'Strong Objectivity'?", in Linda Alcoff & Elizabeth Potter (eds.), Feminist Epistemologies, (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 56.

<sup>53</sup>. Ibid., p. 50.

generates the univocal vision."<sup>54</sup> The problem arises when one discovers that standpoint theory posits both a common woman's experience and social, cultural and historical differences. Hawkesworth astutely concludes that in explaining away plurality, the notion of a woman's standpoint is undermined. Although Harding counters this argument by stating that standpoint theory and feminist knowledge are multiple and contradictory, she offers no direction on how to find one's way through this maze of contradictions to the "standpoint". It seems then, that standpoint theory suggests both plurality and commonality among women. It does not, however, provide direction on how to resolve this bifurcation. It also appears that standpoint theory, in the final analysis, though it originated in Marxist analysis, has become just another manifestation of "women's culture".

Liberal scholars, the third school of women's identity, promote a vision of strict equality between men and women. Betty Friedan, author of The Feminine Mystique and founder of the National Organization of Women, is one of the best-known proponents of liberal feminism. Writing in the early 1960s, Friedan concluded that "the problem for women today is not sexual but a problem of identity -- a stunting or evasion of growth that is perpetuated by the feminine mystique."<sup>55</sup> Friedan explains that a woman cannot find her identity through others. Women must be educated and have creative outlets in work of their

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<sup>54</sup>. Mary E. Hawkesworth, "Knowers, Knowing, Known: Feminist Theory and Claims of Truth", in Signs Vol. 14 No.3 (Spring 1989), p. 545.

<sup>55</sup>. Betty Friedan, The Feminine Mystique, (New York: Dell Publishing, 1984(1963)), p. 77. Friedan defines the feminine mystique: "it simply makes certain concrete, finite, domestic aspects of feminine existence -- as it was lived by women whose lives were confined by necessity to cooking, cleaning, washing bearing children - into a religion, a pattern by which all women must now live or deny their femininity." p. 43.

own. They must be able to fulfil their full human capacities, proving that women are human. Friedan's key words are: human being; citizen; human rights. Women must be considered by others and by themselves as human beings and therefore as equal to men.

The most interesting aspect of the liberal school is that it raises questions of equality versus difference. If all humans are equal, then there is no difference between men and women and essentially they must be the same. If everyone has the same opportunities, does this mean all women and all men could be the same? Obviously not, because as the poststructuralists, marxists and radical or cultural feminists have demonstrated, difference is a key factor in the determination of identity.<sup>56</sup>

Poststructuralists, the fourth school, focus on difference, plurality and multiplicity. They examine language, subjectivity and meaning to discover the locus of power.<sup>57</sup> Building on the work of Saussure, Derrida, Barthes, Foucault and Lacan, poststructuralist analysts "insist that words and texts have no fixed or intrinsic meanings, that there is no transparent or self-evident relationship between them and either ideas or things."<sup>58</sup> Accordingly, there is no essential or essentialized naturalness; everything is a social construct. Diversity becomes

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<sup>56</sup>. Philosopher Rosemarie Tong, in an evaluation of liberal feminism, states that "liberal feminists are moving away from their traditional belief that almost every woman can liberate herself 'individually' by 'throwing off' her conditioning and 'unilaterally' rejecting her traditional sex roles. Indeed, an increasing number of liberal feminists are willing to concede that individual actions *and* social structures prevent many, if not most, women from securing *full* liberation." Rosemarie Tong, Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989), p. 38.

<sup>57</sup>. Chris Weedon, Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987).

<sup>58</sup>. Joan W. Scott, "Deconstructing Equality-versus-Difference: or, The Uses of Poststructuralist Theory for Feminism", in Feminist Studies 14 No.1 (Spring 1988), p. 35.

the key; plurality the rule. Meaning is never fixed but constantly negotiated and renegotiated. Although this has many useful applications for women's historians -- for example the interplay of the constructs masculinity and femininity, or separate spheres -- taken to its ultimate end, poststructuralist theory becomes problematic. If all meaning is in flux, where is there any cohesive understanding? For feminist scholars the predicament is even greater because if woman is only a social construct, how can any history of women be written? If the female subject does not exist, what is the point of feminist history?

The emphasis on diversity and difference has become increasingly popular in feminist studies in recent years. Nancy Cott has observed that "the value accorded 'sexual difference' in feminist theory has increased at the same time that the universality of the claim for sisterhood has been debunked."<sup>59</sup> The notion that all women or all men are the same is an impossibility. Women, as well as men, are differentiated by race, class, religion, location, sexuality -- any number of variables which demolish myths of sameness. There can be no universal woman, no meaning for "woman" that is not historically specific.

On the other side of the equality/difference debate is whether women are, or want to be, equal to men. This raises the question of difference again; are women different or the same as men? Gisela Bock asks some key questions: "why is it, for instance, that 'equality' and 'justice' seem to complement each other in the case of men, but be opposed to each other in the case of women? Why is it that 'difference' is only attributed to one half of humankind

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<sup>59</sup>. Nancy Cott, "Feminist Theory and Feminist Movements: The Past Before Us", in Juliet Mitchell & Ann Oakley (eds.), What is Feminism, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), p. 59.

and not to the other?"<sup>60</sup> Liberal scholars state that everyone is or should be equal but different -- that is, that the sexes are complementary. Marxists suggest that there can be no equality until the systems and structures of capitalism are dismantled. Postmodernists conclude that equality is merely a construct that disguises the inequitable distribution of power. To each ideological camp, equality and/or difference suggest miscellaneous discourses. How equality is defined or perceived affects how groups and individuals situate their response to the question, 'what is equality'.

Does equality imply women are the same as men? Quite obviously there are physiological distinctions between the sexes. But, are these differences important? Anne Phillips notes that in the 1970s "equality might well have been expressed in the longing to be a 'person' instead of a 'woman'."<sup>61</sup> During the 1980s androgyny dropped out of favour as difference became celebrated by those such as Mary Daly, Carol Gilligan, and Adrienne Rich. Instead of women wanting to be treated "as if they were men,"<sup>62</sup> some feminists insisted on defining and glorifying differences between men and women. Many other feminists, however, have decided that the equality/difference dichotomy is false and useless.

Joan Scott examined the "equality-versus-difference debate among feminists" and found that a binary opposition had been created where feminists must choose to support one

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<sup>60</sup>. Gisela Bock, "Challenging Dichotomies: Perspectives on Women's History", in Karen Offen, Ruth Roach Pierson & Jane Rendall (eds.), Writing Women's History, International Perspectives, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 12.

<sup>61</sup>. Anne Phillips, "Introduction", in Anne Phillips (ed.), Feminism and Equality, (New York: New York University Press, 1987), p. 4.

<sup>62</sup>. Gisela Bock, "Challenging Dichotomies: Perspectives on Women's History", p. 10.



position or the other.<sup>63</sup> "In fact", Scott writes, "the antithesis itself hides the interdependence of the two terms, for equality is not the elimination of difference, and difference does not preclude equality."<sup>64</sup> The opposite of equality is inequality, not difference, while the opposite of difference is sameness, not equality. In addition, Scott demands that context must be specified, otherwise a generalized binarization of man/woman "serves to obscure the differences among women in behaviour, character, desire, subjectivity, sexuality, gender identification, and historical experience."<sup>65</sup> Scott's solution is to refuse this false oppositional pairing of equality/difference and expose its inherent hierarchical nature. Further, she suggests that once the equality/difference binarization is dismantled and displaced, we can build a position "of an equality that rests on differences -- differences that confound, disrupt, and render ambiguous the meaning of any fixed binary opposition."<sup>66</sup>

More recently, Gisela Bock and Susan James edited a collection of essays from a conference in Florence, Italy, where international perspectives on equality and difference were debated. This collection is particularly useful because it outlines how positions are divided

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<sup>63</sup>. Scott's examination of the equality/difference debate comes at the forefront of a wave of theoretical arguments that developed out of the now famous "Sears case". In 1979 a sex discrimination case was brought against Sears by the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission. Historians testified for both parties; Alice Kessler-Harris for the EEOC and Rosalind Rosenberg for Sears. For more detail see Joan Wallach Scott, "The Sears Case", in *Gender and the Politics of History*, pp. 167-177; and "Women's History Goes to Trial", in *Signs* Vol.11 No.4, pp. 751-779 which reprints sections of the trial and the historians' arguments.

<sup>64</sup>. Joan W. Scott, "Deconstructing Equality-Versus-Difference: Or, The Uses of Poststructuralist Theory for Feminism", p. 38.

<sup>65</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>66</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

along national lines. The editors note that whereas German and Anglo-American feminists "criticized theories of sexual difference on the grounds that they run the risk of biologism, their French and Italian counterparts have remained comparatively unmoved by this objection."<sup>67</sup> Anglo-American feminism is rooted in notions of equality, although Bock and James agree that the concepts of equality and difference "shift in response to fresh political and theoretical interests, and evolving strategic opportunities."<sup>68</sup> The purpose of the volume, however, is to show how traditional meanings of equality and difference can be deconstructed and new relationships developed. This is reminiscent of Joan Scott's suggestion that the fixed interplay of equality/difference be dismantled for an equality based in difference. It also supports Scott's premise that context is vital to perceptions and interpretations of equality and difference, as the European and American scholars at the conference demonstrated. Unfortunately, Canadian scholars have been notoriously silent in the equality/difference discussion, generally lingering far behind their European, Australian and American counterparts in theoretical and analytic debate.<sup>69</sup>

This is the classic dilemma in feminist studies, historical and others -- how to

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<sup>67</sup>. Gisela Bock & Susan James, "Introduction: Contextualizing equality and difference", in Gisela Bock & Susan James (eds.), Beyond Equality and Difference, (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 2.

<sup>68</sup>. Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>69</sup>. Only a few years ago Canadian historian Linda Kealey complained about "the theoretical sophistication which is lacking in most Canadian women's history" (p. 285) and "English Canadian women's history's reluctance to specify conceptual frameworks and to engage in debates related to these frameworks" (p. 297). Linda Kealey, "Crossing Borders: The Influence of American Women's History on the Writing of Canadian Women's History", in Canadian Review of American Studies 1992 Special Issue Part II, pp. 279-300.

recognize difference yet still find similarities that unite women. Historians are caught up in this quandary as much are epistemologists, psychologists, sociologists and other scholars (and activists) who attempt to examine women as a group. It is impossible to write a "women's history" because women's experiences, situations, interpretations are various and complex. Some scholars insist that women's oppression, their status as the under-class or their discrimination by sex/gender unites all women. This is fundamentally false because women encounter and perceive oppression in a multiplicity of ways. Immigrant women, for example, often feel doubly disadvantaged because of gender and race.<sup>70</sup> Women's diversity, therefore, becomes problematic to those searching for commonality and homogeneity.

After considering the equality/difference paradigms (between men and women, and amongst women) some scholars have started to posit alternative theoretical models for feminist scholarship. Historian Karen Offen suggests a reinterpretation of relational feminism which "proposed a gender-based but egalitarian vision of social organization ... [and] featured the primacy of a companionate, non-hierarchical, male-female couple as the basic unit of

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<sup>70</sup>. For example see: Immigrant Women of Saskatchewan, Doubly Disadvantaged: The Women Who Immigrate to Canada, (Saskatoon: Immigrant Women of Saskatchewan, 1985); Angela W. Djao & Roxana Ng, "Structured Isolation: Immigrant Women in Saskatchewan", in Kathleen Storrie (ed.), Women: Isolation and Bonding. The Ecology of Gender, (Toronto: Methuen Publications, 1987), pp. 141-158; Francis Swyripa, Wedded to the Cause: Ukrainian-Canadian Women and Ethnic Identity 1891-1991, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); Varpu Lindstrom-Best, Defiant Sisters: A Social History of Finnish Immigrant Women in Canada, (Toronto: Multicultural History Society of Canada, 1988); Jean Burnet (ed.), Looking Into My Sister's Eyes: An Exploration in Women's History, (Toronto: The Multicultural History Society of Toronto, 1986); Sheelagh Conway, The Faraway Hills are Green: Voices of Irish Women in Canada, (Toronto: Women's Press, 1992).

society..."<sup>71</sup> Offen finds individualistic arguments (those based in arguments of strict equality and individual human rights) render insignificant any differences between women and men. Although Offen's conclusion that we need a more historically-based definition of feminism and hence an historically-grounded paradigm for feminist scholarship, seems on the surface logical, in fact she glosses over differences among women. Her characterization of women's shared experience is especially maternal, finding child-bearing and child-rearing as experiences that unite all women. However, although many women have motherhood in common, their experiences are likely to be quite different. Additionally, the various experiences of women's lives are so unique, diverse and divergent that women can never be constrained by the false solidarity of 'universal woman', maternal or not.

This is not to suggest that Elizabeth Fox-Genovese's position on the importance of difference is more appropriate. Fox-Genovese states that "even after discounting all of the ways in which our specific culture has constructed and represented difference, a biological difference remains. But the recognition of difference does not dictate the social consequences of difference. The consequences are a matter for the collective determination of society as a whole."<sup>72</sup> Fox-Genovese suggests that liberty is grounded in collectivity; that capitalism has destroyed community, social relations and "the social imagination, and hence the ways of imagining the female self."<sup>73</sup> She explains, "I am arguing that individualism actually perverts

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<sup>71</sup>. Karen Offen, "Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach", in Gisela Bock & Susan James (eds.), Beyond Equality & Difference, p. 76.

<sup>72</sup>. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Feminism Without Illusions: A Critique of Individualism, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), p. 244.

<sup>73</sup>. Ibid., p. 117.

the idea of the socially obligated and personally responsible freedom that constitutes the only freedom worthy of the name or indeed historically possible."<sup>74</sup> Fox-Genovese argues against individualism and for community -- community writ large and a community of women. Although she vehemently rejects "sisterhood", she is in fact arguing in favour of a community of women. In Fox-Genovese's critique women have a "distinct experience" and a "distinct nature".<sup>75</sup> In the final analysis, Fox-Genovese's argument is another variation of the "women's oppression" approach that developed out of Marxist theory. Whereas standpoint theorists proposed the "women's oppression" model as a unique standpoint for feminist theory, Fox-Genovese's argument is but another familiar attack on patriarchy. The problem with both standpoint theory and Fox-Genovese's position is that they argue for both plurality and commonality among women with no direction of how this is to be accomplished.

This is where Teresa de Lauretis' discussion of identity as self-interpretation of personal history is particularly useful. de Lauretis posits that subjectivity and the subject do not need to be determined by biology *or* tradition *or* community. In theorizing women's history, especially women's personal histories, de Lauretis suggests that experience is the key to consciousness and identity. How women mediate experience is determined by "particular discursive configurations"<sup>76</sup> that constantly change. de Lauretis' model provides historical

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<sup>74</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>75</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 243.

<sup>76</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

context, agency and the possibility of a female experience without essentializing women.<sup>77</sup> It is historically sound *and* contextually grounded. It is from this point that a model or a theoretical framework can be developed that explains the lives of rural Canadian women.

## B. Selected Canadian and Rural Perspectives

Historians of Canadian women, following the lead of their British and American colleagues in the 1970s, found the separate spheres analysis useful in examining the lives of Canadian women. Accordingly, separate spheres as an analytic framework became incorporated into the early literature and research on Canadian women's history. The tendency of Canadian historians working within the separate spheres model was to examine the subordination of women (or in other words, women as victims of an unjust system or society), or to celebrate individual women of extraordinary talent and determination, their leadership, organizations and personal achievements.<sup>78</sup> This separate women's sphere also suggests that women were a monolithic group except for the very few exceptional or "great women" who succeeded in the public domain.<sup>79</sup> This is exactly the type of history one

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<sup>77</sup>. Linda Alcoff, "Cultural Feminism vs Post-structuralism; The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory", pp. 422-425.

<sup>78</sup>. For example see: Veronica Strong-Boag, "Canadian Feminism in the 1920s: The Case of Nellie L. McClung", in Journal of Canadian Studies Vol.12 No.4 (Summer 1977), pp. 58-68; Carol Bacchi, "Race Regeneration and Social Purity. A Case Study of the Social Attitudes of Canada's English-Speaking Suffragists", in Histoire sociale/ Social History Vol.XI No.22 (November 1978), pp. 460-474.

<sup>79</sup>. Two earlier historiographical articles demonstrate the fragmented nature of studies of prairie women: Ann Leger Anderson, "Saskatchewan Women, 1880-1920; A Field For Study", in Palmer & Smith (eds.), The New Provinces: Alberta and Saskatchewan 1905-1980, (Vancouver: Tantalus Research, 1980), pp. 65-90; and, Susan Jackel, "Canadian Prairie

generally encounters when reading rural Canadian women's history.

In her 1991 examination of the writing of Canadian women's history, Gail Cuthbert Brandt noted that historians were moving away from the one-dimensional examinations of separate spheres as mutually exclusive domains. She observed that "although separate spheres was an initially useful conceptual framework, feminist historians are increasingly critical of its limits."<sup>80</sup> Historians of women are now utilizing more integrative techniques which examine, for example, the private in the public and the shifting boundaries of so-called masculine and feminine spheres. In Canadian scholarship, the best example of this approach is Joy Parr's The Gender of Breadwinners.<sup>81</sup> This is history with a kaleidoscopic vision that examines changing patterns and the varying dimensions and definitions of public and private. In her study of two Ontario towns, Parr examines gender and class relationships as historical processes and argues that social position is determined through a "multiplicity of elements" which "are changeable rather than fixed."<sup>82</sup> Her analysis provides a valuable model previously lacking in Canadian scholarship. Unfortunately the willingness to work with or develop alternative models has been remarkably slow to develop in Canadian rural studies. Separate spheres and separate women's culture remained the models of choice for examinations of rural

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Women's History: A Bibliographic Survey", The CRIAW Papers #14, (Ottawa: CRIAW, April 1987).

<sup>80</sup>. Gail Cuthbert Brandt, "Postmodern Patchwork: Some Recent Trends in the Writing of Women's History in Canada", in Canadian Historical Review Vol.LXXII No.4 (December 1991), p. 445.

<sup>81</sup>. Joy Parr, The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men and Change in Two Industrial Towns 1880-1950.

<sup>82</sup>. Ibid., p. 9.

Canadian women until recently.

The idea of women's culture is familiar to historians of Canadian women. In a 1982 historiographical analysis, Eliane Leslau Silverman called for historians to confront "the issue of a woman's culture."<sup>83</sup> Silverman challenges historians to question if women had their own culture apart from that of the male culture. She asks, "did [women] live two kinds of lives, one in the male culture where they were controlled by tradition, fear, loyalty, and love, and the other in a parallel society of women where their actions could range from intimacy to power?"<sup>84</sup> The problem with Silverman's query is her determination to find what she calls "heterogeneous feminists" who "shared in the culture of marginality."<sup>85</sup> Silverman posits a women's culture which assumes all women similarly experience marginality. This does not take into account the influence of variable social, economic, political or geographic locations. However, Silverman's analysis and challenge were very influential and Canadian women's historians followed her lead in adopting this limited-perspective women's culture model.<sup>86</sup>

In 1988 the authors of the first survey text on Canadian women's history, Alison

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<sup>83</sup>. Eliane Leslau Silverman, "Writing Canadian Women's History, 1970-82: an Historiographical Analysis", in Canadian Historical Review Vol.LXIII No. 4, (December 1982), p. 521.

<sup>84</sup>. Ibid., 521

<sup>85</sup>. Ibid., 527

<sup>86</sup>. Also see Eliane Leslau Silverman, The Last Best West, Women on the Alberta Frontier 1880-1930 (Montreal: Eden Press, 1984) where Silverman writes, "the life cycle of each woman, and not the events of the public realm, tended to determine her perception of her experience" (iv). In this book, a compilation of Alberta farm women's experiences, Silverman actively seeks out similarities among women.



Prentice et.al., pointed to a distinct women's culture in Canada.<sup>87</sup> They argue that this culture was most prominent in the early twentieth century during the era of reform movements and the growth of women's separate organizations. They also state that this woman's culture, although it may have waned at some junctures, continues to be a factor for women. Their book fits neatly under the banner of "the oppression of women" because, as Peter Ward succinctly noted, "the underlying assumption of the book is that the history of women is principally the history of their inequality, of their attempts to overcome it, and of their quest for expressions of feminine community."<sup>88</sup> The book is another example of how historians have attempted to unite women in a women's culture based on the themes of oppression and identity-in-difference.

Veronica Strong-Boag is one of the leading scholars in the examination of a Canadian women's culture. In 1986 she and her co-editor of Rethinking Canada, Anita Clair Fellman, argued that women shared a women's culture of rituals, traditions and customs "that cannot be presumed to mirror the position of male reality."<sup>89</sup> They also noted that "while [women's] experiences have differed from group to group and time to time, in some ways women's lives resemble each other's as much or more than they resemble those of the men with whom they

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<sup>87</sup>. Alison Prentice, Paula Bourne, Gail Cuthbert Brandt, Beth Light, Wendy Mitchinson, Naomi Black, Canadian Women: A History, (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Canada Inc., 1988).

<sup>88</sup>. Peter Ward, "Review of Canadian Women: A History", in The Canadian Historical Review Vol.LXX No.3 (September 1989), p. 382.

<sup>89</sup>. Veronica Strong-Boag & Anita Clair Fellman (eds.), Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History, (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd. 1986), p. 3.

are closely associated."<sup>90</sup> Strong-Boag further addresses the idea of a women's culture in The New Day Recalled, suggesting that gender informed every aspect of a woman's life and that a female culture was sustained through "a predisposition to intimacy, rooted in patterns of socialization."<sup>91</sup>

Historians of North American rural women have generally preferred to frame their work on the separate spheres methodology or the women's culture paradigm. Glenda Riley, for example, in a comparative study of women on the American prairie and plains suggests that "shared experiences and responses of frontierswomen constituted a 'female frontier'."<sup>92</sup> Riley explains that the female frontier focuses on domestic responsibilities of women and the sameness and continuity of these duties in all frontier settings. Riley concludes that "social class, race, ethnicity, religion, education and marital status did not alter the gender expectations of prairie women and plainswomen in any substantial way."<sup>93</sup> On the other side of this debate are scholars who insist that the experiences of women were diverse and multicultural. As the editors of a collection of essays presented at a 1984 conference on western women noted, "however one may look at gender roles, it is true they reflect political

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<sup>90</sup>. Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>91</sup>. Veronica Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada 1919-1939, (Markham: Penguin Books Canada Ltd., 1988), p. 218.

<sup>92</sup>. Glenda Riley, The Female Frontier: A Comparative View of Women on the Prairie and the Plains, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1988), p. 2.

<sup>93</sup>. Ibid., p. 196. Riley also found that while women's experiences were homogeneous, men's lives were more heterogeneous.

and economic phenomena as much as domestic interaction."<sup>94</sup>

Political, economic and social phenomena are all important factors in the creation of identity. Although all social institutions are gendered, it is how women experience and interpret these institutions that matters. "Separate spheres" and "women's culture" do not begin to explain the circumstances of rural women's lives. These are narrow and restricted paradigms that assume women have an identity-in-opposition. Separate spheres and women's culture perpetuate the dualisms of difference instead of analyzing the actual lived experiences of women. Women's culture presumes there are essential female qualities that unite all women. Separate spheres and women's culture models are often ahistorical -- that is, they offer little or no contextual grounding. They are imposed models that sustain myths of sameness rather than recognizing diversity and plurality.

Identity is created, crafted, and consciously assumed as a result of the interaction between independent subjects and their experiences. Yet, there are other considerations which are equally important. Location and environment situate women in concrete circumstances and add to the catalogue of experience from which they draw their identity. In the end, however, it is the blending of tradition, myth and experience that determines identity, and how women map<sup>95</sup> or braid<sup>96</sup> their selves that matters.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup>. Lillian Schlissel, Vicki L. Ruiz & Janice Monk (eds.), Western Women: Their Land, Their Lives, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), p. 340.

<sup>95</sup>. I borrow the mapping metaphor from Helen Buss who writes, "what I seek in the mapping metaphor is the possibility of multiplicity of identity formation within a single process." Helen M. Buss, Mapping Our Selves: Canadian Women's Autobiography, (Montreal & Kingston; McGill-Queen's Press. 1993), p. 10.

### C. Saskatchewan Perspectives

In reflecting on Saskatchewan women's recorded histories, it is clear that until recently scholars did not keep pace with national and international developments in women's history. Most of Saskatchewan women's history was compensatory and contributory, simply writing "great" women and events into existing historical interpretations.<sup>98</sup> Often studies consisted of a narrative with no critical analysis or articulate theoretical foundation. Further, historians of Saskatchewan women frequently viewed their subjects through the artificial lens of static,

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<sup>96</sup>. Braiding is a term used by Francoise Lionnet in a discussion of racial, sexual and national identity where she explores the term *metisage* as a "creative aesthetic practice and an analytical tool"(p. 245). Lionnet builds on the work of two Caribbean writers, Edouard Glissant and Nancy Morejon. Lionnet's project is to decode autoethnography which "amounts to a genuine way of perceiving difference while emphasizing similarities in the process of cultural encoding"(p. 248). Francoise Lionnet, Autobiographical Voices: Race, Gender, Self-Portraiture, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

<sup>97</sup>. Certainly not all historians of Canadian women are in favour of the shift towards post-modern discussions on diversity. Joan Sangster recently complained about "the emphasis on identity construction" which "... is linked to a post-structuralist inclination to deconstruct 'woman' emphasizing the fractured and multiple identities of women, rather than identifying some of the objective and material structures of economic and state power which so clearly shaped women's lives in an oppressive manner." Joan Sangster, "Beyond Dichotomies: Re-Assessing Gender History and Women's History in Canada", in left history Vol.3, No.1 (Spring/Summer 1995), p. 114. Sangster mistakenly uses the term post-structuralist when she should be using post-modern (poststructuralist being the linguistic project out of which post-modern studies evolved).

<sup>98</sup>. Gerda Lerner defines "compensatory history as the history of notable women", and "contribution history as describing women's contributions to and subjection in a male-defined world." Gerda Lerner, "Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges", in The Majority Finds its Past, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 145-53. In 1986 Lerner elaborated on her meaning of compensatory history explaining that women trained as historians in the past fifty years were "well trained by their male mentors. So they too found what men were doing on the whole more significant and, in their desire to upgrade the part of women in the past, they looked hard for women who had done what men did. Thus, compensatory history was born." Gerda Lerner, The Creation of Patriarchy, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 13.

separate, male and female spheres in the process of emphasizing a distinct women's culture. Historians also commonly considered only Saskatchewan's white, English-speaking women who were active in the public sphere, and disregarded the province's diverse multicultural population and heritage. The result was history limited in focus and narrow in interpretation.

Three general, although not rigid, stages in Saskatchewan women's history are discernable. The first introductory/celebratory stage began in the 1930s and continued into the mid-1970s, although provincial and prairie history texts published as late as 1984 still demonstrated characteristics of this first phase. Studies introduced women as historical actors in one of two ways: as helpmates to men, or as "great" or "noteworthy" individual women. Authors celebrated "great" events, especially female suffrage and the early twentieth-century reform movement. Perhaps historians of Saskatchewan women have focused on extraordinary or "great" women in the public sphere because it is often easier to study the public record or follow the lives of public figures. Whatever the reason, the result was compensatory or contributory history -- an attempt at writing women into the existing historical record.

The second, or separate spheres/women's culture stage, included the period between the mid-1970s and approximately 1990. With the growth of women's history as an accepted academic field, feminist historians examined women as a group (usually prominent, white, English-speaking women only) and often located women within the separate spheres paradigm. Frequently researchers focused on women's organizations. The element uniting most work in this second stage is exploitation -- women as victims of injustice and oppression.

Stage three, work done primarily during the 1990s, emphasizes diversity. Influenced by theoretical developments in literary criticism, anthropology, cultural and ethnic studies, historians of Saskatchewan women began to adopt and adapt new methodological strategies to study Saskatchewan women in their various cultural communities.

Prior to the first stage of Saskatchewan women's history, authors all but neglected women as historical actors. As Ann Leger Anderson noted in 1980, general provincial history texts published early in the province's history, (written exclusively by male scholars), "rarely mention women."<sup>99</sup> Included are works by Norman Fergus Black in 1913, Adam Shortt and Arthur G. Doughty in 1914, and John Hawkes in 1924.<sup>100</sup> The first stage of Saskatchewan women's history was ushered in with the Canadian Frontiers of Settlement series, nine volumes published between 1934 and 1940 discussing the social, economic and geographic systems and characteristics of the Canadian prairies. The authors of this series assumed men were farmers and women helpmates.

Three subsequent provincial histories were written to coincide with particular Saskatchewan anniversaries -- in 1955 J.F.C. Wright's Saskatchewan: The History of a Province commemorated the province's fiftieth anniversary; in 1980 John Archer's

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<sup>99</sup>. Ann Leger Anderson, "Saskatchewan Women, 1880-1920, A Field For Study", in H. Palmer and D. Smith, (eds.), The New Provinces: Alberta and Saskatchewan 1905-1980, (Vancouver: Tantalus Research, 1980), p. 66.

<sup>100</sup>. Leger Anderson refers to: Norman Fergus Black, History of Saskatchewan and the North-West Territories 2 Vols. (Regina: Saskatchewan Historical Co., 1913); Adam Shortt and Arthur G. Doughty (eds.), Canada and Its Provinces: A History of the Canadian People and Their Institutions by One Hundred Associates Vols. 9 and 10, The Prairie Provinces, (Toronto: Brook and Company, 1914); John Hawkes, The Story of Saskatchewan and Its People 3 Vols., (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Pub. Co., 1924).

Saskatchewan: A History marked Saskatchewan's seventy-fifth anniversary; and in 1982 Don Kerr and Stan Hanson's Saskatoon, The First Century was published as a Saskatoon centennial project.<sup>101</sup> These volumes are celebrations of progress, tenacity and development. All three fit into the first or introductory/celebratory stage, giving just a slight nod to Saskatchewan women, but again only to "great" public women.

Two general histories of the western-Canadian region published in the early 1980s, one by J. Arthur Lower, the other by Gerald Friesen, follow the familiar pattern of generally overlooking women as historical actors.<sup>102</sup> It is interesting to note that Lower and Friesen mention most of the same "great" women as do the authors of the Saskatchewan histories and demonstrate the same indifference to women's contributions out of the public sphere and in their day-to-day lives of home and family responsibility. Lower's Western Canada: An Outline History is a chronicle of western settlement. There is little substance or analysis in this text. Friesen's The Canadian Prairies, A History is an analytic and eloquent synthesis of Canadian prairie scholarship. However, because of Friesen's emphasis on traditional western socio-economic development, women do not appear as significant actors. When he was writing Canadian Prairies scholars were only beginning to consider rural women as economic contributors. It was not until the publication of Marjorie Cohen's 1988 book Women's Work,

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<sup>101</sup>. J.F.C. Wright, Saskatchewan: The History of a Province, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Limited, 1955); John H. Archer, Saskatchewan: A History. (Saskatoon: Western Prairie Producer Books, 1980); and, Don Kerr & Stan Hanson, Saskatoon: The First Half-Century, (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1982).

<sup>102</sup>. Arthur J. Lower, Western Canada: An Outline History, (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1983); Gerald Friesen, The Canadian Prairies: A History, (Toronto: University Of Toronto Press, 1984).

Markets and Economic Development in Nineteenth-Century Ontario that scholars seriously analyzed women's activity in the market sphere.<sup>103</sup>

The scholarship of this first stage of Saskatchewan women's history in many respects mirrored the work being done by scholars in the wider Canadian context until the explosion of the "new" social history in the early 1970s.<sup>104</sup> Nationalism, regionalism, economic development and international affairs had previously occupied generations of Canadian historians, those in Saskatchewan included. Consequently, the resulting histories featured "great" men and women and their public activities. Saskatchewan history was no exception. But even after social history began to make an entrée into academic circles in other regions of Canada, historians of Saskatchewan women continued for some time to write stage one "great" persons history. Perhaps it was because examining public records and the public activities of men and women was much easier than reconstructing the lives of those whose lives were more obscure. Analysis of published writings of notable women, for example, was less complicated and complex than piecing together fragments of day-to-day living.

In only a few studies written during this first stage are women portrayed as primary agents or key players in Saskatchewan's history. There are, however, two topics that popular and academic historians have repeatedly reconsidered in which women are given a central role -- the story of the Barr Colonists who emigrated from England in 1903 totally unprepared for

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<sup>103</sup>. Marjorie Griffin Cohen, Women's Work, Market and Economic Development in Nineteenth Century Ontario, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988). Cohen argues that "economic growth brought women's productive efforts increasingly into the market sphere" (p. 10).

<sup>104</sup>. Carl Berger, The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing since 1900, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986).



their lives as homesteaders,<sup>105</sup> and the female suffrage campaign which culminated in the franchise for Saskatchewan women in 1916.<sup>106</sup> These two subjects have been examined in both the first and second stages of Saskatchewan women's history and thus serve as a bridge between the two stages.

The second stage of Saskatchewan women's history, that which examines separate spheres/women's culture, moves from general history texts mentioning only "great" individual women, to studies focusing on women as a group. In examining this stage it is evident that scholars of Saskatchewan women's history, like their British, American and other Canadian colleagues studying women's history, consciously or unconsciously compartmentalized Saskatchewan women's lives into the separate spheres paradigm of private (male) and public (female) domains. Accordingly, scholars incorporated the separate spheres framework into the early literature and research in Canadian women's history. The tendency of Canadian

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<sup>105</sup>. Stories of the Barr Colonists and the difficulties they encountered in transit and in settlement are popular in Saskatchewan folklore. It appears, however, that academic historians have largely left discussions of the Barr Colony to popular and amateur historians as there is not yet a critical treatment or analysis of the Colony. Mary Pinder Hiemstra, Gully Farm, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1955); Alice Rendell, "Letters From A Barr Colonist," in Alberta History Vol.11 No.1 (Winter 1963); and, Lynne Bowen, Muddling Through: The Remarkable Story of the Barr Colonists, (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1992).

<sup>106</sup>. Christine MacDonald, "How Saskatchewan Women Got the Vote," in Saskatchewan History Vol.1 No.3 (1948), pp. 1-8; Catherine Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974 [1950]); June Menzies, "Votes for Saskatchewan's Women," in Norman Ward and Duff Spafford, (eds.), Politics in Saskatchewan, (Toronto: Longmans Canada Limited, 1968), pp. 78-92; Carol Lee Bacchi, "Divided Allegiances: The Response of Farm and Labour Women to Suffrage," in Linda Kealey, (ed.), A Not Unreasonable Claim, Women and Reform in Canada 1800s-1920s, (Toronto: The Women's Educational Press, 1979), pp. 89-109. An edited version of this article appears in Bacchi's book, Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983).

historians working within the separate spheres model was to examine the subordination of women -- presenting women as victims of an unjust system or society -- or to celebrate women of extraordinary talent and determination who triumphed over exploitation. Saskatchewan scholars followed suit.

Early in the second, or separate spheres/women's culture stage, Saskatchewan women's history finally achieved a modicum of recognition as a serious scholarly pursuit. Historians began researching women and so-called women's topics largely in an effort to demonstrate that women were active historical actors in their own right. In this second stage, women became the focus; the province was secondary. Works by Grant MacEwan and Candace Savage are on the cusp between the first and second stages and thus exhibit characteristics of both stages.<sup>107</sup> Both authors definitely celebrate "great" public women but they also append the historical record which hitherto examined only women's suffrage and reform activities.

Memorabilia, clippings and biographical sketches were all part of the first wave of the separate spheres/women's culture stage as historians began to collect women's artifacts.<sup>108</sup> Authors also began writing biographies and autobiographies, both popular and academic,

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<sup>107</sup>. Grant MacEwan, ...and mighty women too: stories of notable western canadian women (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1975); Candace Savage, Foremothers: Personalities and Issues from the History of Women in Saskatchewan (n.p., 1975).

<sup>108</sup>. The best example is Linda Rasmussen, Lorna Rasmussen, Candace Savage and Anne Wheeler, A Harvest Yet to Reap: A History of Prairie Women (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1976). Although there is little analytic substance to this book, it continues to be an invaluable store of memorabilia. As the authors point out in the preface, "it is an overview of the history of white women on the Canadian prairie in the early years of agricultural settlement; it is a place to begin" (p. 8).

celebrating women in Saskatchewan and the other prairie provinces.<sup>109</sup> As scholars delved further into the archives and recovered works by prairie women, publication of collections of letters and writings followed.<sup>110</sup>

Many characteristics of the second stage of prairie women's history, separate spheres/women's culture, are evident in Susan Jackel's reprint of Georgina Binnie-Clark's Wheat and Women.<sup>111</sup> This book provides an example of the injustice/oppression genre of women's history, in particular how women were disadvantaged by legal constraints. Originally published in 1914, Binnie-Clark's book received little attention as growing interest in World War I overshadowed many less pressing issues -- including homesteading in the Canadian West. In 1979 Jackel reprinted Wheat and Women with the addition of her well-documented introduction which helps to place Binnie-Clark's experiences into historical context.

Wheat and Women is the second of two volumes written by Binnie-Clark about her life on the Saskatchewan prairies. The first, A Summer on the Canadian Prairie,<sup>112</sup> recounts

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<sup>109</sup>. For example, see: J.F.C. Wright, The Louise Lucas Story (Ottawa: The Runge Press, 1965); Fredelle Bruser Maynard, Raisins and Almonds (Toronto: Paperjacks, 1973); Ruth Matheson Buck, The Doctor Rode Side-Saddle (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974); and Edna Jacques, Uphill All the Way: The Autobiography of Edna Jacques (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1977).

<sup>110</sup>. For example see, Susan Jackel, (ed.), A Flannel Shirt & Liberty: British Emigrant Gentlewomen in the Canadian West, 1880-1914, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1982).

<sup>111</sup>. Georgina Binnie-Clark, Wheat and Women, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979[1914]).

<sup>112</sup>. Georgina Binnie-Clark, A Summer on the Canadian Prairies, (London: Edward Arnold, 1910).

how Binnie-Clark and her sister Hilaria first went to Canada on vacation to visit their brother who was homesteading, not very successfully, in the Saskatchewan Qu'Appelle Valley, north of Indian Head. Binnie-Clark wrote the first volume in the style of the popular travelogue books of the time. Wheat and Women begins where the first volume ends, covering the harvest of 1905 through the harvest of 1908. Her purpose in writing this book was to demonstrate "what men had done for themselves in agricultural pursuits on the prairie, women could also do for themselves."<sup>113</sup>

An important feature of second stage or women's culture/separate spheres studies is the examination of women's clubs and organizations. Until recently, most Saskatchewan women's organizations studied were those whose members were white and English-speaking. Among the urban organizations examined by historians are the Women's Christian Temperance Union, Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, the Young Women's Christian Association, the Regina Council of Women, and the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association.<sup>114</sup> Historians of Saskatchewan women have also shown increasing interest in rural women's associations. In the first or introductory/celebratory stage of Saskatchewan

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<sup>113</sup>. Ibid., 305

<sup>114</sup>. Nancy M. Sheehan, "The WCTU on the Prairies 1886-1930," Prairie Forum 6, 1 (1981): 17-33; Marcia A. McGovern, "The Women's Christian Temperance Union Movement in Saskatchewan 1886-1930: A Regional Perspective of the International White Ribbon Movement" (MA thesis, University of Regina 1977); Nadine Small, "'Stand By the Union Jack': The Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire in the Prairie Provinces During the Great War 1914-1918" (MA thesis, University of Saskatchewan 1989); Catherine Tomlinson Wylie, "'God's Own Cornerstones: Our Daughters': The Saskatoon YWCA 1910-1939" (MA thesis, University of Saskatchewan 1989); Janet Harvey, "The Regina Council of Women 1895-1925" (MA thesis, University of Regina 1991); Marguerite E. Robinson, The First Fifty Years (Sask. Registered Nurses Association, 1967).

women's history, authors focused on the largely male, central, provincial farmer organizations, only mentioning the formation of women's sections as auxiliaries to the central.<sup>115</sup> Historians writing during the second stage feature analyses of the separate women's farm organizations.<sup>116</sup> In these studies, authors recognize farm and rural women as active participants in rural communities. They no longer assume the women's sections are mere auxiliaries of male-dominated farmer associations.

Veronica Strong-Boag's 1986 examination of post-suffrage prairie feminism argues that feminism did not disappear in the 1920s but rather it shifted from public campaigns to women's issues in the private sphere.<sup>117</sup> Strong-Boag's analysis focuses on the popular organized farm women's associations. Farm and rural women's organizations were also studied by Georgina Taylor, who examined women in the Homemakers' Clubs, the WGGA and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, and by Aileen C. Moffatt, who analyzed

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<sup>115</sup>. Louis Aubrey Wood, A History of the Farmers' Movements in Canada, the Origins and Development of Agrarian Protest 1872-1924 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975(1924)); Harald S. Patton, Grain Growers' Cooperation in Western Canada (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928); Paul F. Sharp, The Agrarian Revolt in Canada, A Survey Showing Parallels (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1921); W.L. Morton, The Progressive Party in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950).

<sup>116</sup>. L.J. Wilson, "Educating the Saskatchewan Farmer: The Educational Work of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association", in Saskatchewan History Vol.31 No.1 (Winter 1978), pp. 20-33; R.G. Marchildon, "Improving the Quality of Life in Rural Saskatchewan: Some Activities of the Women's Section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers, 1913-1920", in D.C. Jones and Ian MacPherson, (eds.), Building Beyond the Homestead, (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1985), pp. 80-194.

<sup>117</sup>. Veronica Strong-Boag, "Pulling in Double Harness," 32-52

the Women's Section of the Canadian Council of Agriculture.<sup>118</sup> Both Taylor and Moffatt found that in the inter-war period rural women did not shy away from accepting public responsibilities. On the contrary, rural and farm women agitated for political, social and economic reforms that would benefit their various communities.

During the second or separate spheres/women's culture stage, historians examining Saskatchewan women's lives began publishing analytic studies instead of following in the style of the narratives of "great" women or events, stage one history. Every-day life of ordinary women became a central issue in scholarly debate.<sup>119</sup> Scholars have also turned to Saskatchewan labour history and the history of education in recent years in order to further

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<sup>118</sup>. Georgina Taylor, "'Should I Drown Myself Now or Later?': The Isolation of Rural Women in Saskatchewan and their Participation in the Homemakers' Clubs, The Farm Movement and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, 1910-1967," in Kathleen Storrie, ed., Women: Isolation and Bonding: The Ecology of Gender (Toronto: Methuen Publications, 1987), 79-100; Georgina Taylor, "Equals and Partners: An Examination of How Saskatchewan Women Reconciled Their Political Activities For the CCF With Traditional Roles For Women" (MA thesis, University of Saskatchewan 1983). On the Homemakers' Clubs, also see: Saskatchewan Women's Institutes, Legacy: A History of Saskatchewan Homemakers' Clubs and Women's Institutes 1911-1988 (Regina: Focus Publishing, 1988); and Aileen C. Moffatt, "'where the emphasis on sex was less': The Women's Section of the Canadian Council of Agriculture" (MA thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1990).

<sup>119</sup>. Mary Kinnear, "'Do you want your daughter to marry a farmer?': Women's Work on the Farm 1922", in Donald Akenson, (ed.), Canadian Papers in Rural History 6, (Gananoque Ont.: Langdale Press, 1986), pp. 137-53; Theresa Healy, "Prayers, Pamphlets and Protest: Women and Relief in Saskatoon 1929-1939", MA thesis, University of Saskatchewan 1989; Jacqueline Bliss, "Seamless Lives: Pioneer Women of Saskatoon 1883-1903", in Saskatchewan History Vol.43 No.3 (Autumn 1991), pp. 84-100; Angela E. Davis, "'Country Homemakers': The Daily Lives of Prairie Women as Seen Through the Women's Page of the Grain Growers' Guide 1908-1928", in Donald H. Akenson (ed.), Canadian Papers in Rural History 8, (Gananoque Ont.: Langdale Press, 1992), pp. 163-74; and, Angela E. Davis, "'Valiant Servants': Women and Technology on the Canadian Prairies 1910-1940", in Manitoba History Vol.25 (Spring 1993), pp. 33-42.

interpret Saskatchewan women's experiences.<sup>120</sup> These types of studies overlap the third stage of Saskatchewan women's history where women's diversity is featured. Some scholars are now testing more sophisticated methodological approaches and the field of study is widened to include more than just white, English-speaking women. However, historians have not generally incorporated cultural studies, gender studies or postmodern methods into historical scholarship of Saskatchewan women.

If historians are to recover the varied experiences of Saskatchewan's women, they can no longer rely only on traditional archival materials as historical evidence. The most important contribution historians of Saskatchewan women could make would be to draw parallels and make connections to regional, national and international developments not only in women's history per se, but in history writ large. Then will Saskatchewan women's history be valuable not only for its own sake, but also for what it can offer to scholars in an international context.

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<sup>120</sup>. Christine Smillie, "The Invisible Workforce: Women Workers in Saskatchewan From 1905 to World War II", in Saskatchewan History Vol.39 No.2 (Spring 1986), pp. 62-78; Apolonja Maria Kojder, "The Saskatoon Women Teacher's Association: A Demand for Recognition", in Saskatchewan History Vol.30 No.2 (Spring 1977), pp. 63-74; Sheilah Steer, "The Beliefs of Violet McNaughton: Adult Educator 1909-1929", Master of Continuing Education thesis, University of Saskatchewan 1979; Michael Hayden, "Women and the University of Saskatchewan: Patterns of a Problem", Saskatchewan History Vol.40 No.2 (Spring 1987), pp. 72-82; Kerrie Strathy, "Saskatchewan Women's Institutes: The Rural Woman's University 1911-1987", Master of Continuing Education thesis, University of Saskatchewan 1987; Irene Poelzer, Saskatchewan Women Teachers 1905-1920; Their Contributions (Saskatoon: Lindenblatt and Hamonic Publishing Ltd., 1990).

### Part III: Stereotypes, Romance & Landscapes

In reading the records, reminiscences, diaries and the like of Saskatchewan's pioneers, it is obvious that women often contributed a great deal to discussions about moving west. Earlier scholars studying settlers and pioneers tended to suggest that the male head of a household made the decision to relocate his family. A more recent generation of scholars have demonstrated that "not all women were dragged unwillingly to the prairies."<sup>121</sup> The highly romanticized stories of dutiful women following their men into the wilderness simply did not ring true. Rather, women who came to Saskatchewan as settlers, whether to towns or homesteads, most certainly had minds and wills of their own, which they exercised frequently, as this study will demonstrate.

Another stereotype of westering women commonly featured by an earlier generation of historians -- that of the desperate, or alternately, depressed settler woman -- has recently been found lacking. Frankly, not all women found living in the North West unbearable. Many had come with the intention of making the best of what Western Canada had to offer for themselves and their families. Additionally, not every woman was isolated or lonely. Small towns and communities flourished in many areas across the region. Both Indian Head and Rosetown, for example, developed a strong sense of community right from the start. Women were active and involved in economic, educational, religious and cultural initiatives. Their lives were full and rich.

The ideal, however, that was held up for rural women was that they could do just

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<sup>121</sup>. Carol Fairbanks & Sara Brooks, Farm Women on the Prairie Frontier: A Sourcebook for Canada and the United States, (Metuchen N.J.: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 1983), p. 42.



about anything at all and would love doing it. The helpmate image (woman as helper/subordinate to her husband/father) is pervasive in much of the early literature about the Canadian West, from autobiographical accounts to scholarly interpretations. The Canadian Frontiers of Settlement Series, for example, published between 1934 and 1940 provides instances of scholars labelling and categorizing women (when mentioned at all) as helpmates. Using this important Series as a starting point subsequent scholars perpetuated the myths therein; men were farmers, women were happy and able helpers. It was not until the 1980s that historians began to challenge the helpmate image.<sup>122</sup>

Scholars are not alone in employing a romanticized characterization of rural women's roles. Women themselves often recorded their experiences using language that suggested a romantic, idealized life which did not reflect their actual situation. Carolyn Heilbrun argues that women have long suppressed the realities of their lives because it was not "womanly" or "seemly", on the one hand to complain, or on the other to boast.<sup>123</sup> The forms available to women writers, the acceptable patterns and models, forced women into specific narrative styles. Accordingly, much of the pioneer literature -- reminiscences, memoirs, diaries and the like -- follow the same highly romanticized and sentimental format. Even women's oral histories may follow a similar format and gloss over experiences by painting them in a

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<sup>122</sup>. Other common representations of rural women include the drudge, the Victorian lady or the illustrious pioneer heroine. Jacqueline Bliss challenges all of these stereotypes of Saskatchewan's rural women in "Seamless Lives: Pioneer Women of Saskatoon 1883-1903", in Saskatchewan History Vol. XLIII No.3 (Autumn 1991), pp. 84-100. Bliss suggests aspects of all of these characterizations of women blended to give pioneer women "seamless lives".

<sup>123</sup>. Carolyn G. Heilbrun, Writing a Woman's Life, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988).

romantic hue. For example, many respondents in this study suggested that their mothers' lives were busy and often difficult, but that their mother took it all in stride. Alice Light "[tried] to imagine her mother's feelings when she saw the new home that she was to live in ... so different from the nice wallpapered home she had left. We never heard her complain though."<sup>124</sup> Joan T. proudly claimed of her grandmother that "she was a determined lady and decided she was going to make the best of it."<sup>125</sup> Shirley Keyes Thompson punctuates her memoirs with nostalgic observations such as: "If eight years of unadulterated striving hadn't given me riches, the experience did give me a more wholesome and charitable mind set ..."<sup>126</sup>

Romanticized statements are far more common in descriptions of women's experiences during the settlement period than of later years. However, this is not to suggest that all women wrote only happy or uplifting accounts of their family's experiences. Mary Pinder Hiemstra recalled her mother's difficulties: "... Mother often said she wished she was a bigger and stronger woman. But she never wished she liked Canada, there were too many hardships, though sometimes it almost seemed as if she was glad of the difficulties and the irritation. Every new obstacle was another good reason for going home."<sup>127</sup> Hiemstra's account, although written in a child's voice, was composed when the author was an adult. One wonders what kind of account her mother would have written in 1903 when she arrived from

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<sup>124</sup>. Alice Light Memoirs, SAB, A211, p. 7.

<sup>125</sup>. Joan T., personal interview, April 1993.

<sup>126</sup>. Shirley Keyes Thompson, "A Prairie Wife's Tale", in Saskatchewan History Vol. XLIV No.1 (Winter 1992), p. 23.

<sup>127</sup>. Mary Hiemstra, Gully Farm, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1955), p. 173. The Hiemstra family came West as Barr Colonists in 1903.

England.

Often the first settlers into an area would write to family "at home" and encourage others to join them in the West. Margaret Liggett's parents, for example, moved from the United States to be near her uncle in Humbolt,<sup>128</sup> and George Pocklington's brother-in-law had settled in Saskatchewan before George arrived in 1906.<sup>129</sup> Harry Moffatt came west from Riceville, Ontario after a hired farm man who had been west, told Harry of his experiences.<sup>130</sup> Harry and his family settled in Rosetown in 1914; his mother-in-law joined them there several years later. Those people who came to Saskatchewan because of personal recommendations, helped to establish or contribute to extended kinship networks that linked past to present while concurrently forming, creating and developing new identities and social landscapes that fit their new rural Saskatchewan home. They had to rebuild their images of self and society because, as William Westfall concluded of nineteenth century Ontario, "social change challenged the patterns of cultural explanation ... tensions of this type forced the culture to search within itself for new ways of explaining a new world."<sup>131</sup>

Indian Head and Rosetown, as will be determined in this study, were very much alike in some ways, yet were somewhat different in others. Social identities were, however, almost identical. The foundation of Indian Head society was laid in the last twenty years of the

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<sup>128</sup>. Margaret W. Liggett, SAB, S-X2,Q#2.

<sup>129</sup>. George Pocklington, SAB,S-X2,Q#2.

<sup>130</sup>. Doreen Calvert, "History of Sec 35-29-16 W 3rd", in Ridpath Community and Club 1906-1982.

<sup>131</sup>. William Westfall, Two Worlds; The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth Century Ontario, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queens Press, 1989), p. 16.

nineteenth century and was influenced by wealthy British landowners. Rosetown, on the other hand, was settled by individual settlers and their families during a period of rapid growth twenty to twenty-five years later than was Indian Head. Not only was the social structure different in the settlement phase of each, but the communities were of two different generations -- the first heavily influenced by the Victorian era, the latter by a modernizing and maturing rural Saskatchewan society. Yet, "Woman", the undeniably dominant female identity in the period 1880-1950, emerged simultaneously in both communities. As long as the fundamentals were there -- white, English-speaking, educated and preferably protestant -- the meaning and definition of "Woman" evolved with the changing social and physical landscape. It was a fluid identity that was molded on the one hand to include the wide range of often rugged experiences rural women faced daily, and on the other hand to allow these same females to still be considered genteel, feminine, and even cosmopolitan, but above all, "Women".

## **CHAPTER II: Introductions; Characterizing Indian Head & Rosetown**

### **Part I: Oral History as Evidence**

A.C. Moffatt: "I'm interested in what it was like to be a woman in Indian Head, what it was like to work here, to grow up, to raise a family, what you learned at school. And I understand Indian Head had quite an active social life, a lot of ladies' clubs and theatre and choral groups. I'd like to know about things like that; what you thought about the health care. I understand there were some very good doctors. So just whatever your life was like in those years; whatever you have to tell me."

Nan Q.: "That goes back a long way (chuckles)."

Morris Q.: "Back to the dark ages!"<sup>1</sup>

#### **A. The Oral History Project**

Oral history is prominently featured in this study. The conclusions herein are based upon a reading of primary and secondary material but also, and more importantly, upon interviews with 54 individuals who had first-hand knowledge of the very identity changes that I wished to study. My intention was to have a series of conversations with residents of two rural communities of British heritage so that I might get at that information which is more personal and certainly more colourful than data gleaned from official documents, newspapers and such. As this is a study of identities, I wanted to speak to people about where they thought they came from and have them explain their lives to me. I wanted to hear their stories, not just read them, because so much of history is, in fact, in the telling.

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<sup>1</sup>. Nan Q. and Morris Q., personal interview, February 1993.

Oral history has not always been a favourite tool of historians. Many scholars are wary of the "stories" their subjects tell because of the possibility of fictionalizing or falsifying of accounts. These are legitimate concerns. However, when oral history is matched with empirical data, or when "stories" are corroborated through the "normal" processes of historical inquiry, oral history adds a richness to a project that otherwise would not be available.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, oral history led me to information that would not have been otherwise available from other sources. For these reasons I decided to "do" oral history. It was the appeal of the story, the texture, if you will, that I hoped oral history would bring to my project.

The interviews I conducted were not highly structured. I quickly discovered that such a format was not conducive to open dialogue. I had a very long list of questions prepared in case I needed them in order to prompt a respondent, but more often than not, I opened the interview with "where did your family come from" and that was sufficient to get people talking. I did have a specific agenda that I hoped to address but I generally let the respondent talk freely and sometimes wander off topic because often those were the moments where information came to the fore that I may not have asked about.

Respondents were asked to talk about their family heritage; when ancestors arrived; where they came from. I asked them about their own lives, their childhood, education, marriage,

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<sup>2</sup>. For theoretical discussions of the pros and cons of "doing" oral history see: Joan Sangster, "Telling Our Stories: feminist debates and the use of oral history", in Women's History Review Vol.3 No.1 (1994), pp. 5-28; Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai (eds.), Women's Words, The Feminist Practice of Oral History, (New York: Routledge, 1991); The Personal Narratives Group (eds.), Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).

family, social life, health care, religion, and paid employment. I also asked them to talk about the area, the town and how they thought it had changed. Most were asked how their life (or wife's life) was different from their mother's. Some respondents replied with intricately detailed answers; others did not. Some required prodding; others talked on and on. Overall, however, these were conversations over tea or lunch in the respondent's home. Even with the tape recorder placed directly in front of the respondent, few people were hesitant to answer my questions.<sup>3</sup>

Most respondents were between the ages of 70 and 95 years of age when I met them and had lived in Indian Head or Rosetown most of their lives. They had not grown up in remote locales but rather, had lived on a farm close enough to town that the family was able to make the weekly Saturday trip into town for shopping and visiting. After completing High School (or at least grade 11), the majority went to "the city" to take some kind of job training, whether that was at normal school, secretarial school, or in a nursing program. After a few years of living away from home, they returned to their rural roots, married and settled into life as a wife and mother.

The respondents to the Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB) questionnaires recalled an earlier period than did the people I interviewed. Most were born during the 1870s and 1880s and had come west from Ontario or Britain as homesteaders. They were,

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<sup>3</sup>. I also tried using a questionnaire that was to be given to women in both towns whom I had not been able to interview for one reason or another. In Indian Head the questionnaire was distributed through the Friendly Neighbours Club (after I had completed the oral history interviews) and only 13 women responded. It seems that I had already spoken to most of the women in town who were likely to be interested in participating in my project. In Rosetown (again after I had completed my interviews) the questionnaire was to be distributed by a local woman; however, none were given out.

in most cases, the parents of the women I interviewed in 1993.

## **B. Selection of Case Study Sites**

Indian Head and Rosetown were chosen as case studies for a variety of reasons. First, I wanted two communities that were primarily British in heritage because those were the people I wanted to examine. Second, I did not want two communities that were neighbours. I hoped to be able to see what similarities there might be in two communities of similar heritage that were not side by side. I, therefore, selected one in the eastern part of the province (Indian Head) and one further to the west (Rosetown). Also, both towns were approximately the same distance from a larger centre (Indian Head and Regina; Rosetown and Saskatoon).

Several practical reasons also influenced my choice of communities. People in Indian Head are deeply committed to heritage preservation and I expected to find an audience receptive to my project; I was right. Only ten years earlier, the Indian Head local history book project had generated a great deal of interest in local history. Residents (past and present) worked together researching their collective and individual histories with tremendous zeal. Additionally, during the fall/winter of 1992-93, Indian Head participated in a Saskatchewan government-sponsored pilot program which identified towns around the province as "heritage sites". At these sites residents were asked to identify records of historical relevance, for example the minute books of the Women's Missionary Society of St. Andrews Church, and record their findings which would subsequently be catalogued in the provincial archives. When I came to Indian Head in January of 1993, this project was



well underway and I benefitted from their sleuthing. Also, through this project, I was introduced to people with an interest in local history who subsequently helped me to establish leads and schedule interviews with long-term residents. This committee also placed a story in the local newspaper describing my work (with my picture included) so residents were immediately aware of who I was and what I was doing. This proved to be enormously helpful; not only was I not a complete "stranger" any more, I was perceived as being as interested in them as they were in themselves.

Rosetown, on the other hand, was a different story. It too had been targeted as a potential "heritage site" for the provincial heritage pilot project but due to lack of community interest the project was not undertaken there. Rosetown also had not done an extensive local history book during the 1980s as had so many other Saskatchewan communities. The town did establish a formal archives in the Rosetown Library and actively collected local history (in particular this archives has an extensive photograph and newspaper collection), but Rosetown residents did not demonstrate the same level of commitment to local history as did people in Indian Head. Still, I remained interested in Rosetown for personal reasons; my grandparents had homesteaded near there and my father had grown up in town. Although no Moffatts have lived in Rosetown for over thirty years and I did not personally know anyone in town, my family name did open doors for me. I was able to develop relationships with persons who remembered the Moffatts and who subsequently introduced me to other long-term area residents.

## Part II: Settling In; Community and Characters

"My parents came to Toronto expecting to meet friends but they never met. However, they did meet the manager of the Sask. Land & Homestead Co. who easily persuaded them that Crescent Lake, Assiniboia, NWT, was a modern 'Garden of Eden'. All it needed was some Adams and Eves with some kids to make good measure. Also you could get 160 acres for a homestead for \$10.00 and some easy conditions." Frank Baines<sup>4</sup>

### A. Community

Dreams of a "garden of eden" lured hundreds of thousands of persons, like the Baines family above, into the area of the North West Territories that later became Saskatchewan. Promises of free homesteads and wide open spaces with clean air and water were tied to visions of prosperity and financial success. Buoyed by land companies, railroad propagandists and expansionist mythmakers, men, women and children made their way into what they hoped would be their land of opportunity. Fannie S. Dunlop noted

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<sup>4</sup>. Baines continued: "After a long and tedious journey we arrived at Broadview. A man and a team of horses from Crescent met us there and we left early the next morning ... Late in the afternoon [two days later] some tents appeared in the distance. 'We'll soon be there. That must be someone from the city having a picnic.' 'Yes' said the driver, 'they're sure having a picnic.' Soon he drove beside an empty tent and said 'here's where you get out.' 'Oh no, said father, 'we must get on to the city.' (Our few belongings were addressed to Crescent City.) 'Well, this is Crescent City.' Five tents and one log shanty with a sod roof." To add to the family's distress there was rain and a thunderstorm the evening of their arrival in "Crescent City". Baines wrote, "mother was in despair. 'Will there be a flood? Wolves last night and water tonight. What a country." Frank Baines, Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB), Saskatchewan Archives Questionnaires (S-X2), Questionnaire #2 (Q#2).

that "my dad and mother were thoroughly disgusted with the place as the black flies, bull dog mosquitos and gnats were in such abundance and the early frosts got the grain crops yearly and winters were so cold and we suffered so much loneliness and privations that they made up their minds to go back to Arkansas but under such circumstances it was impossible as there was no money and no one to buy what we had to sell so we had to stay and make the best of it and as father was a good provider, after a few years he made good."<sup>5</sup>

Immigration into the West did not happen all at once, nor did it occur in a uniform fashion. According to Gerald Friesen, there were five "infusions" of European immigrants into the Canadian prairies.<sup>6</sup> The first European immigrants came with the fur trade. The second infusion came west following Confederation. These were mostly British-Canadians who "established a new, Ontario-like agricultural community."<sup>7</sup> Buoyed by the National Policy, permanent settlement became a central tenet of expansion into the North West. It was during this second infusion that Indian Head was settled. The third infusion

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<sup>5</sup>. Fannie S. Dunlop, SAB, S-X2. Q#2.

<sup>6</sup>. Gerald Friesen, The Canadian Prairies, A History, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), pp. 244-245.

<sup>7</sup>. Ibid., p. 245. Additionally, Kenneth Norrie, in paraphrasing Vernon Fowke, states, "The clear intent [of the National Policy] ... was to reproduce something akin to the commercial and industrial prosperity enjoyed during the agricultural development of Ontario in the first half of the century, or to the American boom that was so readily attributed to the continuous expansion of western settlement in that country. The Canadian West was to be the new agricultural frontier." V.C. Fowke, "The National Policy - Old and New" in Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science Vol. 18. No.3, (August 1952), pp. 271-286, cited in Kenneth H. Norrie, "The National Policy and the Rate of Prairie Settlement: A Review", in R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer (eds.), The Prairie West, Historical Readings, (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1985), p. 237.

to the West, 1897-1913, was the largest, attracting a variety of immigrants from around the world; British, Canadian, American and continental Europeans were most numerous. It was during this infusion that the Rosetown district was settled. The fourth infusion, which occurred during the 1920s, was largely an extension of the third. The fifth infusion came after World War II. In Saskatchewan, most homestead land in the south was settled during the second and third infusions, as was the case with Indian Head in the 1880s and Rosetown in the decade after 1904.

Many people moving West during the second infusion -- the period in which Indian Head was settled -- were influenced by the Canadian expansionist movement.<sup>8</sup> According to Doug Owsram, prior to 1856 the North West was dismissed in the provinces of the United Canadas as desolate and suited only to the fur trade. However, with the rise of Canadian imperialism, railroad construction and increased inland exploration, the North West gradually was reinterpreted not only as suitable but desirable for settlement. Expansionism and the dream of a coast-to-coast Canadian nation was popularized. John Laidlaw's family, travelling from Scotland to the Grenfell District of Saskatchewan in 1882, like the Baines family (above) who came from England in 1883, were among the British immigrants who were subsequently convinced that the Canadian North West was destined for settlement. Laidlaw recalled, "my father learned of the West through propaganda spread by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company in a gigantic advertising campaign to lure settlers to the prairies. The picture painted in the advertisements was far

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<sup>8</sup>. Doug Owsram, Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West 1856-1900, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).

from truthful."<sup>9</sup>

Doug Owram concludes that expansion into the North West was fuelled by central Canadians seeking an economic and cultural hinterland. Some of the expansionists' political goals, he argues, were met when Canada acquired the North West and the Canadian Pacific Railway was completed. But, as Owram found, the expansionist movement was in decline by the end of the century. Settlers were disillusioned when they found reality did not live up to the utopian myths touted by expansionists and nationalists.

The third infusion of settlers into the prairies, 1897-1913 -- the period in which Rosetown was settled -- was the result of Minister of the Interior Clifford Sifton's campaign to populate the Canadian West with farmers. Although there had been a steady stream of immigrants throughout the second infusion, including those moving into Indian Head, by 1895 the number of settlers of European origin remained modest. There were many reasons why people had not raced into the North West Territories to claim a piece of the expansionists' dream. First, was the availability of more productive American land. Many immigrants preferred to take their chances in the American West instead of Canada because, as Kenneth Norrie argues, American land was sub-humid while Canadian land was semi-arid.<sup>10</sup> After the mid 1890s, however, the supply of free American land was exhausted and Canadian land became more desirable. Second, grain prices were very low due to a world-wide depression, making farming a less than desirable undertaking. And,

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<sup>9</sup>. John Laidlaw, SAB, S-X2, Q#2.

<sup>10</sup>. Kenneth H. Norrie, "The National Policy and the Rate of Prairie Settlement: A Review", pp. 242-243.

third, the myths extolled by the expansionists were by definition unrealistic and settlers discovered that conditions in their new homes were quite unlike what they had expected to find. Word of their hardships and disillusionment inevitably reached friends and relatives at home. After 1896, however, the price of wheat rose and new technology and agricultural practices (in particular dry farming techniques) were introduced, making farming on the Canadian prairie appear less risky and potentially more profitable.<sup>11</sup>

Campaigns to lure settlers into the North West were not only aimed at men; women too were targeted as would-be colonizers. If Canada was going to be "a nation of homes,"<sup>12</sup> meaning a nation of families, women too had to be convinced that they would be travelling to hospitable and potentially familiar surroundings. Propaganda directed specifically at women settlers was featured by both government and private immigration companies. The advertising poster employed by the White Star Line (shipping) in Britain, for example, reading "Canada's Call to Women," epitomized the contemporary Anglo domestic vision popularly associated with middle-class British and British-Canadian society. The poster features a smiling, young woman baking pie. The window in front of her opens onto a field where a group of men are harvesting a bountiful crop of wheat. In

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<sup>11</sup>. Ibid., p. 238.

<sup>12</sup>. Emily P. Weaver, Canada and the British Immigrant, (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1914), p. 275. Weaver writes: "...the fact remains that there is a need for the coming out to Canada for a good type of girls, more in proportion than at present to the numbers of the male immigrants, if the Dominion is to be, in accord with the best Anglo-Saxon ideals, a nation of homes."

the background is a village with a church spire rising above the other buildings.<sup>13</sup> Clearly, in this homey scene, the woman is pleased with her situation. The images in this poster suggest to other women that in relocating to Canada they would find a pleasing and familiar environment.

Some settlers were more fortunate than others when selecting their homestead. Many had no idea of what kind of situation they were coming to. Lucky settlers moved to areas where the soil was fertile, water abundant, trees numerous, and supplies available within a reasonable distance. Others were not so fortunate. Some found their homesteads completely isolated, the land unsuited to farming, and a dearth of trees from which to obtain shelter and fuel. Hugh T. speculated about his family's decision to come to the Rosetown area: "I don't think it was really exciting. Of course the new frontier, and you know, you're living in England and you're going to live in western Canada with the Indians and all this sort of malarkey, so when you come out and find that there's no Indians, down here anyway and it's not glamorous at all, in fact it's a damn drudgery place, no running water, no toilets, you name it."<sup>14</sup>

Water was a problem for many homesteaders -- either there was too much, or there was none at all; it was of poor quality, or it was very difficult to locate. Suzanne Taylor of Turtleford remembered hauling water "five miles from a spring the first summer on the homestead (1903). My brother and I went nearly every day."<sup>15</sup> Jean L. of

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<sup>13</sup>. The poster is described as shown at the Mariner's Museum in Newport News, Virginia.

<sup>14</sup>. Hugh T., personal interview, May 1993.

Rosetown recalled that "shortly after we came we dug our own well on the farm, by hand with a windlass and of course they put cribbing to prevent it from falling in on them and then a pick and shovel down the bottom of the well and put that dirt in and then they'd wind up the windlass. They went down 100 feet before they hit water. Doc Myers said that the water wouldn't do us any harm and we never needed a laxative ..."<sup>16</sup>

Not everyone who came to the North West intended to relocate there permanently. Some people expected to prove up their land and sell at a profit, or make their fortunes in retail or some other enterprise and return home. Western Canada, they believed, that land of dreams, was going to make them wealthy. However, events generally conspired against get-rich-quick schemes. Annetta Foley of Dubuc recounted that "my parents heard glowing stories about how a fortune could be made by anyone who was not afraid of work and isolation."<sup>17</sup> John Laidlaw recalled that, "my father like many others thought that in a few years he would be sufficiently well-off to retire and live back in the Old Land."<sup>18</sup> Similar hopes were echoed by Susan Tucker of Craik who explained that she and her husband came to Saskatchewan "to get rich quick and return to the store business. We hoped each and the next year would be our lucky year. Each year was worse than the next -- drought, rust, grasshoppers; [we] had poor sandy soil. We planted more wheat some

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<sup>15</sup>. Mrs. Suzanne Taylor, SAB, S-X2, Q#2.

<sup>16</sup>. Jean L., personal interview, June 1993.

<sup>17</sup>. Annetta Foley, SAB, S-X2, Q#2.

<sup>18</sup>. John Laidlaw, SAB, S-X2, Q#2.



years than we harvested."<sup>19</sup>

Homesteaders in the areas that would become Indian Head and Rosetown did, however, find excellent farming land as the expansionists and propagandists had promised. Three geographic areas are found in Saskatchewan -- forest in the north, parkland further south, and prairie in the most southern areas. Parkland is the most desirable as farmland. The forest area is part of the Canadian shield, heavily wooded, cold and rocky. The prairie region is less fertile, particularly in some of the more arid regions of Palliser's Triangle. A soil survey of the Rosetown area in 1944 indicated that the area "consists of heavy textured soils developed on clay which was deposited in the beds of former glacial lakes. These soils are highly productive and exhibit exceptional resistance to drought." The report describes the land as having a "smooth topography, high percentage of arable land and absence of stones."<sup>20</sup> The glacial lake in the Indian Head area left clay and silt deposits that resulted in "a very dark brown heavy textured soil of the park zone, mostly of smooth topography and free from stones."<sup>21</sup>

Indian Head was settled in the 1880s; Rosetown approximately twenty years later. Located sixty-five kilometers east of Regina, Indian Head was first surveyed in 1882. The

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<sup>19</sup>. Susan Tucker, SAB, S-X2, Q#2.

<sup>20</sup>. J. Mitchell, H.C. Moss, & J.S. Clayton, Soil Survey Report No.12, (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 1944), pp. 98-100. Cited in Arthur Frederick Broadbridge, "The History of Rosetown 1904-1939", M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1949, p. 3.

<sup>21</sup>. College of Agriculture, University of Saskatchewan, Studies of Farm Indebtedness and Financial Progress of Saskatchewan Farmers, Report No.3, Agricultural Extension Bulletin No. 68, November 1935.

railroad also came to Indian Head in 1882 making it easily accessible to settlers. Yet it was not individual homesteaders who were primarily responsible for Indian Head's early growth. A large "bonanza" farm -- the Bell Farm -- was established just as settlers and homesteaders were beginning to move into the Qu'Appelle Valley. Consequently, Indian Head developed very differently from its neighbouring municipalities. Instead of small individual homesteads, the Indian Head area grew out of one man's vision for an extensive farm, owned by shareholders, and employing hundreds of workers of British heritage. Even though this enterprise, known as the Bell Farm, failed before the turn of the century, its legacy and in particular the social patterns established in the Indian Head area during its operation, influenced local society for another fifty years.

The Bell Farm was established in May 1882 by Major William Robert Bell, originally of Brockville, Ontario. Major Bell arrived in the Qu'Appelle region in 1881 scouting for land for a large-scale farming operation.<sup>22</sup> Shortly thereafter he persuaded Canadian and British investors to finance the Qu'Appelle Valley Farming Company.<sup>23</sup> The Company purchased a block of land "ten miles square, extending seven miles north and three miles south of what is now Indian Head."<sup>24</sup> This included 23,000 acres of

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<sup>22</sup>. Bell is reported to have walked from Brandon, Manitoba, along the proposed route of the Canadian Pacific Railway until he selected a suitable site. He had some previous experience with large-scale farming at the Bell-Kelso Farm in Minnesota. W.A. Waiser, "W.R. Bell", draft entry, DCB XIV, (forthcoming, University of Toronto Press).

<sup>23</sup>. The Board of Directors included Edgar Dewdney, Lieutenant Governor of the North West Territories. Bell was manager of the farm and held the largest number of shares, 1100 of 6000 shares.

<sup>24</sup>. Indian Head: History of Indian Head and District, (Indian Head: History of Indian Head and District Inc., 1984), p. 60.

government land and 29,111 acres from the CPR.<sup>25</sup> The arrangement Bell made with the government was that by fall, 1888, 128 families would be in place on each township (288 families in total), 20,000 acres would be under crop, and \$60,000 would be spent on farm improvements.<sup>26</sup> However, some of the land had already been claimed by squatters who had expected it to be granted to them as homesteads. Law suits were filed that eventually resulted in the Bell Farm paying out a \$7125 cash settlement to the squatters to reimburse them for improvements they had made. The Farm thus got off to a tenuous start and, unfortunately, its financial difficulties only increased from that point.

The Bell Farm was subdivided into plots of 213 acres. Two-thirds of each plot was to be cultivated yearly. Despite the financial problems that plagued the operation, plans for expansion went ahead. Bell oversaw the construction of seventy buildings including a grist mill. Subsequently Bell also purchased the Indian Head townsite where an elevator was established. Early in 1885, prior to the military campaign at Batoche, Bell travelled to England to promote the Farm and to recruit students for a proposed agricultural college to be built at Indian Head.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, when the uprising began, much of the manpower from the farm (including Major Bell) was channelled into the military effort and the Bell Farm suffered enormously. Only 1,000 of the planned 8,000 acres were seeded that summer.

In 1885 the Farm refinanced and sold the townsite and some land for an

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<sup>25</sup>. E.C. Morgan, "The Bell Farm", in Saskatchewan History, (Spring 1966), p. 42.

<sup>26</sup>. Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>27</sup>. No agricultural college was ever created.

experimental farm to the federal government. Then, in 1886, Bell sold most of the original Farm to the Bell Farm Company Limited.<sup>28</sup> The Company's financial difficulties continued and in 1889 it was liquidated on the orders of the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories. Major Bell, who had continued farming independently of the Company on 13,000 of his own acres, secured an additional 19,700 acres from the Company's Scottish investors at the time of the liquidation. He then immediately transferred 7,000 acres to the Canadian Co-operative Colonization Company founded by Englishman Lord Brassey.<sup>29</sup> Bell tried to carry on his "bonanza" farming scheme but was unsuccessful. Fire, low wheat prices, and poor crops once again placed his operation in extreme financial difficulty. His personal life was no less tragic as his wife Catherine died in October 1895. In 1896, the final blow came when the Scottish investors sued Bell for \$125,000 and Bell's land and property were sold in settlement of the suit. Major Bell left Indian Head in 1896. He travelled to England, eventually remarried, and returned to live in Winnipeg where he held a seat on the Winnipeg Grain and Produce Exchange.

The Canadian Co-operative Colonization Company, formed by Lord Brassey, had also acquired land from the Bell Farm Company at the time the first venture was liquidated. Brassey's interests are reported to have been philanthropic in nature and were focused on encouraging poor persons from Britain to settle in the North West.<sup>30</sup> Brassey

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<sup>28</sup>. Shareholders were Major Bell, E.J. Eberts, and William Boyle of New York.

<sup>29</sup>. Thomas Brassey was the First Earl of Brassey, a member of the English Parliament, and a diplomat (Governor of Victoria, Australia).

<sup>30</sup>. Indian Head: This History of Indian Head and District, pp. 63-66.

was in residence at Indian Head only periodically (he hired managers from England to work on-site), but his presence was widely felt due to his on-going interest in the community's social and religious life.

The Brassey Estate survived only until 1895 when Lord Brassey began to dispose of his property.<sup>31</sup> Although his colonization scheme had failed, Brassey maintained a relationship with Indian Head by constructing St. John's Anglican church, a Bishop's residence (which served as the home of Bishop of the Diocese of Qu'Appelle until 1911), and a creamery. Brassey's greatest influence on Indian Head society, however, came with the reinforcement of British cultural and social practices during his tenure. Unlike stories told of other rural Saskatchewan communities where informality was said to be more the norm, Indian Head maintained a strict social hierarchy for several generations.

High society, or at least the pretence of it, began with the first residents. Influenced by Major Bell, Lord Brassey, and other wealthy investors, some members of the Indian Head community tried to reconstruct and maintain a British or British-Canadian upper class society on the prairie. Major William and Catherine Bell, for example, set the standard not only for the Bell Farm, but for the entire district. And what a lavish standard it was. The Qu'Appelle Vidette assiduously reported the Bell's comings and goings and

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<sup>31</sup>. The Bell Farm and Brassey Estate are integral to Indian Head's history. Although the "bonanza" farm was a financial failure and possibly discouraged independent settlement, it attracted business and prospective employees to the area. Many of the locals were pleased when the Farm was broken up. E.C. Morgan reports that the Qu'Appelle Vidette "claimed the action would benefit the town and district by enabling small farms to be established." (p. 59) However, as Morgan notes, the Farm had brought much attention to the Indian Head area and had demonstrated "the fertility and productivity of the prairie soil when this fact was still little recognized in the outside world." (p. 60). From the Qu'Appelle Vidette May 28, 1896; cited in E.C. Morgan, "The Bell Farm".

always took care to mention the "honoured guests" who frequented the Farm. Lieutenant Governor Dewdney and his wife, in particular, visited often and the Bells, in turn, journeyed to Regina to visit the Dewdneys.<sup>32</sup> Some years, during the winter months, the Bells travelled further afield. The Vidette announced in December 1884 that the Bells had "gone south for the winter."<sup>33</sup> Happily, the following April, the Vidette reported that "Major Bell returned to Indian Head last Saturday from the Old Country,"<sup>34</sup> presumably as a result of the North West uprising.

"The Old Country" was a euphemism for Britain. Even though many of the people moving into the Indian Head district were Canadian, Britain was their "homeland." This was not, of course, unique to residents of Indian Head; such sentiments were commonplace among most Canadians of British heritage. The Vidette took special note of visitors from Britain, stating in July 1885, for example, that "two families from the Old Country arrived here on Monday night and we hope they will locate in our neighbourhood."<sup>35</sup>

Balls, parties, concerts, and celebrations were common occurrences in the Indian Head district. On New Year's Eve 1884 a ball was held at the Commercial Hotel that was

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<sup>32</sup>. Major Bell, supported by Lt. Governor Dewdney, ran unsuccessfully in the 1883 election seeking a seat on the Council of the North West Territories.

<sup>33</sup>. The Qu'Appelle Vidette, December 25, 1884.

<sup>34</sup>. Ibid., April 2, 1885.

<sup>35</sup>. Ibid., July 16, 1885.

billed as "the ball of the season."<sup>36</sup> Less than a month later the Vidette reported that "all our young folks went for a sleigh ride and attended the concert and ball at Katepwa on Tuesday evening."<sup>37</sup> A cricket club was formed in 1885, as was a chess club and a curling club. In June 1885, the Vidette announced that "the race track is being put in order and everybody is preparing to celebrate the First in grand style."<sup>38</sup> The following year plans for a boat club were stymied when "both the Bell Farm and town dams on Spring Creek broke."<sup>39</sup> Such class-based activities were popular in Indian Head and helped to establish a social hierarchy that locals adhered to well into the twentieth century.

Nettie N. tried to explain Indian Head society. In her experience she found that "Indian Head is not a classic small town, prairie town. They ... were really trying to be as English as they could."<sup>40</sup> The upper echelons of society played polo, tennis and cricket, organized shooting parties, staged operas and operettas, held formal balls and society teas. Women had their calling days when they invited their circle to tea. As Mrs. M.M. Whyte explained, "a lot of the ladies had their day for callers once a month. Calling ladies left their card and two of their husband's cards. Hats and gloves were a necessity for all occasions."<sup>41</sup> The ladies' calling days seem to have continued until sometime during the

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<sup>36</sup>. Ibid., December 25, 1884.

<sup>37</sup>. Ibid., January 29, 1885.

<sup>38</sup>. Ibid., June 25, 1885.

<sup>39</sup>. Ibid., April 15, 1886.

<sup>40</sup>. Nettie N., personal interview, February 1993.

<sup>41</sup>. Mrs. M.M. Whyte, SAB, S-X2, Q#5.

1920s.<sup>42</sup> Of course, this level of society did not include all of the local women. Former resident R.C. Sanderson noted that "there were in Indian Head some people who felt themselves better than others and just called amongst themselves."<sup>43</sup> Ivy E., a local farm woman, expressed her opinion in a most vehement fashion when she proclaimed, "as for me, I would never go and call [on relatives in town], that's for sure, because I knew I wasn't wanted."<sup>44</sup>

The first Indian Head town council was appointed in 1884. In 1902 the town of Indian Head was incorporated as a separate municipality. The town's population at that time was approximately 1000 persons and the businesses included numerous services, stores, clubs and hotels.<sup>45</sup> There were five churches (Presbyterian, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Methodist and Anglican), five general stores, three hardware stores, a drugstore, a jeweller, a furniture store, two lumber yards, a bakery, two barbers, a tailor, four hotels and several real estate agents. There were also implement dealers, restaurants, clothing stores, carpenters, a harness-maker, a shoe maker, and a flour mill.<sup>46</sup> In 1904 A.J.

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<sup>42</sup>. Nettie N., personal interview, February 1993. It is interesting to note that this respondent, who moved to Indian Head during the 1920s with her husband, later commented that she had been told that "Indian Head was considered an awfully difficult place to move to ... [but] we had no problem at all." However, she would have been considered part of the top strata of social hierarchy due to her husband's influential occupation as bank manager.

<sup>43</sup>. Robert Charles Sanderson, SAB, S-X2, Q#5.

<sup>44</sup>. Ivy E., personal interview, March 1993.

<sup>45</sup>. Indian Head, History of Indian Head and District, p. 24.

<sup>46</sup>. Ibid., p. 24.



Osment, originally from London, England, built an Opera House with rear and side galleries (balconies) that also doubled as a dance hall. When performances were being staged, chairs were put in front of the stage on the "beautifully polished (hardwood) dance floor 48 feet by 48 feet."<sup>47</sup> Opening night featured the opera "Faust" performed by the Harold Nelson Opera Company. Opera, theatre, concerts, and balls were popular in Indian Head and the Opera House became central to Indian Head cultural life. A.J. Osment's daughter recalled that the balls "were splendid affairs where the men wore white gloves or carried a handkerchief so as not to soil the ladies' evening gowns. Ladies wore long white kid gloves which came past their elbows. A spectator could sit in the gallery and watch groups here and there filling out their dance programmes..."<sup>48</sup>

The Bell Farm, the townsite, the fertile land and the railroad connection were not, however, the only drawing cards for the Indian Head district. The Experimental Farm, created by the federal government in June 1886 as one of five farms designed to explore Canada's farming needs,<sup>49</sup> also drew thousands of people to Indian Head each year on tourist excursions.<sup>50</sup> The Indian Head station was located on 675 acres purchased from

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<sup>47</sup>. Mrs. D.D. Irwin, "Behind the Footlights", in Saskatchewan History, Vol. IX, 1956, p. 22.

<sup>48</sup>. Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>49</sup>. In June 1886, "An Act Respecting Experimental Farm Stations" received Royal Assent and experimental farms were established in Indian Head, Brandon, Ottawa, Nappan (Nova Scotia), and Agassiz (British Columbia).

<sup>50</sup>. W.P. Johnson & A.E. Smith report that the first excursion was in 1893 with 200 people from Moose Jaw. This excursion was considered such a success that more tours were organized. By the early 1900s excursions came from as far away as Prince Albert. W.E. Johnson & A.E. Smith, Indian Head Experimental Farm 1886-1986, (Regina:

the Bell Farm at \$12.50 an acre.<sup>51</sup> In February 1888, Angus MacKay, a local man who had farmed in the area since 1882, was appointed farm superintendent. The Farm began operations in April 1888. In the early years seven people were employed on average during the winter. This number rose to 15 in the summer. Although the farm was not a major employer, it was a valuable asset to the Indian Head area. Besides the thousands of tourists who came each summer to see the Experimental Farm, there was also a constant stream of visiting dignitaries from Canada, the U.S, and Britain who toured the station.

Over the years the Experimental Farm expanded in size and responsibility. The Indian Head Forest Nursery Station was established in 1902 and transferred to the Experimental Farm in 1931.<sup>52</sup> Then, in 1935 the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration Act (PFRA) was enacted which was initially designed to "alleviate prairie agricultural problems by improving cultural practices, conserving water, and controlling land use."<sup>53</sup> The Indian Head Experimental Farm administered the PFRA. It examined soil drifting and experimented with reclamation of sandy soils. After World War II, the

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Research Branch, Agriculture Canada, Historical Series No.23, 1986), p. 15.

<sup>51</sup>. Ibid., p. 10. The original price per acre when Major Bell bought the land in 1882 was \$1.25/acre. Only six years later it was sold back to the federal government at \$12.50/acre. In 1926 the farm was expanded to include the Patterson farm, north of the Experimental Farm. The original lease for the Patterson property was for fifteen years; however, the lease was extended for an additional five years and then was allowed to lapse. In 1954 the Patterson farm was purchased and permanently added to the Experimental Farm.

<sup>52</sup>. The Nursery was transferred in 1958 to the Research Branch of Canada Agriculture and again in 1963 to the PFRA. Indian Head: History of Indian Head and District, pp. 46-50.

<sup>53</sup>. Ibid., p. 29.

PFRA administration moved to Regina and the Experimental Farm was no longer responsible for PFRA programs. However, the Experimental Farm continued to benefit farmers as research into horticulture, soils, and agronomy continued. Doris Q. explained, "if you take (the experimental farms) out of there, there'd be no Indian Head."<sup>54</sup>

Services and utilities also added to Indian Head's early prosperity. The post office opened in December 1882 establishing a vital link to family and friends "at home". Postal services were first administered out of a local store. The first post office building was built in 1906 by Arthur Leach who remained as postmaster until 1949. Although officially Mr. Leach was the postmaster, many area residents agree that his wife did most of the work. "She ran the business as far as that was concerned," Myra M. explained. "[He] wasn't too interested. He was just a letterhead, as I termed it, and she did all the work."<sup>55</sup> The first telephone company in Indian Head was started in 1892. In 1905 it was sold to Bell Canada. Three years later it was taken over by Saskatchewan Telephone. In 1910 the rural telephone companies were connected to the Saskatchewan telephone system.<sup>56</sup> Sewer and water services were approved in 1905, further confirming that Indian Head was developing into a modern and progressive community.

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<sup>54</sup>. Doris Q., personal interview, March 1993.

<sup>55</sup>. Myra M., personal interview, February 1993. Apparently Mr. Leach must have at least picked up the mail on occasion as Diane X. told this story: "Mr. Stevenson would go down the road and they had this one country road and he had a load of wheat and he was coming to town and [Mr. Leach] had a load of mail and he was there and somebody had to get off the road. So [Mr. Leach] says get off the road, the mail must go through. So they were going to have a fist fight over this." Diane X., personal interview, April 1993.

<sup>56</sup>. Indian Head: History of Indian Head and District, pp. 160-161.

Medical and dental services were scarce in many rural communities but not so in Indian Head. Dental services were available in Indian Head from 1886. But, as Jean T. adamantly stated, "dental hygiene was nil in those days ... some wouldn't even come into the office, they were frightened, frightened to go to the hospital and frightened to go to the office."<sup>57</sup> The first doctor came to live in Indian Head in 1886 but there was no hospital until 1895 when a maternity hospital was built. With the population of the town and surrounding area continually growing, the desire for hospital services was pressing. The dream of a local hospital was finally realized in January 1905 when the Indian Head General Hospital, affiliated with the Victorian Order of Nurses, was opened. The new facility contained twelve beds.<sup>58</sup> Two years later a nursing school was added. In the years 1912-1919 ten nurses graduated from the training school. By 1919 a Nurses Home was added and the number of hospital beds was increased to thirty. In 1929 an additional wing was constructed. The demand for services continually increased and in 1951 a new, larger hospital was opened.

There was no lack of churches in the Indian Head area. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, built in 1882, was the first Indian Head church. All Saint's Anglican Church, built in 1884 at Katepwa (approximately eleven miles north of Indian Head) was the first area Anglican church. Soon after, in 1885, St. Chad's Anglican Church was built at Sunny South (approximately nine miles south of Indian Head). Closer to town, Major Bell made

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<sup>57</sup>. Jean T., personal interview, April 1993.

<sup>58</sup>. "General Hospital", pamphlet published "by the order of the Directors 1919", Indian Head Library, File:"Indian Head".

arrangements for Anglican services to be held on his property. The Qu'Appelle Vidette reports throughout the 1880s that Anglican services were conducted in Indian Head (on the Bell Farm) on an average of every second week, by a representative from the Anglican Church in Fort Qu'Appelle. St John's Anglican Church, built in town by Lord Brassey, was dedicated in June 1885. Methodist services were first held in Indian Head in 1883 but a church was not built until 1898. In the interim, Methodists living in town congregated in the Town Hall for services. Outside of town the same minister also conducted Methodist services in Fair Play, Rose Valley and Wide Awake. As noted above, Catholics were not well represented in Indian Head. St. Joseph's Parish church was not constructed until 1903 and served only as a mission ministered by the priests from Lebret until 1947 when it was declared a parish on its own.<sup>59</sup>

Schools were also important to potential settlers. The first Territorial School opened in Indian Head in 1887. By the mid 1890s the school was crowded and students were moved to the Town Hall. In 1901 a new and more spacious school was completed. In 1910, again due to lack of space, the high school students were relocated across the street to an office building. In 1914 a separate high school was built. It boasted "a soccer field, two baseball diamonds, a tennis court, three basketball courts ..." and "one of the best equipped chemistry and physics labs outside of the city."<sup>60</sup>

In the area immediately surrounding Indian Head there were ten one-room country

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<sup>59</sup>. Most of the information from the preceding paragraph is from Indian Head, History of Indian Head and District, pp. 112-125.

<sup>60</sup>. Ibid., p. 75.

schools. Wide Awake was the first in 1886, followed by Katepwa in 1887, Sunny South in 1889, Fair Play in 1890, Glenn Lynn in 1898, Rose Valley in 1900, Jubilee in 1905, Sunny Slope in 1907, Squirrel Hills in 1918, and Lake Marguerite in 1952.<sup>61</sup> Schools opened as settlers moved in and applied to the Board of Education to form a school district. Often, prior to opening one of these rural schools, lessons were given in a private home or in a vacant building on donated land.

Access to a rural school only meant that children received a primary level education. High school classes were taken by correspondence or students were sent to Indian Head High School where they boarded with friends or relatives during the week, returning home on the weekends. A few families sent their children into Regina to boarding school. Sisters Karen and Zelda, speaking of their high school experiences, remarked that "there was nowhere to go to school. You either boarded in Indian Head because it's too far to ride and paid tuition, or you boarded in Regina and paid tuition and believed that it was a better education you'd get (in Regina) which was what [our] dad believed."<sup>62</sup> One group of farm women was quick to suggest that when the rural schools closed in 1964, "it was the beginning of the end," as the focal point shifted to the town of Indian Head and away from their own insular school district community.<sup>63</sup>

Farm and town did, however, meet and mingle in Indian Head regularly. In the

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<sup>61</sup>. Prior to 1952, students in the Lake Marguerite District attended Glen Lynn School or went to boarding school. The small rural schools were closed in 1964 with the schools consolidation act and students then attended school in town.

<sup>62</sup>. Karen I. & Zelda C., personal interview, May 1993.

<sup>63</sup>. N.N.D.Q., personal interview, March 1993.

post-settlement period, Saturday was the day when many rural folk packed up the entire family and headed into town for shopping and recreation. In the winter people went to town during the afternoon; in summer they went after supper. Several respondents discussed their Saturday town adventures during the inter-war era. Susan G. remembered, "there were ... poles ... [in Indian Head] that you could tie your team to which was something and in the summertime we had the car but in winter it was a team of horses and a covered cutter ... and you'd have a robe or buffalo robe or whatever ..." <sup>64</sup> Naomi Q. recalled that when her family quit using a team and sleigh in winter and used cars, they often had to wait for the snow plow to open up the road for the Saturday traffic: "at Wide Awake I think there were thirty-two cars in a row waiting behind this guy that was opening up the road ... and I remember [two boys] walked down the tracks and told the stores to stay open because there were about thirty-two cars coming in to shop and they did." <sup>65</sup>

Commonly families would attend a movie, shop for groceries, and then visit along Grand Avenue (Indian Head's main street). The stores and post office remained open until midnight or until shopping was completed. Naomi described a typical 1930s Saturday in town: "the women would be shopping and the men would stand around on the street corners and argue about politics or whatever they wanted to argue about." <sup>66</sup> The entire family looked forward to the Saturday excursions. Nora H. vividly recalled that as a young

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<sup>64</sup>. Susan G., personal interview, May 1993.

<sup>65</sup>. Naomi Q., personal interview, March 1993.

<sup>66</sup>. Ibid.

girl she was very disappointed if bad weather prevented the family from making the regular Saturday trip to Indian Head: "when we were growing up, and oh, if it rained and we couldn't go to town Saturday night, the end of the world had almost come."<sup>67</sup> While the men "argued" on the streets or in the beer parlour, the women either sat in the family car or went into the Ladies' Rest Room, which had a small sitting area, a washroom, a small heater to make tea, and a place to change diapers. The space was donated by a local businessman and was maintained by a committee of farm women.

Indian Head has a unique and distinct history because of the Bell Farm and the federal Experimental Farms. Although the townsfolk and the farmers were often separated by geography and class, they shared many racial and social attributes. Fully 80% of the residents of census division 6 (includes Indian Head and surrounding area) in 1921 were British born.<sup>68</sup> Generally this also meant that persons in this group were white and English-speaking. Furthermore, most area residents were Anglican, Methodist, or Presbyterian; 88% in 1901, and 81% in both 1911 and 1921 (see Appendix X).<sup>69</sup> These factors -- white, English-speaking, protestant, of British heritage -- were the bedrock upon which social identities were created. They were the primary elements that were

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<sup>67</sup>. Nora H., personal interview, April 1993.

<sup>68</sup>. British born includes Canada, Newfoundland, England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and "other British possessions." Census of Canada, 1921. The comparable province-wide figure is 73.68% British born. Although it is possible that Canadian-born residents could have been French-speaking, the data collected in the personal interviews in Indian Head and Rosetown indicates that most Canadian born settlers in both communities came from Ontario or Manitoba and claimed British ancestry.

<sup>69</sup>. The comparable province-wide figures for Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian were in 49.0% in 1901, 51.5% in 1911, and 50.1% in 1921 (see Appendix IX).



subsequently renegotiated into the identity "Woman", a representation of a feminine, western-Canadian ideal that affirmed the actual lived experience of Saskatchewan's British-Canadian rural women.

Although Rosetown was not settled until twenty years after Indian Head, the two towns and their surrounding districts had many racial and social identities in common. Sounding much like Indian Head, Rosetown was characterized by resident Susan Tucker as "English-speaking, easterners mainly and a sprinkling of Yanks; [a] protestant community."<sup>70</sup> In 1921, 79% of census division 12 (Rosetown and area) were British born.<sup>71</sup> Although Rosetown did not cultivate as strict a social hierarchy as was the case in Indian Head, Rosetown too developed a social structure that fostered class and ethnic distinctions that were adhered to for generations.

Perhaps because Rosetown did not have the pseudo-aristocratic influences Indian Head had in the early years -- with Major Bell, Lord Brassey and entourage -- Rosetown society was differently ordered. Social activities seem to have been more inclusive with cultural life centred around movies, dances, musical activities (band, orchestra, choir), and many sporting events. Rosetown did have an element of high society, in particular ladies' teas, that were attended by "a certain class of people,"<sup>72</sup> but generally, the social hierarchy in town was not as strictly maintained as it was in Indian Head. Some of the farm women, however, did see a clear distinction between themselves and town women. Susan Tucker

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<sup>70</sup>. Mrs. Susan Tucker, SAB, S-X2, Q#3.

<sup>71</sup>. Census of Canada, 1921.

<sup>72</sup>. Hugh T., personal interview, May 1993.

wrote, "the farm set called the small town set or village set the 'High Society Set'. Seemed to think them snooty and dreary. Visitors always entertained in the parlour -- if there was a parlour."<sup>73</sup>

The railroad did not come through the area southwest of Saskatoon and into the Rosetown district until 1908. Only a few settlers ventured out onto the prairie ahead of the rail line, settling along what was known as the Old Bone Trail.<sup>74</sup> Where Indian Head grew up alongside the rail tracks and had access to supplies and the "outside" world, Rosetown's origins were slightly different. Settlers arrived first; then the CNR line came through in October 1909, making Rosetown the railway terminus and bringing many people into the area. Also in 1909, the price per bushel of No.1 Northern wheat had risen to \$1.09 and, fortunately for wheat farmers, the yield that year was above average.<sup>75</sup> Three grain elevators were in use in Rosetown by the fall of 1909. Such factors made Rosetown an attractive and seemingly prosperous location in which to settle. The CPR line was built several years later just north of town giving residents access to two rail lines. This was definitely a boon to the developing area.

Prior to the arrival of the trains, Saskatoon -- 120 kilometers from Rosetown -- was the closest supply depot. In 1906 two stores opened close to what would become the

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<sup>73</sup>. Mrs. Susan Tucker, SAB. S-X2, Q#5.

<sup>74</sup>. The trail was called The Old Bone Trail because aboriginal people had used it to haul buffalo bones to Saskatoon for sale. The Trail began in Saskatoon and "moved in a southwesterly direction, almost parallel to the present Canadian National line which passes through Vanscoy, Delisle, Laura, Tessier, Harris, and Zealandia and thence to Rosetown and beyond." Arthur Frederick Broadbridge, "The History of Rosetown 1904-1939", p. 4.

<sup>75</sup>. Ibid., p. 21.

townsite of Rosetown but they were only small outlets and the long trip to Saskatoon for supplies was often still required.<sup>76</sup> Application for a post office at Rosetown was approved by Ottawa in 1907 and in September postal services commenced out of the Heartwell homestead with Mary Jane Heartwell as postmistress.<sup>77</sup> Her sons had the contract to carry the mail from Zealandia, which was, at the time, the end of the rail line.<sup>78</sup>

The townsite was surveyed in July 1909 and in August was granted village status. The population was estimated to be over 100 persons.<sup>79</sup> By the end of 1909 there was "a doctor, a hotel, a drug store, a bakery, four general stores, three restaurants, three wood and coal dealers, ... the weekly Rosetown Eagle and a print shop, a barber shop, a laundry, a bank, a notary public, two furniture stores, two hardware stores, three grain elevators, two flour and feed dealers, two livery barns, a harness shop, two tinsmiths, a blacksmith shop, four lumber companies, four draymen, five implement dealers, seven real estate and insurance agents, and an undertaker."<sup>80</sup> Two years later a joint Town Hall and Fire Station was built. In 1912 the first telephone exchange opened.<sup>81</sup> Rosetown had quickly

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<sup>76</sup>. Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>77</sup>. The name Rosetown was proposed for the site to honour James "Dad" Rose, the first settler in the area. Frank Glass, Rosetown, First 75 Years, (Rosetown: Rosetown Publishing Company, 1984), p. 51.

<sup>78</sup>. Agnes Wickett, Stories of Early Rosetown, (Rosetown: Rosetown Publishing Company Ltd., n.d.), p. 6.

<sup>79</sup>. Frank Glass, Rosetown, First 75 Years, p. 51.

<sup>80</sup>. Ibid., pp. 51-52.

<sup>81</sup>. Ibid., p. 52.

become the focal point of the R.M. of St. Andrews and in 1911 Rosetown's status was increased to that of a town.

The first hospital, which opened in 1911, was a private hospital with ten beds, run by Dr. E.T. Myers.<sup>82</sup> It was replaced two years later with a larger hospital and nurses' residence, operated by the Town of Rosetown. In 1917 the Union Hospital District was organized and the mandate for the hospital extended. In 1927-28 the number of hospital beds was increased to twenty-one and ten years later to fifty beds. The Rosetown Hospital Ladies' Aid was formed in 1914 primarily for fund raising. It was disbanded in 1918 with the reorganization of the hospital into the Union Hospital District, placing the hospital "on a broader financial foundation."<sup>83</sup>

Schools in the Rosetown area came about in much the same way as they had in Indian Head. Classes were first held in Mrs. Stewart's living room.<sup>84</sup> By 1910 twenty-two students attended school in the Town Hall. In 1911, "a four room brick school was erected, later known as the Stewart School."<sup>85</sup> By 1918 overcrowding forced some classes to be held in alternative locations around town. This necessitated the construction

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<sup>82</sup>. Dr. Edward Thomas Warden Myers was originally from Portland, Ontario. He studied medicine at Queens and did postgraduate work in New York. He moved to Rosetown in 1910. Dr. Myers was elected as an M.P. in 1917 on the Unionist platform and held his seat until 1921. He continued to practice medicine in Rosetown until 1955. Rosetown Eagle, "Rosetown Union Hospital, 75th Anniversary Edition", p. 3.

<sup>83</sup>. Ibid., p. 5. In 1947 a Hospital Aid Association was organized to "replace and replenish furnishings and equipment in the Hospital." p. 5.

<sup>84</sup>. Mrs. Stewart was the wife of the first doctor in Rosetown, Dr. A.M. Stewart.

<sup>85</sup>. Frank Glass, Rosetown First 75 Years, p. 60.

of an addition to the school which was completed in 1922. In 1924 there were approximately 200 students attending school in Rosetown.<sup>86</sup> In 1930 a high school was built. As in Indian Head, rural students attended high school in Rosetown because rural schools only accommodated students to the tenth grade. This practice continued for many years. In 1952 women in Rosetown reported to the Province of Saskatchewan Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life that "in our district most of the families who move to town do so [so their children can attend high school]. There is always a great scarcity of suitable boarding places and many find it impossible to make the trip twice daily that would be required if their children live at home on the farm."<sup>87</sup> Rosetown also had a "separate school" for Catholic students after St. Joseph's Convent opened in 1928. Previously all students attended Rosetown Public School regardless of religious affiliation.

Although the majority of the area's population was Anglican, Methodist, or Presbyterian, the percentage of protestants was not as high in Rosetown as it was in Indian Head. Whereas more than 80% of the local population was protestant in Indian Head, in Rosetown the comparable numbers were only 65% protestant in 1911, and 77% in 1921 (see Appendix XI).<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>. 1924 Rosetown Public School photo. Author's personal collection.

<sup>87</sup>. Province of Saskatchewan Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life, "Summary of Problems from Homemakers' Clubs", December 16, 1952, p. 11.

<sup>88</sup>. Prior to the 1925 union of the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational denominations as the United Church, the major religions in Saskatchewan, totalling about 70% of the province's population, were Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Roman Catholic. Appendix IX shows that from 1921 through 1941, the three major protestant denominations of Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian together totalled approximately 50% of the province's religious affiliations. After the formation of the United Church in

Rosetown's churches occupied as important a place in local society as they did in Indian Head. St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, the first area church, was built in 1908 six miles east of town. Six years later, in 1914, the church was moved into town. The first church built in town was the Methodist church, constructed in 1910. The Anglican Church opened in 1912 and the Presbyterian Church was dedicated in 1915. The Anglicans, however, had been holding services (ministered by the Anglican Railway Mission) in a hall over King's store, 1909-1912.<sup>89</sup>

Perhaps the most unfortunate aspect of living in Rosetown was the poor quality of the drinking water. As Jean L. explained, "Zealandia has wonderful water, McGee has wonderful water but Rosetown water is terrible ... it is harder than flint ..."<sup>90</sup> It was not until 1948 that Rosetown had a water and sewage system installed due to the high costs involved in locating suitable water.

The years 1910-1918 were years of rapid expansion for Rosetown. Families moved into the area, businesses opened and expanded, service clubs organized, housing

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1925, Anglican, Presbyterian and United Church combined to form an average of 46% of the province's church members. After church union in 1925, the United Church quickly became the largest religion across the province; in 1931 and 1941 26% of Saskatchewan's population claimed their religion to be United Church. The three main protestant religions, which after 1925 were Anglican, Presbyterian and United Church (the Methodist Church no longer existed as a separate entity), continued to make up close to 50% of the province's population. Those affiliating with the United Church alone composed slightly more than one quarter of the population. Between 1901 and 1941 Roman Catholics, on average, made up twenty percent of the population. Saskatchewan was, therefore, overwhelmingly protestant.

<sup>89</sup>. "Rosetown St. Andrews Anglican Church, History Notes 1909-1989", Rosetown Library and Archives.

<sup>90</sup>. Jean L., personal interview, June 1993.

starts increased, and civic development was just generally exciting.<sup>91</sup> The Rosetown Eagle appears to have been a key player in promoting the town's potential. In a manner comparable to other cities and towns in Saskatchewan and across the West, boosterism was alive and flourishing in Rosetown.<sup>92</sup> In July 1918, for example, The Eagle reported "that Rosetown on Saturday nights takes on the aspects of a city during fair time is evidenced in the statement of a couple of townsmen who reported having made a tour of the three blocks on Main Street last Saturday night and without moving off that thoroughfare counted 196 cars on the street at 10:15 pm. This is convincing proof of prosperity in the district."

This period of optimism and prosperity in Rosetown continued throughout the 1920s.<sup>93</sup> It was, as A.F. Broadbridge argues, a prosperity founded on the "heavy rich clay of the surrounding farming country."<sup>94</sup> Farming and farm products were the foundation of Rosetown's development and growth. Unlike Indian Head which had the Experimental Farms and Tree Nursery to help support the economy, Rosetown was dependent on the wheat economy. Unfortunately, when the depression of the 1930s reached Saskatchewan,

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<sup>91</sup>. A.F. Broadbridge, "The History of Rosetown 1904-1939", Chapter II, pp. 26-54.

<sup>92</sup>. Alan Artibise explains that the "most important parts of the mental baggage of the boosters were a belief in the desirability of growth and in the importance of material success. To boosters, the challenge presented by the undeveloped prairies was to build there a prosperous, populous, and dynamic region as quickly as possible." This most certainly was the attitude in Rosetown. Alan F.J. Artibise, "Boosterism and the Development of Prairie Cities, 1871-1913", R. Douglas Francis & Howard Palmer (eds.), The Prairie West, Historical Readings, (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1985), p. 411.

<sup>93</sup>. A.F. Broadbridge, "The History of Rosetown 1904-1939", Chapter III, pp. 54-82.

<sup>94</sup>. Ibid., p. 81.

Rosetown businesses were placed in a very precarious situation as most counted on farmer's money to keep their businesses afloat; there was no other economic base in the area. Fortunately, Rosetown was not as devastated by crop failures as were some other areas of the province. According to Canadian Department of Agriculture records, 1937 was the only year the area experienced extensive crop failure.<sup>95</sup> Yet regardless of the government's evaluation, many area residents suffered during the 1930s. Jean L. recalled that "the dust bowl was terrible and then russian thistles. You could just see them going in clouds through the air and grasshoppers and army worms and [they] ... would come to a building, they just crawled in millions up over top of us."<sup>96</sup> Many Rosetown and area families required relief during the 1930s and young unemployed people found few reasons to stay in town. Hugh T. recalled the "futility of it all ... fourteen years of my life were a dead loss,"<sup>97</sup> and Lefty Moffatt spoke of "riding the rods" out to Montreal because there was nothing better for him to do.<sup>98</sup>

Both communities, Rosetown and Indian Head, survived the worst of the Depression years, picked up the pieces and then sent their sons and daughters off to war in 1939. At home war work was undertaken with fierce determination as women's societies knit, sewed, packed parcels, wrote letters, and baked for men and women overseas.

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<sup>95</sup>. Canada, Department of Agriculture, An Economic Classification of Land in the Elrose, Rosetown, Conquest Area, by R.A. Stutt, Ottawa, 1944, p. 31. Cited in Broadbridge, "The History of Rosetown 1904-1939", p. 83.

<sup>96</sup>. Jean L., personal interview, June 1993.

<sup>97</sup>. Hugh T., personal interview, May 1993.

<sup>98</sup>. Ellis H. (Lefty) Moffatt, recollections of the author.



Fraternal organizations raised money, sold bonds and held dances in support of the war effort. Slowly, local economies recovered -- even with the wartime price controls and regulations. When the war ended and the troops returned home, there was much celebration and hope for the future of the province. The province's fiftieth anniversary was approaching in 1955 and rural folk of Saskatchewan looked ahead with optimism and anticipation. They also began to celebrate their pioneer heritage and with the support of the Saskatchewan Archives Board, began to collect the reminiscences and memories of their pioneer citizens.<sup>99</sup>

## **B. Characters**

In describing the communities of Indian Head and Rosetown, above, a portrait of schools, shops, and social situations emerges. However, few residents are introduced and the sense of community and shared identity based in lived experience and self-interpretation is only touched upon. Although social, political, and economic climates provided the context within which residents situated their new circumstances, it was the experiences of living within these communities that crystallized their identities. For many first-generation rural women, experiencing the West often meant a shift in self-perception. Identity necessarily was recreated in order to cope with a new set of circumstances. For a select few, identity remained firmly within familiar patterns as they attempted to carry on

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<sup>99</sup>. The collection known as the "Pioneer Questionnaires" is located in the Saskatchewan Archives Board office in Saskatoon. In all, ten questionnaires (each approximately 7-10 pages in length) were distributed to all persons who considered themselves Saskatchewan pioneers. I found these records to be enormously rich and I have quoted from these frequently throughout this study.

in their new situation much as they had done "at home". Most women, however, adapted contemporary gender roles to suit their new life on the Saskatchewan prairie as they redefined femininity, domesticity, and what it meant to be a "Woman". Their daughters and granddaughters subsequently created their own definitions of womanhood based on their own experiences.

Following are three biographies of representative "Women" from Indian Head and Rosetown who are discussed in the following chapters. Their family histories and personal life stories describe the subtle changes in rural "Womanhood" from the supposedly genteel domestic angel of their mother's generation to the more robust and realistic rural "Woman" who was educated and often experienced in waged labour, farm labour, and domestic labour.

**i) Nora H., Indian Head<sup>100</sup>**

Nora's mother, an orphan, came from England in 1901 to join her brother who was working on a farm at Balcarres. Nora explained, "[mother] had a hard life. Her father was a captain at sea and her mother wasn't a very good mother, I think. She was an alcoholic ... her mother would pawn [the kids'] shoes and then she'd have to Monday morning get her shoes -- boots I guess they were -- out of the pawn shop, and she (her mother's mother) would do anything to get money for her drink." Nora continued, "mother's mother and dad both died when she was around 12-13 years of age so she went to an orphanage and she couldn't speak ... so she had never been educated ... [Aunt Mary] took

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<sup>100</sup>. Personal interviews, April 1993.

her out of the orphanage and then she took her to get some help so she could learn to speak and really, it was just a minor operation. They did it in the chair of the doctor's office ... she never did learn to read and write but she wasn't dull. She had such a good memory."

When Nora's mother came to Balcarres to be with her brother, he had already arranged for her to work as "a maid". Nora continued with her mother's story: "It was a big farm and a big house and she had another maid as well as mother and quite a few hired men and I remember my mother telling me how terrible it was. These hired men had head lice and mother had long hair. Well, she had to cut that off, shave it off, and use kerosene on her head to get rid of those cooties! She worked hard and long hours and I think what hurt her a lot was that the other hired girl became pregnant by one of the hired men and the girl jumped into the dug-out or slough and died. She drowned herself and that affected mother no end, you know. Anyway, she somehow got over here to Indian Head and she worked for a Mrs. G. in a nice wood-stone house." Nora's mother worked for several more Indian Head families until she married Nora's father in 1909. For four years the couple hired themselves out as a team to area farmers. In 1913 they bought a half section of land south of Indian Head and began farming on their own.

Nora is one of five children, one boy and four girls. She recalls that the family "had very little money but we had a lot of love."<sup>101</sup> She attended Squirrel Hills school, a three and a half-mile walk from home. Grades 1 through 8 were taught by the teacher but

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<sup>101</sup>. Nora's mother worked as a housekeeper or cleaning lady occasionally "to get a bit of money". She also cleaned the school in mid-August before the students returned "and she might get \$2 for that."

grades 9 and 10 were taken by correspondence. In grade 11 Nora boarded with her married sister who lived in Indian Head so Nora could attend high school. She continued her story: "I know my mom and dad did the best they could by us, you know, as far as education goes, but we were very anxious to get out and earn money so after my grade 11, I went to Balfour Tech (in Regina) for a year and took a business course because that would be one year earlier that I could get out and earn." In the spring of 1942 she returned to Indian Head to work in the Royal Bank. She stayed there for four years working her way up from ledger-keeper to teller.

Nora loved her very active life. After work she played softball and tennis; tried curling and lawn-bowling; went to movies and the theatre. There were not, however, many men in town as most had joined the armed services. Nora describes the situation: "we were very close to our friends, the girl friends. We'd go everywhere together because there weren't enough men around. There were hardly any men around and we'd go to a dance and we'd think nothing of dancing with girls all night."

When asked what it was like when the men returned, Nora replied, "Oh! Exciting, I tell you!" Parties, dances, and welcome celebrations were frequent. That was when Nora met the man whom she would marry. "One Saturday night, I think, I was walking along with girls, again on Saturday night, and [he] came up and asked me if I'd like to go to the dance at Lebret. So I didn't know whether to go with him or not but there was about five boys in the car but I went anyway and we went to the dance at Lebret." When asked what her mother would have said had she known Nora had gone to the dance, Nora laughed heartily and said, "mother didn't know! She probably surmised without me telling

and that was in April and then about next October we were engaged and then the next June we were married, in '48."

Nora continued working at the bank until one month before her wedding. The young couple then moved to Saskatoon while Nora's husband completed University. Their first child was born the following September; four more children were born during the 1950s. Once Nora's husband completed his degree, the family moved back to Indian Head to her husband's farm.<sup>102</sup> They remained on the farm until 1976 when they moved into town. Nora "did work a little bit in the 1970s back in the Credit Union here but I just worked long enough to know that I really didn't want to."

Nora has a long history of community involvement, although her mother did not.<sup>103</sup> As a girl, Nora was a member of the Peppy Pals, a junior homemakers-type of club for teenagers. After marriage she joined the Friendly Neighbours, a local women's group, of which she is still a member.<sup>104</sup> Nora has also been a member of the United Church Women since she was a young woman. Similarly, Nora's children participated in community organizations and events. All of Nora's children completed post-secondary education and

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<sup>102</sup>. Nora's father-in-law lived with Nora and her husband for one year. He then re-married and moved out. However, Nora recalled that her first summer of "housekeeping" was very difficult because "I didn't just have [my husband]. I had his dad and I had his brother who was sort of undecided as to what he was going to do and he was home and then he rejoined the airforce and then their nephew Paul, who was about nine came, and you know, I couldn't boil water because I had left home when I was in Grade 10 and when you board you go and help with the dishes but you don't really cook. So I had a bad summer that year."

<sup>103</sup>. Nora feels certain that her mother's illiteracy kept her from joining any clubs or organizations. The family also did not belong to a church.

<sup>104</sup>. Chapter VI discusses the Peppy Pals and Friendly Neighbours in greater detail.

are employed outside of their homes. Only one remains in Indian Head.

**ii) Glenda T., Indian Head<sup>105</sup>**

Glenda's father came to Saskatchewan from Ontario in 1907. He worked in Lajord until 1909 when he went to Winnipeg to take a business course. While in Winnipeg Glenda's father met Mr. I., a seat holder on the Winnipeg Grain Exchange, who invited Glenda's father to visit Mr. I. and his family in Indian Head. Glenda's father accepted the invitation and subsequently married Mr. I.'s daughter in 1913.

Glenda's mother's family came to Indian Head from Ontario in 1892. Upon completing high school Glenda's mother attended Secretarial School in Brandon and then worked as a bookkeeper in her father's store until she married Glenda's father. A son was born in 1916; Glenda was born in 1919.

Glenda attended Jubilee School and then Indian Head High School. "I was always interested in airplanes," she explained, "and I wanted to be a stewardess. I took my grade 12 and in those days you had to be a nurse to be a stewardess, so I hadn't taken chemistry and you had to have chem to go into nursing so I went back an extra year and I took my grade 11 and 12 chem and a couple of other subjects just to make a full year. And at that time you could only be 5'5" and weigh 125 pounds to be a stewardess. I grew to be 5'6 1/2" and 130 pounds so I couldn't apply to be a stewardess. That's when I went and took a business course (at Reliance School of Commerce in Regina)." Glenda's interest in airplanes did not wane because she could not be a stewardess. "When I graduated from

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<sup>105</sup>. Personal interview, March 1993.

[business school] I got a job with the Department of Transportation which was pretty close to an airplane." She worked at various jobs in Regina, her favourite being with the Weather Office because "you could see all the planes coming in and everything. It was real interesting. I spent a lot of time at the window."

Glenda was eventually offered a teletype job that required that she go to Winnipeg for training. "I was there for quite a few years and then I had thyroid trouble and I sort of had a nervous breakdown and I had to come home, at least mother came down and insisted that I quit my job and come home, so I came back [to Indian Head in 1944]. " Glenda was home "for a while" and then took a job with General Motors in Regina. "Then a job came up in a lawyer's office so I came back to Indian Head in '46 and worked for the lawyer." In 1947 Glenda married a man she had gone to school with and moved to the farm he was renting from his father. She added, "I was getting on, I was 28 when I got married. My husband was 30 but he always said he'd saved me from being an old maid and I said `well I saved you from being an old bachelor!'"

Fifteen years later Glenda's husband died of a heart attack and Glenda and her two children "had to get off the farm" because her father-in-law immediately sold it. When asked what the father-in-law thought she and her children would do without the farm, she replied "That's what I asked him and he said `You and the kids will get along all right.'" She added, "It was a traumatic time. They say that everybody is nice to widows but I don't know. Everybody seemed to be getting everything they could off the farm." Forced to support herself and her children, Glenda moved into town, lived with her parents briefly, and "then I got a suite." Within three months of her husband's death she had

returned to work, first part-time as a receptionist in a doctor's office and then full-time as a secretary in the local Ag Rep Office . Glenda remarried in 1974 but this time did not quit her job.<sup>106</sup> She remained in the Ag Rep Office until she retired at age 65.

Glenda was, and still is, very active in community activities. She was an avid sportswoman who curled, played softball, golfed and bowled. She is a member of the Royal Purple, the Friendly Neighbours, the Boy Scouts and several other local organizations.

When asked to describe Indian Head, Glenda said, "Mother always said that Indian Head was a cliquy town ... like there was this group that would think they were a little better than the others and then there are the others down there." When asked why she thought the town was like that she replied, "I don't know. Right from the time of old. Depending maybe where they came from and how important they were in the east when they came out here or something, you know, because most of them came out from Ontario to start out here, of the old people. They weren't old people then but some were a little better than others or always figured they were. Mother said right from the time when it was a cliquy town and I think it still is."

### **iii) Jean L., Rosetown<sup>107</sup>**

Jean's family also originated in Ontario. Her father was born in 1874, her mother in 1877. They were married in 1897. Jean's father was a blacksmith who wanted to farm.

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<sup>106</sup>. Glenda's second husband died of cancer fifteen years later.

<sup>107</sup>. Personal interview, June 1993.



The young family lived in several different areas of Manitoba and Saskatchewan before settling in Rosetown in 1909 because, as Jean explained, "Some of my mother's folks were up here."

Jean, born in 1902, was one of seven children, four girls and three boys. "Every time they moved there was another [child]", Jean said. "My last sister was born in the sod house out on the farm east of town here" where the family lived for six years until "Dad built our big old frame house out on the farm ... a big, fine, two-storey house with five bedrooms and a bath and a water system, Delco light lamp, big kitchen with lots of cupboards and we had a dumbwaiter that you could pull up and down to the big square dining room with folding doors and a parlour."

When asked if the boys and girls in her family had different responsibilities, Jean answered, "Yes. Everybody had their own. I think I should have been a boy. Dad always -- I seemed to be Dad's favourite and when the boys, when Joe left to go to Moose Jaw to further his education, why I had to do the driving and I was the only one that milked cows on the farm."

Jean attended the local rural school which was a mile and a half walk from home. "Then later on", she explained, "they moved the school within a half a mile, well, a little better than a half a mile of our place so we didn't have quite so far to go." Jean attended high school in Rosetown. "We had a little house [in town] ... and we did our own cooking like in the week and then we'd always go home for the weekend." She completed grade 11, took a year off to help her Dad on the farm, and "then went to Normal [School in Saskatoon]. I could take four months of Normal and teach a year and went back and

finished my Normal in four months and then I taught until I was married -- four years."

Jean's mother was a "tailoress" but teaching seems to have been the preferred goal for her daughters; Jean and three of her sisters became teachers. (The fourth sister studied Home Economics for one year at the University of Saskatchewan.) Jean's Dad paid for her first term at school but Jean "put [herself] through after that."

Even though Jean's family lived on the farm, Jean's mother was involved in the Women's Missionary Society in town as well as the local Fortune Community Club. Jean did not consider that her mother had "worked" outside of the home even though she had been a seamstress. "Mother didn't do anything outside of her clubs and work connected with that," she said. Living close to town also meant that the family could go into town for the weekly Saturday-night festivities. "Saturday night was a BIG night in town," Jean exclaimed. These weekly excursions kept the family in touch with what was going on in town and with their other neighbours.

Jean's Normal School experience was very similar to that of most other respondents -- "I didn't figure they taught anything that did us any good," she explained. "It didn't do us much good at all as far as getting out and teaching in a country school." She did, however, survive her teaching career. "I just had up to grade 8 the first year but the second year I had high school and you know when you've got all the different grades it's pretty hard to make up a curriculum to get everything all worked in."

Jean met her husband while she was teaching in Dublin; he farmed not far from the school at which she worked. When they were first married Jean and her husband moved twice a year because "we really didn't have a home." In the spring they lived on their land.

"There was no house on the place and we lived in a cook car and then in a granary ... and then it was winter time so then we'd have to move, pack up and move some place warmer and back again in the spring."

Jean had five children in seven years and did not have time for much else other than looking after her family. "It was terrible," she said. "I didn't do much besides raise a family ... I didn't have much of a social life. I came into Rosetown one time and Bill G. thought that I must have moved away [because] he hadn't seen me for so long." In 1956 when Jean's husband "was getting up in years" and her son had married, they rented the farm to the son and Jean and her husband moved into Rosetown. The biggest change for her then was that "[she] had less work to do."

In the following pages Jean, Glenda, and Nora along with their families and neighbours will continue to tell their stories. Their voices are what make this study unique. They will describe life in Indian Head and Rosetown as they remember it and as it was described to them by their elders. Part of the goal of this study is to deconstruct their life stories. In this way "Women's" agency and constructed identity can be properly understood within the context of a dynamic and distinctly western Canadian landscape.

### CHAPTER III: Recreating Domestic Identities: Tradition, Myth & Lived Experience

"My sister, one year younger than I, was my  
mother's helper, while I, being the oldest  
was my father's 'chore boy'  
though I was a girl."<sup>1</sup>

"Zelda was dad's boy and I was mom's girl."<sup>2</sup>

Women of British heritage who settled in rural Saskatchewan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries recreated the contemporary (and generally considered traditional) gender paradigm of separate spheres then popular in eastern Canada and Britain, into a new ideal of "Woman" that was representative of the British-Canadian female experience in rural Saskatchewan. Domesticity, the key element of woman's so-called separate sphere, was brought from home and initially positioned as the ideal for women. However, in the process of settling in and adjusting to their new locale, women adapted the imported feminine ideal to fit their current situation. Domesticity still remained at the heart of "Woman's" identity, but it was now a recreated domesticity that included the work rural women actually did as opposed to that which the imported ideal delineated they should do. The once genteel and cultured woman became the genteel and cultured farm-helper. But because the newly defined domestic ideal remained grounded in the old domestic traditions, myths, and practices, it was more of a re-creating of identity than a creating of a radically new identity. Rural domesticity gave "Women" considerable agency, but it did not provide them

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<sup>1</sup>. History Questionnaire #13. The respondent underlined this phrase.

<sup>2</sup>. Karen I., personal interview, May 1993.

with total freedom. What it meant to be a woman was thus redefined, but remained feminine.

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For settler-women of British heritage, becoming a "Woman" in what would later be known as rural Saskatchewan was in some respects just like becoming a woman at "home". In both places womanhood and notions of what constituted "proper" behaviour for women were framed by separate spheres, a popular concept that restricted the so-called moral, sheltered, private sphere of home and family to females, and the coarse, contaminated, public world of work and commerce to males. Lessons learned as a girl -- how to run a household, care for a family, and honour one's social and cultural obligations just as mother had done -- were considered as important in rural British-Canadian communities in Saskatchewan as they were in Toronto or Winnipeg. Women were expected to exhibit "proper" behaviours whether they lived in the city, small town Saskatchewan, or a sod hut on a homestead.

Two competing mythologies of how the western provinces should be settled further complicated rural Saskatchewan women's on-going process of redefining "Woman" to fit their new situation. First, was the myth that presumed all settlers would abide by *established* British-Canadian traditions and that persons of British heritage would serve as role models demonstrating women's and men's "proper" and distinct roles. Second, was the myth that settlers would create a vibrant *new* society with great opportunities for everyone. In this second scenario women and men worked side-by-side for the benefit of the greater good. Simply, then, the difficulty settler-women faced with regards to female identity was the impossible balancing act between two very nebulous positions based in tradition and myth, neither of which was representative of their actual lived experiences in rural Saskatchewan.

In examining domesticity and domestic identities popular in British-Canadian rural Saskatchewan communities from 1880 through the immediate post World War II era, it is clear that the cultural baggage of generations of women and men was carried from "home" and then, to varying degrees, transplanted in Saskatchewan. But, contrary to what other scholars have concluded about Canadian women's roles -- that women's "lives and ambitions were circumscribed,"<sup>3</sup> "constrained,"<sup>4</sup> and "subordinat[ed] within [the] patriarchal society"<sup>5</sup> -- British-Canadian women in rural Saskatchewan demonstrated considerable agency in redefining female roles and subsequent female identities. Although domesticity remained at the heart of the expanded female identity of "Woman", it was not an identity built on oppression. Rather, it was an identity that blended past and present in a dynamic, forward-looking ideal of rural woman who could successfully do just about anything that needed to be done.

Domesticity was, as Robert L. Griswold argues, "a tie to the past, a way one connected new surroundings to older roots."<sup>6</sup> Griswold also notes that domestic ideology

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<sup>3</sup> Veronica Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled: The Lives of Girls and Women 1919-1939, (Markham: Penguin Books Canada Ltd., 1988), p. 217. As discussed in Chapter I, the authors of Canadian Women, A History also chart a course of women's oppression and exploitation throughout Canadian history. Women in both Canadian Women and in The New Day Recalled (and in Strong-Boag's other publications) are perceived as victims. Things are done *to* women; rarely are women shown as active or independent decision-makers.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 220.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Robert L. Griswold, "Anglo Women and Domestic Ideology in the American West in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries", in Lillian Schlissel, Vicki L. Ruiz & Janice Monk (eds.), Western Women; Their Land, Their Lives, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), p. 21.

contributed to a sense of continuity between generations. Most women who relocated to rural Saskatchewan, however, found that domestic identities learned somewhere else were often inappropriate and unmanageable in Saskatchewan because rural women did not have clearly delineated spheres of responsibility. Put another way, "rural women did not occupy a separate sphere."<sup>7</sup> Whether out of necessity or by choice, rural women assumed many of the jobs and responsibilities previously gender-marked as male.

One useful approach in examining how rural "Women" recreated and redefined domesticity is to trace the effects it had on the patterns of their lives from childhood through maturity. This approach provides a comparative framework common to most females because the patterns of their lives followed the same or a similar course as children and teenagers, and through the customs associated with dating, courtship, marriage, motherhood, and maturity. In each stage of life private and public experiences coalesced into a system of shared meanings. At the points where meaning was shared, for example at school, church or

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<sup>7</sup> Nancy Grey Osterud, Bonds of Community; The Lives of Farm Women in Nineteenth-Century New York, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 275. Jane Marie Pederson agrees: "the realities of the lives of many women made the achievement of middle-class ideals of womanhood problematic. Although rural women were cognizant of ideals of femininity, they would not or could not conform easily to all the precepts of those ideals." Jane Marie Pederson, Between Memory and Reality: Family and Community in Rural Wisconsin 1870-1970, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992) p. 159. Seena B. Kohl concurs with Osterud and Pederson; she writes, "[that in southwestern Saskatchewan] there was a loosening of sex-role expectations" because "the requirements for survival necessitated the learning of new skills and the putting aside, or holding in abeyance, the traditional concepts of feminine behaviour." Seena B. Kohl, Working Together: Women and Family in Southwestern Saskatchewan, (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada Limited, 1976), p. 33.

in the job market, social identities were self-consciously reinforced.<sup>8</sup>

Although a "Woman's" life was influenced by a bevy of elements such as kinship networks, traditional mentalités, geographic location, ethnicity, class, religion, and personal experience, most women's lives during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were overwhelmingly influenced by separate spheres and notions of domesticity. This chapter will adopt the life-cycle approach to demonstrate how "Woman" was developed in childhood and maintained through maturity. Moreover, it will illustrate how rural women segued from conventional interpretations of domesticity and woman's "proper" sphere to create a female identity that allowed them to be both genteel and robust.

"Woman" was an identity quietly born on the Saskatchewan prairie. It originated in British-Canadian ideals of woman as domestic angel and was reinforced by numerous popular and official discourses and policies. Government-sponsored literature promoting western Canada, for example, coded women's roles separately from men's. Desirable male homesteaders were portrayed as strong, capable, and hard working. Women were described as wives and helpmates to a husband. Moreover, federal settlement policy promoted domesticity and separate spheres in the Homestead Act.<sup>9</sup> Even popular discourses found in

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<sup>8</sup>. Teresa de Lauretis, "Feminist Studies/Critical Studies: Issues, Terms and Contexts", in Teresa de Lauretis (ed.), Feminist Studies/Critical Studies, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp. 8-9.

<sup>9</sup>. The Dominion Lands Act stipulated that male, eighteen-year-old British subjects were entitled to apply for homesteads but a female qualified only if she could prove she was sole head of a family. Dominion Lands Act, September 1, 1908, Section 9 states: "1) Every person who is the sole head of a family, or, being a male, has attained the age of eighteen years, and who is a British subject, or declares intention to become a British subject and who makes application in the manner hereinafter provided, shall be entitled to obtain entry for a homestead for an area of available agricultural land, not exceeding one quarter section ...



newspapers and periodicals read by rural people supported separate spheres.<sup>10</sup> Angela Davis, in an extensive examination of the Grain Growers' Guide, one of the most widely circulated rural Canadian journals, concluded that "the founding publishers and editors [of the Guide] supported women's suffrage, encouraged women's participation in farm organizations and assumed that women would read the whole paper. But they retained the traditional concept of separate spheres of interests for men and women."<sup>11</sup> Advertisements, however, could be confusing to readers. While most ads did promote contemporary notions of separate spheres,

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2) In the case of any woman who, claiming to be the sole head of a family, makes application for entry for a homestead, if any doubt arises as to her status as the sole head of a family, the Minister may decide whether her application shall be granted or refused." These restrictions disadvantaged most women by forcing them to pay thousands of dollars for land before they started farming while qualified males had only to pay ten dollars up front. The purpose of the Dominion Lands Act and cheap homesteads was, therefore, to encourage families to settle in the West. It was not to encourage single women to become independent operators. Georgina Binnie-Clark, a woman who farmed north of Indian Head, notes in her autobiography that the Honourable Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior, met with Cora Hind of the Winnipeg Free Press to discuss women-farmers and homesteads. Binnie reports, "that he had arrived at a decision to refuse the expansion of the homestead law in order to permit women to homestead because he considered it would be against the main interest of the country ... Women, he assumes, are already averse to marriage, and he considered that to admit them to the opportunities of the land-grant would be to make them more independent of marriage than ever." Georgina Binnie-Clark, Wheat and Women, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979(1914)), p. 308. Binnie-Clark does not provide a date for the meeting, noting only that it was shortly before the fall of the Liberals (1911).

<sup>10</sup>. People were often very influenced by mass media. For example, in the mid 1950s, the Province of Saskatchewan Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life noted that "for many homemakers, apparently the radio, television, magazines, and newspapers represent their chief sources of new ideas about how to manage their homes and raise their families." Province of Saskatchewan Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life, Report #10, "The Home and Family in Rural Saskatchewan", (1956), p. 103.

<sup>11</sup>. Angela E. Davis, "Country Homemakers': The Daily Lives of Prairie Women as Seen Through the Woman's Page of the Grain Growers' Guide 1908-1928", in Donald H. Akenson (ed.), Canadian Papers in Rural History Vol. VIII, (Gananoque: Langdale Press, 1992), p. 165.

some definitely relayed messages that were antithetical to a system of distinct male and female spheres. The following poem, a 1910 advertisement for Royal Crown Soap found in The Rosetown Eagle, is illustrative of an ad that clearly points females towards the domestic sphere:

A Dear Little Girl At The Rink  
 Sat Down Just As Quick As A Wink.  
 Said She "I Don't See Why They Giggle At Me  
 It Is Very Polite - I Don't Think.  
 I'll Just Sling The Old Skates Out Of Sight  
 And Stay Home With My Mother At Night;  
 I Will Learn Light Housekeeping  
 With ROYAL CROWN SOAP  
 And May Soon Have A Home Of My Own  
 Don't You Hope;  
 That Will Beat Roller Skating All Right.<sup>12</sup>

Another example, a 1918 advertisement for Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound was headed with "MOTHERHOOD WOMAN'S JOY",<sup>13</sup> and left no doubt as to its message.

On the other hand, some advertisers conveyed images that were contrary to traditional notions of woman's "proper sphere". In May 1913 The Eagle ran an ad for wire fencing with a picture of a woman stringing the fence by herself and 1914 ads for Sherwin-Williams show women painting a floor and varnishing a bureau. Most advertisements, however, do show women baking bread, ironing, sewing or working at other such domestic duties.

Although the identity of "Woman" was new and unique, it was not a radical departure

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<sup>12</sup>. The Rosetown Eagle, March 12, 1910.

<sup>13</sup>. Ibid., March 7, 1918. The ad claimed that "among the virtues of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound is the ability to correct sterility in the cases of many women."

from contemporary gender conventions. Even though rural women assumed new identities and crafted new roles for themselves, they did not redefine "Woman" as being outside the boundaries of conventional thinking in terms of gender identification. There was no reconceptualizing of the family, no uncomfortable displacement of prevailing social constructions of sexual difference. "Woman" still referred to English-speaking, white, educated females of British-heritage. Little girls were still expected to learn from mother how to grow up "feminine", marry, and have families of their own.<sup>14</sup> What did change was that definitions of "Woman" and femininity were reinterpreted so that the demands of rural life seemed to fit within the accustomed norms for femininity.

Lorraine Garkovich and Janet Bokemeier provide an interesting example of how this process of reinterpreting gender roles for rural women worked. They suggest that the concept of domesticity was expanded to include the new responsibilities rural women assumed. For example, they discovered that when women did field work they were called "helpers and so the fieldwork was not their primary responsibility. When women did assume primary responsibility for particular enterprise activities, such as poultry, the activity was redefined from farm work to household work."<sup>15</sup> However, not only did this process redefine the sphere of women's responsibilities, it often increased women's work load. Even though

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<sup>14</sup>. The Rosetown Eagle ran an editorial on May 14, 1914 that clearly stated that mothers were responsible for daughters: "The mothers who are responsible for the girls who gad on the streets should stop and think what they are doing. They are at an impressionable age. Where will you have their impressions come from? - from off the streets, or from home. It is for the mothers to settle the question."

<sup>15</sup>. Lorraine Garkovich & Janet Bokemeier, "Agricultural Mechanization and American Farm Women's Economic Roles", in Wava G. Haney & Jane B. Knowles (eds.), Women & Farming: Changing Roles, Changing Structures, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), p. 218.

women were expected to work in the fields, the barn, or with some duty that was typically gender-marked as masculine, there was no reciprocal move by men to help women in the home. Women continued to be responsible for all domestic and household duties. Rural women, therefore, assumed what Veronica Strong-Boag calls a "double load" or Jane Marie Pederson labels a "second shift."<sup>16</sup> Yet, because it was all reinterpreted as "women's work", the label obscured just how much extra responsibility women were assuming.

Seena B. Kohl, in a study of southwestern Saskatchewan, agrees with Pederson and Strong-Boag and notes that "the frontier period set the standard for later generations."<sup>17</sup> For example, in an undeveloped rural setting gender-marked activities were not always clearly delineated, particularly if a family had no boys to assign to so-called male tasks. In such instances women and girls often assumed extra responsibilities. But, whereas women in the early settlement years might have thought that their extra duties were temporary, many of their daughters grew up thinking women's work automatically included responsibilities in the yard, barn or fields. One respondent to my history questionnaire revealed that in her experience boys and girls had "no difference in chores until [their] mid-teens" when they

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<sup>16</sup>. Veronica Strong-Boag, "Pulling in Double Harness or Hauling a Double Load: Women, Work and Feminism on the Canadian Prairie", in Journal of Canadian Studies Vol.21 No.3 (Fall 1986), p. 32. Jane Marie Pederson, Between Memory and Reality, p. 184. It is interesting to note that today's farm activists often use the term "triple load" when discussing the responsibilities of farm women today: farm work, family and paid employment. Nettie Wiebe, Women's President, National Farmer's Union, in-class discussion with WMST 398, June 3, 1993, University of Saskatchewan.

<sup>17</sup>. Seena B. Kohl, Working Together: Women and Family in Southwestern Saskatchewan, p. 34.

became "young ladies".<sup>18</sup> Another pointed out that since she was asthmatic, she "couldn't help in the barn and fields,"<sup>19</sup> implying that had she not been physically impaired, she would have done such work. Several other respondents indicated that as part of their regular childhood chores they had delivered milk, cared for animals, and helped at harvest-time. Most recognized, however, when they were doing what often was considered "boy's work", but none complained about it.

It is important to understand that although women and girls may have been assigned male-identified duties, they were still expected to be "Women". It was just that the definition of what it was to be a "Woman" had shifted. Female identity was restructured and redefined according to experience and varying expectations. Work was work in rural Saskatchewan and when something needed to be done it did not usually matter who did it as long as it was done right. Accordingly, definitions of what was "Women's" work became blurred as demands necessitated something be done or taken care of. The so-called distinct female and male separate spheres were renegotiated and redefined and "Woman's" sphere and corresponding responsibilities became increasingly elastic.

The new definition of "Womanhood" that was held up for British-Canadian settler-women in Saskatchewan was that they should be able to do just about anything, from farming to child rearing, without losing their femininity. For their daughters the definition was expanded to also include certain forms of paid employment. This new ideal, and the corresponding image of "Woman" derived from it, was a representative blend of fact and

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<sup>18</sup>. History Questionnaire #4.

<sup>19</sup>. History Questionnaire #1.

fiction, of reality and fantasy. There is no evidence that girls who grew up working with animals (milking cows, feeding pigs, grooming horses) or working in the field were unfeminized or lost their desirability as potential wives. On the contrary, a young woman who knew what work needed to be done in a rural locale and could then do it was of considerable value. However, a "Woman" still had to be a good housekeeper, cook, laundress and seamstress to maintain her status as "a good wife and mother".

Women generally agreed that the home was their domain and that it was their responsibility to set it up and properly maintain it. A Rosetown area woman recalled her first Canadian home during the settlement period: "I can't say that I ever got so homesick that I thought I had to go back because I tell you, I think I was so busy. You see, when I went into that shack that Jack had it was just bare walls, bare boards, bare everything. Well, in order to make it look like a home the first thing I did was to paper ... well, he was willing to paper, make it look like home."<sup>20</sup> Rose Seaman McLaughlin describes how she settled into her first home in Archydale: "So grow up Rose, I told myself. I shed a few tears in the dishpan, and decided that I had not been holding up my end. I hadn't done a thing to the house since the first week ... Now with a growing feeling of permanence, I set about feathering our nest, starting with the living room."<sup>21</sup> For both women appearances of home and homeliness were a priority. Structurally a shack was just a shack, or a sod house only a sod house, but once a "Woman" took over, it became a home. Both women began with cosmetic alterations,

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<sup>20</sup>. O., taped interview, no date.

<sup>21</sup>. Rose Seaman McLaughlin, Grainbuyer's Wife, (Regina: Focus Publishing, 1989), pp. 30-31.

visible representations of what home had meant somewhere else. Even though their new living arrangements were not like those they had left "at home", women adapted their surroundings to their needs and subsequently adapted themselves to their new surroundings. They became the place as much as the place became them.

The patterns of a woman's life did not, however, change much because of where she was situated. Circumstances may have differed, but location did not usually alter life-cycles or patterns. Most girls grew up expecting to marry, become mothers, raise families, and mature as grandmothers. Girls learned at a very young age what was required of them, what roles they were to fulfil, and which were proper behaviours for "polite" society. Rose Seaman McLaughlin recounted an exchange she had with a very young girl in the early 1940s: "there was a little girl to chat with along the familiar route, and we were always careful to hook the door if there were any boys around. 'We're girls', she would say daintily. 'We don't like boys. They swear. They throw stones. They pick up frogs.' 'Oh, boys are alright,' I would say not wanting her to have troublesome hang-ups later on. 'They do the hard dirty jobs for us,' and we'd giggle about their hard luck."<sup>22</sup> This is a very telling example of how girls learned the differences between male and female spheres. It is also an interesting example of the mixed messages about social identities children received. The adult woman here explains to the child that men do hard and dirty work while women are not expected to perform such work. Then the woman and the girl laugh about the plight of men, implying all the while that it is better to be a woman than a man and escape such dirty and hard work. Underlying all of this is the insinuation that women do not work hard. Hard work and dirt go

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<sup>22</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

together and, because women do not get dirty, their jobs cannot be considered work. This contradicts the words and writing of many, many rural women (including the adult in this scenario later in this same volume), who discuss how busy they were and how much hard work they routinely had to perform.

Social and cultural life-cycles are constructions of a particular time and space. In the period 1880-1950 a British-Canadian woman's life centred around family responsibilities. Dating or courting, weddings and marriage, pregnancy and childbirth were important milestones for young women. Let us examine each of these in turn to estimate the degree to which rural Saskatchewan women conformed to or departed from the external inherited model.

In Saskatchewan's settlement period there were not many single women and therefore not much dating took place. Many of the first settlers were single men who came west by themselves to find a homestead. Often they "batched" (lived on their own or with other men) until they could find a woman to take over domestic responsibilities. Susan Tucker recalled that "for several years I baked bread for several bachelors. They would buy two one hundred pound [sacks] of flour. I would have one sack in payment for baking the other one. This was fine, but it seemed as if I was always preparing extra meals for the bachelors when they came for their bread."<sup>23</sup>

Not all bachelors married as soon as possible; Charles Moxley recalled that "I batched until I could afford a housekeeper."<sup>24</sup> Lawrence Irwin Hockley, of the Indian Head area,

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<sup>23</sup>. Susan Tucker, SAB, S-X2, Q#1.

<sup>24</sup>. Charles Moxley, SAB, S-X2, Q#7.



remembered that "with my elder brothers I batched in Wide Awake district as early as 1902, where we had just acquired land. About 1908 I batched with an elder brother on his homestead."<sup>25</sup> Trevor D. of Indian Head was so anxious to have a housekeeper that in 1906 he wrote to Elizabeth D. in Qu'Appelle when he heard she would soon be leaving her employment there. He had a particular type of woman in mind, as he explained when he wrote to her: "I want a person that is neat and clean and jolly around the house and by what I have saw of you you would fit the bill." He added that he had not mentioned in town that he was looking for help because "if all the old women up town knew that I wanted a housekeeper they would be sending every old cranky maid that came around to me for a job", implying that employment as a housekeeper was often expected to lead to a more permanent arrangement.<sup>26</sup>

Single men presented a unique problem in domesticating the West. Culturally accepted gender roles assigned to men the tasks of breaking the land and "organizing the political economy" -- as much as was possible -- while women "civilized" and domesticated the environment. Women represented families, homes, children, society, and a stable future. Because women were just as central to the larger task of building a society as were men, every effort was made to find wives for bachelors. Susan Tucker, of the Rosetown area, thought only women teachers were hired in her district because, as she wrote, "[I] am not sure

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<sup>25</sup>. Lawrence Irwin Hockley, SAB, S-X2, Q#1.

<sup>26</sup>. Letter from Trevor D. to Elizabeth D., March 19, 1906. Personal collection of Wayne Horsman, Indian Head.

but [I] believe [the] motive was in marrying off the bachelors."<sup>27</sup> Tucker's comments betray not only local concerns about single men, but she also touches on a much larger issue. If the future of the Canadian West was to be assured, families with ties to the land and their communities were urgently required.

There were few single women living in Saskatchewan in the province's early years so if a man wanted to marry he might as well go "back home" to find a bride. Robert Whitfield Sansom, for example, came west on a harvest excursion in 1905 and settled in the Idaleen area (fourteen miles south of Rosetown) the following year. He returned to New Brunswick in 1907, married Jennie Hassack and returned to his homestead. Jennie followed him west in 1908. She was twenty-six years old.<sup>28</sup>

As the West became more populated and families more prevalent, girls and women of marrying age could be found in the local community. At that point, communities took on more insular characteristics as neighbours became relatives. Kinship networks became localized and extended families were common. This often helped to bridge ties to the past with the unfamiliar present situation and locale. The extended family might include grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles. Into the twentieth century it was not uncommon to have several generations living under one roof or in very close proximity.<sup>29</sup> Many respondents remembered their grandparents living with them at different times throughout their lives. One

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<sup>27</sup>. Susan Tucker, SAB, S-X2, Q#3.

<sup>28</sup>. Robert Whitfield Sansom, SAB, S-X2, Q#2, 7 & 9.

<sup>29</sup>. The Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life reported that "most of the families (interviewed by the commissioners) had relatives living within ten miles and visited them weekly." Report #10, "The Home and Family in Rural Saskatchewan", (1956) p. 78.

Indian Head area woman noted that her paternal grandparents had lived with her family.<sup>30</sup> Another explained that "my mother's mother stayed part-time with my mother and another sister for several years after she was widowed until she died."<sup>31</sup> Yet another woman recalled that "we lived with [my grandparents] sometimes and I spent all my summers with them until I was eleven years old."<sup>32</sup>

Dating and courting became more common as boys and men came calling on unmarried girls and women. Doris Q. spoke of the "courting parlour" at a neighbour's house where as boys, her husband and his friend would hide behind the couch so they could hear what was going on when family members were courting.<sup>33</sup> Generally, however, courting and dating were not so formal in rural settings. Indian Head and Rosetown were both noted for the number of dances and social activities where young people could socialize. Both were very active communities and there were plenty of opportunities for single people to get out and about in chaperoned and other suitable group settings.

Several respondents were eager to share their (romanticized) stories of how their parents and grandparents met. Glenda T., for example, recounted the story told to her by her father: "one day [he was] working out at the farm ... and he said 'we were working around the yard and all of a sudden this horse came tearing into the yard with this girl on it and her

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<sup>30</sup>. History Questionnaire #6.

<sup>31</sup>. History Questionnaire #4.

<sup>32</sup>. History Questionnaire #5.

<sup>33</sup>. Doris Q., personal interview, March 1993.

hair was flowing out behind her and she threw her rope on me and she's had me ever since!"<sup>34</sup>

There was no mention of her mother's thoughts on this story.

Family and friends often introduced young people to each other or arranged for them to meet. Sisters might suggest to brothers that they ask out their girlfriends, or brothers might introduce their sisters to their pals. It does not appear that parents had much to do with arranging dates. Ivy E. explained that her brother introduced her to his hockey pal, whom she later married after he pursued her relentlessly. "Anywhere I went," she said, "he was there and I don't know how he knew I was going," although she suspects her brother told him.<sup>35</sup> Joan T. recalled that she "went home for a weekend and coming back on the train this young girl was in uniform who was [his] sister and we got off the train and the people I boarded with knew he was coming to pick [her] up so he picked me up too and dropped me off at their place and then went on home and I don't know what was said on the way home, and he said 'Maybe I should ask that teacher to go out to the show,' and [his sister] said, 'I don't know why you don't. She seems like a nice girl.' That's how it happened."<sup>36</sup> Faye H. laughed as she told the story of her first formal date with the man she later married: "I saw him in his working clothes, you know how the mechanic looks in an overall and we had been going together a little while and a dance came along and he wanted to take me to this dance and the funniest thing, I can still remember, he came to this door and he was all dressed up and I'd never seen him with a suit on and I thought, 'Now who is this man?' It was really

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<sup>34</sup>. Glenda T., personal interview, March 1993.

<sup>35</sup>. Ivy E., personal interview, February 1993.

<sup>36</sup>. Joan T., personal interview, April 1993.

funny, you know. So, I always said, 'Clothes made quite a difference to a man.'<sup>37</sup>

Courting and dating changed quite dramatically when world war drew many young, single men away from home. World War II, in particular, had a profound effect on both Indian Head and Rosetown. With so many young men away during the war years, social situations were very different than they had been prior to the war. Both towns still held frequent dances and fund raisers for war-related work, but for many young women, their beau was overseas. Bill and Nancy I. discussed how they had been introduced by her friend prior to the war and how they corresponded for the six years he was in Europe. Then in 1946, when Bill returned to Indian Head, they were married.<sup>38</sup> This scenario was common in Indian Head and Rosetown as young men came home from the war and married local women.<sup>39</sup>

Weddings were not, as Nancy I. explained, "a big spread like they [are] now."<sup>40</sup> The marriage ceremony often was held in the manse of the local church or in the bride or groom's parents' back yard. A small luncheon or tea followed. The average number of guests was between twenty and thirty people. Although the celebrations were not lavish, women still took special care with their bridal ensemble. Maude Amelia Bate, married during the settlement period, made a special note that she had "bought [her] corsets to get married at

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<sup>37</sup>. Faye H., personal interview, February 1993.

<sup>38</sup>. Bill I. & Nancy I., personal interview, March 1993.

<sup>39</sup>. In one sample of women I questioned, of fourteen, nine married men returning from the war (1943-1949).

<sup>40</sup>. Nancy I., personal interview, March 1993.

Eaton's [catalogue]."<sup>41</sup> During the Depression and World War II, brides commonly wore a suit or dress and jacket -- an outfit they would wear again. Although brides had to be practical in planning their wedding, there were always certain "necessities" a bride just had to have. Shoes were the coveted item for Doris Q. who also sent her order to the Eaton's catalogue. As she told the story of her wedding preparations she began to laugh heartily: "I got the shoes out of the Eaton's catalogue and they were a little bit too tight, so someone said 'We should put those shoes in some water and then put them on when they're wet and stretch them.' So, you know, the heels they all tracked, I guess they were painted, so we sent them back to Eatons ... and I probably got a new pair!"<sup>42</sup>

A charivari was sometimes held when a couple was first married, although more so in the settlement period than in later years. Alice Light recalled that when she married in 1918, "Folks in the district chivaried us. We heard that they were coming so we hid on the stairs with the coal oil lamps out, making out that we weren't home, the usual custom. The din they made outside was terrific, as there were about fifty persons all with bells, tin cans and anything that would make a noise. When at last we lit the lamps and went to let them in, they were ready for a dance ..."<sup>43</sup> Although a honeymoon was not common, some couples splurged and went away, if only briefly. A few went to Banff, a popular western Canadian honeymoon spot since the 1920s. Others went to Regina or Saskatoon to stay at "fancy" hotels such as the Hotel Saskatchewan. Those with less time or resources went visiting

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<sup>41</sup>. Maude Amelia Bate, SAB, S-X2, Q#2.

<sup>42</sup>. Doris Q., personal interview, March 1993.

<sup>43</sup>. Alice Light, "Alice Light Memoirs", SAB, A211, p. 14.

friends and relatives. Doris Q. explained that she and her husband spent their wedding night at her mother-in-law's house. The following day the three of them drove to Saskatoon to stay with the mother-in-law's friends.<sup>44</sup>

The period of courtship or dating prior to marriage was, for most respondents, a time they remembered as being enormously fun. Many recalled an endless round of social activities with numerous friends. Even girls who lived on the farm came into town with family at least once a week, on Saturday night, and had an opportunity to meet with friends.<sup>45</sup> If no formal social event was scheduled -- a dance or picnic, for instance -- girls and young women still wanted to be part of "the crowd". Nora H. recalled that during the 1930s "the young girls, like I was, I can remember we'd walk around the blocks and walk around and walk around, all night. That's what we did."<sup>46</sup>

But regardless of all of the fun and activity of this period prior to marriage, it was also a time when girls were learning unwritten rules about becoming "Women". In chaperoned situations they socialized with boys and young men and honed their social skills. Additionally, girls witnessed how other young women "successfully" attracted "suitable" husbands. These informal lessons served to reinforce the lessons they were officially being taught at school --

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<sup>44</sup>. Doris Q., personal interview, March 1993.

<sup>45</sup>. Once girls who attended rural school reached grade 11 they came into town to attend the high school. In this way they had the opportunity to get to know girls from "home" and town.

<sup>46</sup>. Nora H., personal interview, April 1993.

that their primary function in life was to become a wife and homemaker.<sup>47</sup>

After marriage the next phase of a "Woman's" life was pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood. Although girls were partially trained at home and at school to accept the responsibilities of homemaking, few understood sex, contraception, or childbirth. In most families, sex was rarely or never discussed. Many children were completely uninformed about where their baby siblings came from. In discussing their experiences during the inter-war period, several respondents noted their confusion with regards to childbirth. Connie Q. of Qu'Appelle recalled that "We never knew there was a baby coming. Of course, we never even thought of such things until after the baby was born and we had a new sister or brother, whatever it was. We were really surprised."<sup>48</sup> Karen I. and Zelda C., sisters from the Indian Head area, explained that their sex education "could [be] put on the head of a pin almost. But we herded cows so we saw life as it was. We saw the animals and that's probably where we ... that's about all we learned. The thing that I learned about birth control was reading Reader's Digest. I promise you I learned lots of stuff out of that book."<sup>49</sup> Another Indian Head area woman noted that the biggest change she had seen in her lifetime was "the wonderful option of family planning, which for a woman is the most liberating thing since electricity."<sup>50</sup> And Nora H. lamented, "It's kind of a shame that girls especially don't get some

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<sup>47</sup>. Chapter IV discusses the provincial curriculum and how it clearly guided girls in the "domestic arts".

<sup>48</sup>. Connie Q., personal interview, April 1993.

<sup>49</sup>. Karen I. & Zelda C., personal interview, May 1993.

<sup>50</sup>. History Questionnaire #5.



kind of instruction on how to [raise kids]."<sup>51</sup>

Pregnancy, which generally followed soon after marriage, was sometimes viewed as an illness, even by women. In 1912 Mrs. Cutt of the Indian Head area recorded in her diary, "Dr. Hart here & Nurse Potter. I took sick. Cissie here. Baby was born at twenty minutes to two."<sup>52</sup> She remained in bed for ten days after the child's birth. The day she got out of bed, the doctor was in attendance. Similarly, thirty-seven years later, the practice of a long resting period after birth continued. Nora H. recalled spending two weeks in hospital after the birth of her first child. She said, "Yes, they kept you in two weeks and about the twelfth day you could sit up and dangle your feet over the edge of the bed ... By the time I had the third child they were getting you to walk in a week, like they'd let you go home in a week, and then with the last one, about ten years between the oldest and the youngest, well, I think I was in for four days or something and I felt far better going home on the fifth day than I did on the fifteenth day."<sup>53</sup> The most interesting point here is the contradiction between the image of the hardy, rural woman who is strong and sturdy, and the image of the frail, weak, new mother who required two weeks of bed rest after childbirth. Apparently, "Women" were only expected to be strong when doing what was previously gender-marked as male, but were encouraged to be typically feminine and delicate in undeniably female roles.

Midwives frequently attended births in the years before hospitals were built. Having

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<sup>51</sup>. Nora H., personal interview, April 1993.

<sup>52</sup>. 1912 Pocket diary of Mrs. James Cutt, Indian Head Museum. Entries previous to the day the child was born do not mention the pregnancy.

<sup>53</sup>. Nora H., personal interview, April 1993.

skills as a midwife gave a woman a distinct identity, one that was highly valued. Several respondents proudly discussed a relative's prowess as a midwife. Ivy E. recalled that during the settlement period "Grandma E. brought over two hundred children into this world and never lost a mother or a child ... She hooked mats all summer. She'd say 'you know some of those women when they get out of their bed after bearing a child, they come out on a dirt floor' and she wanted something for them to step on ... You see, Grandma E. thought it would lift [their] spirits."<sup>54</sup> Mary Elizabeth Davis also commented on women helping women during delivery during the same era: "Women bore their children in their own homes in those days, often ... indeed generally ... without the aid of doctor or professional nurse, as even if these were summoned, the 'Stork' frequently arrived before they did. I like to think now of the times when I was able to go to a sister woman whose 'hour had come upon her' and of the dear babies usually washed and dressed before Father returned from his slow and anxious journey to Regina for help."<sup>55</sup> Francis and Frank D., on the other hand, defended their grandmother who did not have a perfect delivery record: "Grandma D. was a midwife and she went one place and the woman was up washing the ceiling. She was pregnant and I guess she was pretty close to being due ... and Grandma D. said, 'You're crazy'. And the woman said, 'You think I'd let a little thing like that bother me', and of course, she lost the baby."<sup>56</sup>

Although births outside of marriage generally were not considered "polite" conversation, some respondents did discuss local rumours and stories. It is interesting to note

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<sup>54</sup>. Ivy E., personal interview, February 1993.

<sup>55</sup>. Mary Elizabeth Davis, SAB, S-X2, Q#2.

<sup>56</sup>. Francis D. & Frank D., personal interview, May 1993.

that when women of older generations were asked about children born out of wedlock they often responded as Nadine Q. did by saying, "I don't know if there was much of that or not."<sup>57</sup> Younger women were more frank: "Back then, there was also, I don't know, some families would have sent them to homes for unwed mothers to places like Winnipeg. Like if you're going to hide a girl for a year then you'd send her to Winnipeg or somewhere like that, or for five or six months, or if you had some relative down on the farm, like our great auntie ... she had an illegitimate child but she was raised by her mother, not like they were sisters but for all intents and purposes they were, and those who didn't know, didn't know and those who knew, knew."<sup>58</sup>

Unplanned pregnancies were not unfamiliar to rural folks. In Indian Head a rather elaborate story evolved that covered up the original circumstances of a birth out of wedlock for an entire generation. A young, single mother came to work as a housekeeper for an Indian Head farmer in 1906. He subsequently adopted the woman's child although the housekeeper and the farmer never married because he was already married to a woman who had left him several years earlier. In 1907 the housekeeper became pregnant with the farmer's child and went to Winnipeg where the child was delivered in a private maternity hospital. This second child was raised by the housekeeper's mother in Saskatoon. Obviously, the second child would have created some scandal as it would be apparent that the farmer was the father. Even more interesting is that almost everyone in the community knew the situation. When the adopted child grew up she began to refer to her mother -- the

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<sup>57</sup>. Nadine Q., personal interview, March 1993.

<sup>58</sup>. Karen I. & Zelda C., personal interview, May 1993.

housekeeper -- as her aunt to hide her own so-called illegitimate birth. It was not until after the death of the adopted daughter in 1988 that her children discovered that the woman whom they thought was their aunt (the housekeeper) was in fact their grandmother. The rest of the community knew, but no one ever told the grandchildren.<sup>59</sup>

After childbirth, raising children was the next phase of a rural "Woman's" life. It was commonly held that "Women" should care for children because of their supposedly inherent maternal instincts, their civility, and their ability to act as role models for their daughters. Lois X. of Rosetown tells a wonderfully illustrative story of how as a young girl during the 1920s she followed her mother's lead in an unfamiliar situation. She began by explaining that her mother "was a lady and that she knew how to do things graciously but she never made any fuss about it." Lois continued, "Everybody came to our home and we went to everybody else's homes. If they did things differently, well that was fine. I guess it sounds really sort of snobbish but it's not [in] the least that. I can remember going out when I was just fairly small and we went to a home and for dinner and I didn't know where to put my bread and butter because they didn't have a bread and butter plate and I remember looking at it and wondering, 'What am I going to do with this?' and then watching my mother put hers on the side of her big plate, of course. But I really didn't know how I was going to manage without a bread and butter plate!"<sup>60</sup>

Family and maintenance of family members was the linchpin of domesticity and

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<sup>59</sup>. This story was pieced together from diaries, clippings, and letters from the private collection of Wayne Horsman, Indian Head.

<sup>60</sup>. Lois X., personal interview, April 1993.

woman's traditional sphere. But, again, many women were ill prepared for the responsibilities of motherhood. Nora H.'s experiences were not uncommon: "I remember when I had my first baby (in the 1940s)," she said. "I remember looking at him in the crib every morning or in the little basket and I thought, 'Oh, I kept you living for another day.' I was as inexperienced at raising kids as I was at cooking."<sup>61</sup>

Fortunately for busy, rural homemakers young boys and girls played together and entertained themselves with games and sporting activities. However, while young kids may have played together, they were also frequently taught about separation -- the separate or "proper" spheres of "Women" and men. As young children grew older and were channelled into segregated activities, girls and boys formed friendships with other children of their own sex. Even though they played with boys as children, as teenagers young women were expected to chum with girls. In other words, once girls reached the age where they were considered "young ladies", it was no longer appropriate for them to play with boys.

Although young girls and boys often did the same or similar chores, girls were also expected to learn childcare, household maintenance, cooking, and the so-called domestic arts from their mother. Many young women, however, were not prepared for the duties that became theirs as wives and mothers in an underdeveloped rural setting. Kathleen Strange poignantly recalled how inept she felt when she arrived in the West from Britain in 1920: "How vividly I recall my first day on the farm, and the almost overwhelming realization it

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<sup>61</sup>. Nora H., personal interview, April 1993.

brought me of my total lack of knowledge of the kind of life that lay ahead of me."<sup>62</sup> An Indian Head woman exclaimed that she spent her "first year of marriage learning to cook!"<sup>63</sup> After 1911 girls and women could learn domestic skills through various programs developed through the Extension Division of the College of Agriculture, University of Saskatchewan. Most programs were offered through the Homemakers' Clubs organized by the University. The Women's Section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, formed 1913, also offered programs for women and girls but these programs were not generally considered domestic training; the organized farm women focused on economic and political education for women. The value of domestic training programs developed in the province was the practical nature of the courses -- how to cook, sew, clean house, provide medical aid. Kerrie Strathy concludes in her analysis of the Homemakers' Clubs that "implicit in the promotion of Homemakers' Clubs was the belief that women's primary role was that of homemaker."<sup>64</sup> Strathy demonstrates that not only did government policy attempt to ensure that traditional gender roles would be maintained by excluding women from registering homesteads, but also that educational policies of the province's University would endorse separate spheres.

Local clubs and associations for girls and women that helped reinforce the identity of "Woman" were also developed out of these university programs. In Indian Head, for example, the Peppy Pals Homecraft Club was organized in 1935 by Mary Agnes Pearen to

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<sup>62</sup>. Kathleen Strange, *With the West in Her Eyes*, (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, 1945), p. 45.

<sup>63</sup>. History Questionnaire #5.

<sup>64</sup>. Kerrie A. Strathy, "Saskatchewan Women's Institutes; The Rural Women's University 1911-1986", Master of Continuing Education thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1987.

teach girls and young women about homemaking. Members joined when they were between twelve and fourteen years of age and generally remained in the club until marriage. Peppy Pals also attended the annual Homemakers' Convention held at the University of Saskatchewan, which suggests they were connected to the Homemakers' Clubs. Nora H. recalled that the Peppy Pals received information and programs from the University. She quickly added "that it really helped her over the years in homemaking."<sup>65</sup> Nora also made a point of noting that "I often notice though, that the kids that were in 4H and in the Peppy Pals or whatever, they're the leaders [today]."<sup>66</sup> There was also a local Indian Head boys club, The Grain Club, led by Carl Pearen, Mary Agnes' husband. Occasionally the boy's and girl's clubs got together for functions but generally they met separately so girls could learn to be "Women" and homemakers while boys could learn to be "Men".

Being busy and working hard are constant themes in rural women's writings regardless of what period is examined. In many instances, the work load was almost the same from generation to generation. Of the 1920s Jean L. explained, "Well, you see I had five kids in about seven years. I didn't do much besides raise a family. When we lived down here we had -- I've always had a garden -- when we were out on the farm at Fortune we had cows and pigs and chickens and I did all my own, made all my own butter, canned all my own meat and vegetables, of course we didn't have deep freezers and everything then, we had to put them in jars. We never had too many fruit trees or anything like that. Had our own buttermilk ..."<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>. Nora H., personal interview, April 1993.

<sup>66</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>. Jean L., personal interview, June 1993.

Of the 1930s, Naomi Q. said that before she left for school, "I'd have to have the vegetables ready for dinner and [the boys had] to have the water in ... There were three of us girls. We had a fairly big house. It was all on one floor. One of us would have to do the front two bedrooms and the front room, the next person would have to do the livingroom, put all the beds in the bedroom, the next person would do the kitchen and we had to have it all done before we went to school."<sup>68</sup> Regardless of the era, there was always much daily work for rural girls and women.

Women's work-load, however, did receive a modicum of recognition in the local press. The Qu'Appelle Vidette, in 1887, ran an editorial stating "that women need some consolation. Consider how much of their work perishes in the day that is done, and has to be repeated day after day, and then say whether it is a great marvel that some of them have been ill advised enough to talk occasionally about their 'narrow sphere' ... there is poetry in her life, it is true, but there is an enormous amount of prose. And sometimes, I wish, when a man expresses horror at some woman's escaping from her housework to a wider field of action that he would try a long continued course of dusting, washing-up, and mending stockings, and see if he ever found it at all monotonous."<sup>69</sup> Whether Qu'Appelle Valley women received any "consolation" after the article appeared is unknown.

From the settlement period through to the 1950s, it was rural electrification that made the greatest difference in rural women's work-load. However, in most cases electricity did not come to the farm until the 1950s, meaning that most women simply did without it before

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<sup>68</sup>. Naomi Q., personal interview, March 1993.

<sup>69</sup>. The Qu'Appelle Vidette, January 6, 1897.



then. The Saskatchewan Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life, 1952-1957, discovered that some farm people were only then beginning to realize that electricity was not a luxury. The commissioners also noted that "in its early stages the social effects created by the introduction of electric power on the farm are perhaps even more important than the economic effects."<sup>70</sup> The submissions women made to the Commission outline their anticipation of a reduced work load when electricity was introduced. One woman explained: "I believe lack of electrical power has been a large handicap and grievance. Homes cannot be modernized without it. How many women have ruined health from overwork?" After discussing the "extra work involved in just one task -- canning", she concluded with her observations on the results of overworked farm women: "What time has the farm woman for gracious living? Or what energy would she have left? Early risers cannot be out in the evening. To take a little time when tired and busy to encourage children at play or start them playing together is a great effort. Usually time spent thus means extra work late. The reason for so many farm accidents is because the mother has no time to supervise her children at play."<sup>71</sup>

Constant challenges to the contemporary paradigm of distinct male and female spheres resulted in a continuous reinterpretation of what it was to be a rural "Woman". Whereas settler-women did male-characterized jobs thinking them a temporary measure, their daughters grew up doing that same work but not thinking much about it. There are numerous

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<sup>70</sup>. Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life, Report #11, "Farm Electrification", (1957), p. 1.

<sup>71</sup>. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

recorded examples of settler-women undertaking activities that were at the time considered somewhat remarkable or unusual, that only one generation later seemed commonplace for women. For example, Euphemia Riddick Dixon "thought nothing of getting on the train and going down to Winnipeg and doing her shopping" during the 1880s.<sup>72</sup> Annie Yule's mother "learned to ride and shoot, bake and sew" by the time she was twelve years old (1889), a perfect example of girls learning both male and female gender-marked activities.<sup>73</sup> One of Shirley Keyes Thompson's "first undertakings that spring of 1916 was to make doors for the lower section of the homemade dish cupboard."<sup>74</sup> And Susan G. of Indian Head remembered that during the 1930s she and her sister would take a team of horses into town before school and sell the cream.<sup>75</sup> The list goes on and on; women driving tractors and hauling water, driving wagons of wheat to the elevator sometimes forty miles away. These were all activities that generally fell within the traditionally masculine sphere -- building, shooting, travelling alone, commerce -- that were originally considered noteworthy for women. However, regardless of some women's ability to transcend the proscriptions of contemporary gender roles, it was still, as Susan G. explained, "a man's world ... I can remember my mother saying to me though 'It's a man's world and you'll find out,' and you know, it was. It was a man's

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<sup>72</sup>. "Family history", personal collection of Ivy E., Indian Head.

<sup>73</sup>. "Annie Yule, Family History", personal collection of Arnold Dales, Indian Head, circa 1970.

<sup>74</sup>. Shirley Keyes Thompson, "A Prairie Wife's Tale", in Saskatchewan History Vol. XLIV No.1 (Winter 1992), p. 22.

<sup>75</sup>. Susan G., personal interview, May 1993.

world because they made all the decisions."<sup>76</sup>

Driving, in particular, was at first considered to be a masculine activity, yet references to women drivers are numerous. Many family histories specifically note that "grandma" or "mother" learned to drive when automobiles were still new or rare on the prairies. Jean L. of the Rosetown area explained that when "the boys (her brothers) left home, why, I had to do the driving."<sup>77</sup> Glenda T. of Indian Head fondly recounted this story of her mother's first driving experience: "I know my mother, she was one of the, I guess she was the first person, lady, to drive a car. She was only sixteen, I think, and they were on the farm where her dad lived out in Jubilee and she didn't have any meat for dinner. She had to cook the meals for all these men [at harvest] and she didn't have any meat and Grandpa's car was sitting out there so she got out, got in the car and drove it to town and I guess the butcher just about fainted when he saw her coming in and he said, 'How did you get to town?', and she said, 'I drove myself in'. He said, 'You can't drive' and she said 'Oh yes I can and I need some meat for dinner for all those men', so she got a whole bunch of sausages, and when Grandpa came in for dinner he said, 'I forgot to go to town for the meat' and he said, 'Where did you get this?' and she said, 'I drove into town and got it'. Well, he was horrified to think that she would drive to town. She kept driving from then on."<sup>78</sup> Nettie N., also of Indian Head, explained that she drove her husband around on business during the 1920s and 1930s. "Oh, I did the driving," she said. "All over the country. I love the car. And then he often, he did so much

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<sup>76</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>77</sup>. Jean L., personal interview, June 1993.

<sup>78</sup>. Glenda T., personal interview, March 1993.

driving and he would have some of his work at night and it saved his eyes. You see, so I drove everywhere, all over, and south of town and across the valley and all over. Oh I loved the car. I'd drive anywhere, anytime."<sup>79</sup>

Not all women were as adventurous or as willing to assume new roles as were those who learned to drive. In many cases, tradition was maintained as men and women followed customary patterns of gender-specific roles or duties. For example, Rose Seaman McLaughlin reports that one morning during the 1930s she took a bucket of soapy water over to her husband's grain office to wash the windows for him. However, "Roy said nix -- that is his domain. He intends to do his own books too -- I am glad of that ... so I left the suds where they might be needed and came home to do some baking, which is what I am supposed to do."<sup>80</sup> Rose was effectively shut out of her husband's place of work -- the male public sphere of commerce and business -- and relegated to the kitchen where she presumed she belonged anyway.

Responsibility for financial affairs is another example of a traditionally male, gender-marked duty that remained within the purview of many rural men. Particularly in the settlement years, women were legally restricted in the financial obligations they could assume or the property they could own. The Dominion Lands Act, for example, and the lack of protection for married women with regard to ownership of family property (or more accurately, a husband's property and/or estate), are but two examples of how women were

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<sup>79</sup>. Nettie N., personal interview, February 1993.

<sup>80</sup>. Rose Seaman McLaughlin, Grainbuyer's Wife, p. 27.

limited in ownership of property.<sup>81</sup> Of thirteen Indian Head women asked who was responsible for the family finances, eight replied that their husband was. One also noted that "he insisted in the last years I learned to handle the finances. When he died suddenly of cardiac arrest I was most thankful for his previous guidance."<sup>82</sup> Four other women stated that they shared financial responsibilities with their husbands, although two qualified their statement. One decided that both she and her husband were responsible, but then added "mostly husband."<sup>83</sup> The other noted that she took part in the decision-making process but that her husband was still ultimately responsible.<sup>84</sup>

Although men generally controlled financial affairs, that does not mean women were unaware of the family's financial situation or that they were kept out of the decision-making process regarding finances. Jane Marie Pederson discusses women's opportunities to participate in the decision-making process in conjunction with women's power and status in the family. Citing six American sociological studies conducted between 1937 and 1984, Pederson concludes that there was a "persisting pattern of egalitarian decision-making on

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<sup>81</sup>. Interestingly enough, by 1920 banks were trying to attract new customers with advertising that proposed farm women have their own bank accounts. For example, the Rosetown Eagle ran the following ad for the Royal Bank of Canada on November 11, 1920:

"The Farmer's Wife Should Have a Banking Account. Sometimes the money received from the sale of her eggs and butter is not deposited in the bank and she gets no benefit from them. The staff of this bank is trained to be especially courteous to ladies not familiar with banking ways."

<sup>82</sup>. History Questionnaire #1.

<sup>83</sup>. History Questionnaire #9.

<sup>84</sup>. History Questionnaire #3.

farms."<sup>85</sup> She adds that "men and women shared in making important decisions about financing and the allocation of farm resources, furnishings and maintaining the home, and the socialization of children."<sup>86</sup> The findings of the Province of Saskatchewan Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life, 1952-1957, support Pederson's conclusions. Of 160 women interviewed, commissioners discovered that "for only two kinds of decisions was the father indisputably the most influential family member ... deciding about the planting of crops and deciding to buy machinery."<sup>87</sup> Only 70 of the 160 women reported that the husband was the most influential family member for deciding to borrow money, suggesting that for over half of the women surveyed, some type of joint decision was made or that the women had control of the finances.<sup>88</sup>

Several of this study's respondents concurred with the idea of joint decision-making agreeing, for example, that women kept the books for the family enterprise.<sup>89</sup> Nora H., in

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<sup>85</sup>. Jane Marie Pederson, Between Memory and Reality, p. 179.

<sup>86</sup>. Ibid., pp. 176-177.

<sup>87</sup>. Province of Saskatchewan Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life, Report #10, "The Home and Family in Rural Saskatchewan", p. 74. 135 of the 160 women reported that their husband was most influential in deciding what crops to plant, when and where, and 100 reported that their husband was most influential in deciding to buy machinery. "Most influential" is defined as "in a check of respective roles of husband, wife and children in various decisions, the individual indicated definitely emerged as the most influential person for a given type of decision"(p. 73). The Commission also found that regarding the "father-centred decision making" scores, "no significant differences were noted based on the social and economic factors analyzed"(p. 87).

<sup>88</sup>. Ibid., p. 73.

<sup>89</sup>. This supports Seena B. Kohl's findings in the 1950s and 1960s. Kohl noted that "women's participation spans virtually the entire range of enterprise activities" including keeping the books (p. 68). In Kohl's sample of women doing bookkeeping, she found that

discussing her mother's illiteracy, noted that "[mother] couldn't do what other women did, like to manage the finances, and dad always had to keep them."<sup>90</sup> Jan U. insisted that it was more common for women than men to look after the finances: "I think the men were always too busy," she said. "There was a lot of chores and cows and pigs and chickens and I think maybe the women, even though there was big families, they always had a time when they could sit down and do that up, where the men were outside all day."<sup>91</sup> When this same respondent was asked about women keeping for themselves the money they raised from selling home-made butter, she at first replied that she had kept the money for herself. Then she added, "Well you know, you had to buy groceries with it or whatever the kids needed. I wasn't saving up for myself."<sup>92</sup>

Even though many women did participate in the family decision-making process, they often were not considered an equal partner. Sometimes there were power struggles within families. Although the law and tradition may have been on the side of male prerogative, women were, however, able to assert themselves in other ways. Joan T. of Rosetown, in recalling how she finally got a refrigerator in the 1940s, provides an interesting example of how she was able to exert her influence and get what she thought she needed: "Well, I said, 'Look. If Jack buys that car, he's going to buy a fridge.' I said, 'I need the fridge worse than

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21% (18 women) did it in 1961, and 19% (12 women) in 1972 (p. 94). Seena B. Kohl, Working Together: Women and Family in Southwestern Saskatchewan.

<sup>90</sup>. Nora H., personal interview, April 1993.

<sup>91</sup>. Jan U., personal interview, April 1993.

<sup>92</sup>. Ibid.

I need the car' ... and boy I stayed with it and he bought the car and he bought the fridge, but he didn't like buying the fridge but I said to myself, 'I've put up with that long enough ...'"<sup>93</sup>

When asked how their life was different from that of their mother or grandmother's life, respondents had a variety of answers. Most said their mother was more isolated and had worked harder than they had. Three Indian Head area sisters-in-law in particular saw substantial differences in their lives from that of their mothers'. "Well, of course it was [different]. You see our mothers' lives, it was in the dirty thirties so that everything was different for everybody, wasn't it really? Of course, now we're more affluent or something ... and I think today, I think people don't work as hard as they've got more and they're not satisfied, a lot of them ... You know, kids today they have no chores to do and the same at school. Their fun is there for them. They don't have to make their own fun whereas you did when you lived out in the country ... But see, society has changed; everything has changed."<sup>94</sup> This was a common response -- that life was generally easier now than it had been in the past.

Hugh T. of Rosetown, agreed that life was easier today than it had been during the 1930s when he was a young man. He explained: "Well, my wife and I, my first wife, we were never spoiled because we were too busy making a living but my family are spoiled. I don't mean spoiled rotten, but they're spoiled because of the things they have, and my grandchildren ... you just can't believe it and there's such a difference from now till then."<sup>95</sup>

Joan T., however, had quite a different story. Whereas most elderly female

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<sup>93</sup>. O., taped interview, no date.

<sup>94</sup>. Doris Q., personal interview, March 1993.

<sup>95</sup>. Hugh T., personal interview, May 1993.



respondents claimed that their life had been easier than their mother's life had been, Joan's life had taken the opposite course. Joan's mother had led a relatively comfortable life in town during the settlement period. Joan, on the other hand, had gone from town to live on a farm after she married. She described her very hectic day-to-day work-load of the 1930s and 1940s and then added, "My girls say, 'How did you do it all mother?' But everybody did it so you didn't think anything of it. [I] grew a big garden and when we got the locker plant in Indian Head that was a real life saver too because then you didn't have to can all these vegetables, make all that jam and jelly and can meat and like. I don't even remember my mother canning but then we were right beside the store ..."<sup>96</sup>

Perhaps the most interesting exchange occurred when a husband and wife, Connie and Ken Q., were separately asked about how women's lives today were different than in the past. When Ken was asked if there was much difference between his wife's life and his mother's, he replied, "Not very much."<sup>97</sup> He argued that his mother had scrubbed floors, fed threshing crews, baked and cooked, did laundry in a wash tub -- all things he remembered his wife had to do for years when they first were married. When Connie was asked if she thought her life was different from her mother's, she said, "Not as hard, I can tell you that ... my mother raised eleven of us on the farm and she came out from England. She had no children. Her and Dad came over just after they were married and started raising a family ... Mother had never been on a farm and I can imagine what she felt like. You know, there was no convenience on the farm when we were living south of Indian Head." Later she commented again on the lack of

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<sup>96</sup>. Joan T., personal interview, April 1993.

<sup>97</sup>. Ken Q. & Connie Q., personal interview, April 1993.

convenience and suggested that her parents "never seemed to worry about lacking. Now if I had to go backwards I know it would worry me but they were, mother was always happy about it." However, soon after Connie indicated that this statement might not be completely accurate when she added that "Dad was a very jolly man though ... but Mom wasn't. Well, Mother wouldn't, you know what I mean, she having the kids ..." <sup>98</sup> Ken thought that his wife had done the same amount of work that his mother had done; Connie thought her mother had done far more work than Connie had ever done. Their perceptions of rural women's work loads were very different.

Decision-making, power and status within the family were all key aspects of how women perceived themselves. Women with a wider range of responsibilities and independence who participated in public endeavours or negotiated male spheres of influence were more likely to challenge traditional interpretations of women's sphere. When women assumed previously male gender-marked activities, they shifted their perceptions of masculine and feminine and accordingly redefined, in their own image, what it meant to be a "Woman". Their so-called female sphere came to encompass whatever needed to be done to ensure the welfare of the family and the family enterprise. For those of the second and subsequent generations, certain occupational opportunities were also included in the definition of "Womanhood". The result was a balance between tradition, myth, and reality and in the process they created a distinct image of rural women that had room for local nuances and

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<sup>98</sup>. Ibid.

multiple points of departure.<sup>99</sup>

Although it is not historically accurate to make sweeping generalizations that apply to all rural families in all situations, or as Rosemarie Tong states, "collapse differences among women into the Universal Woman,"<sup>100</sup> it is possible to conclude that the recreated domesticity of British-Canadian rural Saskatchewan women's identity of "Woman" was the result of a blending of imported mentalités, official and popular discourses on domesticity and womanhood, and actual lived experiences. The identity of "Woman" was not, however, strictly a manifestation of local imperatives. Rather, it was based in the heritage of British ancestry, the mythologies of British-Canadian culture, and the exigencies of regional and local conditions. It was in this blend, this mixing of local, regional, national and international cultures, that a new domestic ideology was crafted that supported a redefined perception of "Woman" as English-speaking, white, educated, and of British heritage.

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<sup>99</sup>. The Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life agreed that "women's roles in the last half-century have changed far more than men's roles and that clarification of these new roles is still in process." Report #10, "The Home and Family in Rural Saskatchewan", p. 107.

<sup>100</sup>. Rosemarie Tong, Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction, (Boulder: Westview Press Inc. 1989), p. 237.

## CHAPTER IV: Learning to be "Women" at School & Church

"As far as Grandma Dixon was concerned, you HAD to go to school and you HAD to go to church".

"We weren't sure which came first".

"Well, both went together".<sup>1</sup>

Church and school -- these were two of the fundamental institutions around which Indian Head and Rosetown society were organized. Early settlers insisted on both religion and education for themselves and their families. Subsequent generations followed suit. Church and school represented order, control, and perhaps most importantly, they implied "civilization". Both symbolized well-known and well-established patterns and systems of belief familiar and comfortable to most settlers in Indian Head and Rosetown, as well as to many other people across the area that would become Saskatchewan: as Christians they went to church, as citizens they sent their children to school.<sup>2</sup> The two practices often went hand-in-hand, ideologically and practically.

The teachings of both schools and churches were not developed at the whim of local ministers or teachers. Rather, official programs, doctrines, philosophies, and curricula generally were imported from metropolitan Canada, whether that be Winnipeg, Toronto, or Montreal.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, schools and churches provided important and familiar links to the

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<sup>1</sup>. Ivy E, & Karen I., personal interview, February 1993.

<sup>2</sup>. Recall that almost 80% of the population of both communities were of British heritage.

<sup>3</sup>. In the case of the Anglican Church, directives, funds and personnel came from even farther away -- the British Isles. See Marilyn Barber, "The Fellowship of the Maple Leaf Teachers", in Barry Ferguson (ed.), The Anglican Church and the World of Western Canada, 1820-1970, (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1991), p. 154.

wider world beyond small town Saskatchewan.<sup>4</sup> Along with Canadian codes of law and order that were imposed on the Territories prior to the settlement period, the institutions of church and school helped to imprint and reinforce British-Canadian values (popular and official) on the area that became the province of Saskatchewan. They established that Indian Head and Rosetown, like many other Saskatchewan communities, would favour the customs, traditions, and mores of British-Canadians.

Yet for "Women" church and school offered a mixing of messages -- a mixing of inherited ideals with evolving local realities. Imported identities, philosophies, and cultural practices that were not appropriate or did not "fit" local conditions and situations were subsequently modified. The mixing of messages, however, was not the same in both institutions as schools were more open and willing to adapt to local conditions than were churches. Although both were venues where females learned to become "Women", schools exercised relatively more independence over their programs of study than did churches. Additionally, churches explicitly organized committees and study groups along gender lines while at schools girls and boys studied and played together.

What effect did school and church have on the lives and the social identities of women and girls in Indian Head and Rosetown? The scope of answers for such questions is vast, ranging from the suggestion that schools and churches were simply sites where rural women had an opportunity to visit at get-togethers or meetings, to churches and schools being liminal

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<sup>4</sup>. Miss Helena Robertson, teacher at Jubilee School (four miles north of Indian Head) 1913-1914, for example, specifically recalled teaching from Ontario high school textbooks. "Memoirs of Miss Helena Robertson", in Album: Jubilee School #1122; Indian Head Museum.

spaces where girls were taught how to become "Women" through the use of approved curricula and religious teachings. As outlined in previous chapters, being a "Woman" in Indian Head and Rosetown had very specific criteria anchored in British-Canadian traditions, myths, and contemporary practices. Schools and churches provided additional formal venues for augmenting social identities associated with or attributed to "Women". Their role in disseminating information -- whether fact or fiction -- about what it was to be a "Woman", is key to understanding the mixed messages rural women received regarding their "proper" social identities. On the one hand, churches reinforced "traditional" models of women as genteel, pious, and feminine and did not consider that women's spiritual responsibilities differed due to geographic location. Christians were thought to be Christians regardless of where they lived. On the other hand, while rural schools too taught girls to become "traditional" nurturing and maternal homemakers, there were provisions in the provincial curriculum that also allowed schools to respond to local circumstances and in the process offer a different instructional message regarding "Women's" proper role in rural Saskatchewan society.

Schools, therefore, exercised more independence over imported teachings than did churches. Whereas schooling and the curriculum were in some respects modified to meet the needs of rural families, church doctrine and practices were often strictly imposed, leaving little, if any, room for local interpretation. The ritual and institutional structures of the predominant religions were very much the same in small-town Saskatchewan as in Toronto or the Ottawa Valley. Therefore, although schools and churches both reinforced "traditional" role models for women in their official or sanctioned programs of study, rural schools were

given greater latitude than were rural churches in disseminating that information.

Although it has been argued that the Ladies' Aids of local churches lacked a national or central organization that co-ordinated or directed their work,<sup>5</sup> and that most of the women's efforts were local and focused on supporting the church to which they belonged, the fundamental premise of women's church organizations was to unite in fellowship. In this respect even the very localized Ladies' Aids were overtly directed by church doctrine and practice because as auxiliaries, Ladies' Aids were bound to adhere to approved church practice. Further, the national church office generally exerted control over the readings, articles, and programs of study discussed by the local Women's Missionary Societies and bible study groups by assigning "recommended" courses of study and devotional programmes. Hence, where the provincial department of education adapted a borrowed curriculum in the development of a Saskatchewan program of study, and local school boards exerted at least a modicum of independent authority over their own schools, church groups and auxiliaries had little room in which to express independent thought or chart an independent course of study or action.

Proper education for children -- secular and religious -- was considered essential to the development of the Territories. This fundamental premise was responsible for the primary

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<sup>5</sup>. Nancy Hall argues that "the Ladies Aids never possessed more than local congregational organization and were not an officially recognized part of the general structures of either the Methodist or Presbyterian churches. At no time was there a central organization to provide coordination and direction. In fact, it was not until church union in 1925 that the Ladies Aids had a constitution recognized by the church." Nancy Hall, "The Professionalization of Women Workers in the Methodist, Presbyterian, and United Churches of Canada", in Mary Kinnear (ed.), First Days, Fighting Days: Women in Manitoba History, (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1987), p. 122.

link between church and school: education. Religious training would help children develop into good Christians who would adhere to the protestant culture, and formal schooling would prepare them to be good citizens who knew their respectful place in life. In both situations, however, girls learned how to be "Women" and boys learned how to be "Men".

### **Part I. Learning to be "Women" at School**

School programs and curricula were developed, as Paul Voisey argues of Vulcan, Alberta, in "a conscious attempt to transmit cultural traditions to the young."<sup>6</sup> Education was also used by the provinces as a tool to Canadianize "foreigners". A popular sentiment among educators in the early twentieth century was that if school children could be acculturated as Canadians (ie: speak English, learn "proper" Anglo culture, and the like) they would take that knowledge home to other members of their family who would then eventually become Canadianized (read: instructed in and accepting of Anglo-Canadian customs and traditions). For example, girls taking home economics courses could demonstrate to their mother the importance of cleanliness as well as the significance of social etiquette. The perceived value of education was, therefore, not just to teach basic literacy skills; taxpayers also expected education would form and shape the Canadian West in a particular British-Canadian fashion.

Education represented not only a tie to the past and what was known; it also symbolized the future and the possibility of some control over the unknown. School meant community, growth, and expectations of development. Education meant progress and an

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<sup>6</sup>. Paul Voisey, Vulcan, The Making of a Prairie Community, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 175.



enriched environment. Additionally, schools provided an excellent primary venue for imposing social control and instructing young people about how to become good citizens. Thus the conditions for a conflict between past, present and future were established, as educational traditions (and myths) developed outside of Saskatchewan competed with real-life (rural and semi-frontier) experiences, and future expectations for a burgeoning, progressive and dynamic province.

School became a contested site where an imported curriculum competed not only with rate-payers' expectations, but also stimulated tensions between ideology and reality. The conventions and practices of an educational system largely borrowed from eastern Canada were the bedrock of Saskatchewan's curriculum. Unfortunately, some aspects of the program of study were just not suited to rural schools and were not designed to prepare students for life in a rural community. The utility of portions of the curriculum for Saskatchewan rural girls was further complicated by unrealistic models of what Canadian women's roles should be as set out in girls-only courses such as home economics. More often than not, the experiences of rural Saskatchewan girls were very different from those for whom the curriculum was written. Contemporary urban models of acceptable femininity were difficult, if not impossible, to cultivate in a rural Saskatchewan locale, although many residents in both the Indian Head and Rosetown areas worked very hard to do so.

Rural schools, the focal point of a community, were also used as community halls and churches.<sup>7</sup> Schools were used for polling stations during elections and occasionally as a place

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<sup>7</sup> E.C. Morgan, "Pioneer Recreation and Social Life", in Saskatchewan History, (Spring 1965), pp. 41-54. One group of women in Indian Head lamented the closing of the rural schools because they felt it had been "the beginning of the end ... it seems that it ended up

for listening to political speeches. In 1940, the Rosetown School Board allowed the SDB Club to use a classroom one afternoon per month "as a Health Center from which a free service would be given as to the weighing and measuring of pre-school children, distribution to mothers of health material, booklets etc."<sup>8</sup> Meetings, dances, potluck suppers, box socials, card parties, sports days, and religious services were also held at the school. The annual Christmas concert, for example, was an eagerly anticipated event in many communities. Nora H. explained that in Sunny Slope, near Indian Head, "we always had a great Christmas concert, at least we thought it was and it was just the highlight of the year!"<sup>9</sup> Many

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more towards town after that." "It was too bad like when they closed up rural schools ... that was the end of the district wasn't it?" "Yeah, it was the center of the community. You had dances, you had card parties, and the men would take the kids to school and they'd stand around and visit a while. You know, it was just, everybody was centred there." N.N.D.Q., personal interview, March 1993.

<sup>8</sup>. Minutes of the Rosetown School District #2534, 1940; cited in Arthur Broadbridge notes, (SAB A-34).

<sup>9</sup>. Nora H., personal interview, April 1993. She added: "You had to get somebody to be Santa Claus and we had a moth-eaten old suit that sure looked like Santa Claus to me and we had a big, high Christmas tree in the school. I don't know how high -- it looked awfully high to a kid but I think it must have been 8 or 10 feet high and they would have a concert and the teacher would be responsible for this but then they would usually have some [help] from, maybe the chairman of the school board, to be MC and then come the night of the concert they would take the desks down the basement and put planks across so that all the people sat out there and to me it seemed as if it was as big as the Centennial Arts building but it was only a little school house in one room but to think that all those people came to hear us and then the little kids would say their recitations and we'd have drills and Christmas singing and plays. I think they were pretty good, a lot of them, at least they were fairly good. It depended a lot on the teacher. Then after the program, well, Santa Claus would slip out and go down the basement and they'd jingle the bells and they'd say 'Santa is on his way' and we'd be so excited that he was really coming and then he'd come bounding into the school and then he'd hand out the presents that were under the tree and we could hardly wait for our name to be called and we were lucky if we just got one but sometimes there was somebody else would put one under. And Santa would always have to kiss the teacher ... then he'd have maybe two boxes of jap oranges and he would, Santa Claus would, stand up and he'd throw them out to the

respondents related stories of parties and socials they attended as youngsters with their parents. Bill I. explained that the adults "had to [take the kids]. There was no babysitters to leave at home." His sister Karen H. added, "The kids would come when we had dances and card parties. The kids would go to sleep on the desks or somewhere and go lie down; they'd go to sleep."<sup>10</sup>

Construction of a school was, therefore, one of the earliest expressions of community building.<sup>11</sup> In the area immediately surrounding the town of Indian Head settlers established eight one-room country schools between 1886 and 1907.<sup>12</sup> Of the second wave of settlement in Saskatchewan, approximately 1905-1912, Irene Poelzer reports that the number of schools and school districts also increased enormously.<sup>13</sup> The Rosetown school and most schools in its surrounding area were built during that second wave.<sup>14</sup>

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adults as well and if you were lucky you'd catch an orange. But each kid got a little brown paper bag and it had a jap orange and some nuts and some candy in it -- you know, that old ribbon candy -- ... and the peanut shells would be stuck to the candy and things like that, but oh, it was good. It was wonderful. And we treasured it too because that was a real treat."

<sup>10</sup>. Bill I. & Karen H., personal interview, March 1993.

<sup>11</sup>. In 1884 a school ordinance was passed "permitting the organization of tax-supported public and separate schools ... the ordinance set the minimum requirements for organizing a school district and provided for the local operation of the district." John Archer, Saskatchewan, A History, (Saskatoon, Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), p. 76.

<sup>12</sup>. They were: Wide Awake, 1886; Katepwa, 1887; Sunny South, 1889; Fair Play, 1890; Glenn Lynn, 1898; Rose Valley, 1900; Jubilee, 1905; and Sunny Slope, 1907.

<sup>13</sup>. There were 716 schools in 942 school districts in 1905; by 1912 there were 2110 schools in 2573 school districts. Irene Poelzer, Saskatchewan Women Teachers 1905-1920, Their Contributions, (Saskatoon: Lindenblatt and Hamonic, 1990), p.36. Poelzer cites her source as the Department of Education Annual Reports, 1905-1912.

<sup>14</sup>. Shortly after settlers arrived in Rosetown in 1904 school was first held in a home, then in the town hall, and subsequently in 1910, students attended classes in a new four-room

What did a rural Saskatchewan school look like? Mary Hamilton described the Wide Awake School yard (circa 1920) as having swings, a teeter-totter, football goal-posts, a drinking water well, a wood pile, a barn for horses, and two outhouses "placed a considerable distance from each other and protected by a board wall around each for extra privacy or to discourage the usual pranks to outhouses."<sup>15</sup> Helena Daly described the Jubilee School house circa 1914: "The school was quite an attractive building with a large bell, a furnace, pictures and necessary equipment and believe it or not, we had a telephone, ring 6. After a few days that was the only ring I heard. I had 15 pupils altogether. When I found out one was in grade 10 and 2 in grade 9, I was really worried. I was 19 with a grade 11 certificate and 3 months teacher-training. I had taught a year and a half, grades 1-4 in a two room village school. Jubilee had 4 in grade 8, 1 in grade 7, 2 in grade 3, and 5 in grade 1. Some grade 1 pupils just came in the summer."<sup>16</sup>

Getting to school could be quite an adventure for students who had to find their way either by walking or on horseback. Girls were not pampered any more than were boys; kids had to get to school and whether they were male or female, horseback was usually the quickest way to get there. Glenda T. learned to ride a horse when she was just four years old. She had, as she recalled, "a little pony, Buster, half Shetland and half Welsh, and Shetland ponies are notorious for being stubborn and this came out in my little pony." Even before she

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school.

<sup>15</sup>. Mary G. (Ford) Hamilton, "Mists of the one-Room School -- Now a Memory", in Album: History of Wide Awake School District #54, Indian Head Museum.

<sup>16</sup>. Helena Daly, "Memoirs of Miss Helena Robertson", Album: Jubilee School #1122. Indian Head Museum. Robertson taught at Jubilee School from August 1913 to June 1914.

attended school herself, Glenda raced the other children to the school as they passed her farm in the morning. "But then when I started to school on this pony, of course you weren't racing anybody, he would just go so far and then he'd stop and then Dad would come along with the binder whip and that little pony knew the length of that binder whip but just before Dad could get the swat, he'd start off again. So poor old Dad, he'd walk more times to school."<sup>17</sup>

Susan G. also rode a pony to school. She recalled, "I started [school] when I was seven years old and drove a little Indian pony by myself ... two and a half or three miles I guess and, see, my sister went to town school only because she was the only one at that point and then when I came along to go to school I went to Squirrel Hills. I started after Christmas and then in June she came out and then the two of us went." She added that when she and her sister went to school together they used a team of horses called Rex and Beauty. "I remember going to school with our team", she said, "and sometimes [in winter] we'd upset our cutter and Dad always said, 'Well, unhook and get on the backs and ride them home,' so that's what we used to do if we got stuck or dumped and if we'd be in a bad storm Dad would say, 'Well, just start the horses out, cover your heads and let them go. They'll bring you home.'"<sup>18</sup>

Nora H. too recalled using horses to get to school. Like Susan G., Nora particularly remembered how difficult it was getting to school during the winter. "I was always cold because we didn't have the proper clothes and we didn't have insulation in the house, you know, and it seems to me that I spent most of my life being cold because we had such a long

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<sup>17</sup>. Glenda T., personal interview, Indian Head, March 1993.

<sup>18</sup>. Susan G., personal interview, Indian Head, May 1993.

ride to go to school with horses ... three and a half miles ... and we always used an old school pony called Ivy that we took in the summer time but in the winter time we quite often had to get my dad or Al to drive us to school in the sleigh because the horse couldn't, a single horse couldn't handle it, and we'd have a team and I can remember walking to school and running our hands along the telephone wires as we'd walk, the snow was so high."<sup>19</sup> Mary Hamilton remembered a winter's day in the early 1920s when she was the only student who went to school. "It was stormy. The teacher, a lady, and I stayed until noon, then we went to her boarding house which was just a short distance from the school. I had to stay overnight there."<sup>20</sup>

Once children arrived at school there were still chores that had to be done before classes could begin. First, the horses had to be put in the barn and in winter the school had to be heated as the heat was not left on when school was out. Usually one of the boys was "hired" as a caretaker of sorts. His job was to haul water to the school, start the furnace in the morning, and in some cases sweep the school. The Minute Book of the Sunny Slope School, for instance, indicates that in 1926 the board recommended "that A.E. Prior's children

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<sup>19</sup>. Nora H., personal interview, Indian Head, April 1993.

<sup>20</sup>. "Reminiscences of Mary G. (Ford) Hamilton", in Album: History of Wide Awake School District #54, Indian Head Museum. Even into the late 1940s and 1950s children rode horses to school. Joan T. explained, "Our youngest one thinks he really missed something because he never drove a horse to school and our oldest girl says, 'Yeah. All you missed was a lot of cold rides.' He said, 'I think I missed more than that when I hear some of the things you guys did with your horse and carts.' It was quite an adventure!" Joan T., personal interview, April 1993.

be appointed to bring water to school at \$18.00 per annum,"<sup>21</sup> and in 1927 "that we pay \$35.00 per annum for sweeping."<sup>22</sup> None of the respondents remembered the job of caretaker being assigned to a girl. Nora H. explained, "the boy, well, usually he was one of the students, like in the older grades, would go to school and light the fire early ... sometimes the teacher did [it], and they would get paid, you know, maybe fifty cents or a dollar a month or something like that to light the fire."<sup>23</sup> Even this small episode each morning at school taught girls something about what their role was: boys did caretaker jobs, girls did not.

Who was it, then, that attended school? Appendix VII demonstrates that in the period 1911 through 1941 almost an identical percentage of boys and girls aged 7-14 years, attended school in each census year; approximately 66% in 1911, 88% in 1921, 91% in 1926, and 94%

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<sup>21</sup>. Minute Book of the Sunny Slope School District #1843, January 1925-1963; January 15, 1926.

<sup>22</sup>. Ibid., January 21, 1927.

<sup>23</sup>. Nora H., personal interview, Indian Head, April 1993. As Nora mentioned, some schools expected the teacher to look after the fire. The Sunny Slope School, for example, often asked the male teachers to look after the fire. In December 1930, at a time when school districts were reducing the salaries paid to teachers, the Sunny Slope board "decided to accept [the teacher's] offer of a reduction of \$50 per annum and the teacher undertake to look after the fire free of charge"(December 20, 1930). In July 1932 the board decided to offer a teaching position to a male teacher if he would agree to light the fires. When the first male teacher declined the job, a second male teacher was approached because "it was felt a male teacher would be more suitable than a female." The next entry indicates that this second applicant accepted the job which he was offered at a rate \$50 less than had been offered the first applicant. In addition he agreed to do "firelighting"(July 13, 1932). Apparently, the cost of firelighting was important to the board during this difficult economic period. Hiring a male teacher meant the firelighting could be included in the teacher's salary. Hiring a female teacher meant also hiring a local boy to do the caretaking jobs. In July 1936, for example, a female teacher was hired and at the same meeting the board decided "that Kendall Brown be engaged to light fires at ten cents per day" (July 23, 1936). Minute Book of the Sunny Slope School District #1843.

in 1931, 1936, and 1941.<sup>24</sup> The largest increase, between 1911 and 1921, is the result of the May 1, 1917 School Attendance Act which made attendance at school mandatory for children aged 7-14.<sup>25</sup> Irene Poelzer's research shows that the Act had an immediate effect on attendance. According to Poelzer, in a May 1917 speech Premier Martin reported that the 1915 school attendance records indicated only 58.63% of rural students and 61.58% of urban students were in school. After the School Attendance Act was passed, overall attendance in 1917 was reported as 68%. This increased to 76% in 1918 and 80.48% in 1919.<sup>26</sup> Appendix VIII, however, shows that after age 14 (when students were outside of the scope of the mandatory School Attendance Act), a greater percentage of females remained in school than did males, and that the total percentage of boys and girls staying in school after age 14 continued to rise. In 1911, 18% of girls aged 15-19 and 13.6% of boys were in school. In each subsequent census year through 1941, the percentage of girls in this group remained approximately five percent higher than for boys of the same group, until 1941 when the difference jumped to ten percent more girls than boys in school.<sup>27</sup> By 1941 almost half of the female population aged 15-19 was in school but only 40% of boys of the same age were in

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<sup>24</sup>. Figures from 1901 are not strictly comparable to data from 1911-1941 because the terms were defined differently. However, the 1901 information is still useful because it shows again almost the same number of girls as boys attending school: in the age group 5-20 years, 34.07% of boys attended school for any length of time; 33.4% of girls attended school for any length of time. Source: Census of Canada 1901, Vol. I, Tables X and XI.

<sup>25</sup>. This law was enacted as part of the increasing effort to "Canadianize" immigrants.

<sup>26</sup>. Irene Poelzer, Saskatchewan Women Teachers 1905-1920: Their Contributions, p. 51.

<sup>27</sup>. It is also possible that there were far more girls than boys aged 15-19 in school in 1941 because many young men would have enlisted in the armed forces to serve in World War II, while girls remained at home.



school. Very possibly girls were staying in school longer because in order for them to pursue careers as nurses, teachers or any of the other fields women were increasingly entering, they first had to complete high school.<sup>28</sup>

Locally, notations in the "Daily Register" from Jubilee School, near Indian Head, correspond to the provincial findings with regard to the equal number of boys and girls under age 15 attending school. In 1919 twenty-seven students between the ages of six and fourteen were registered at Jubilee School -- fourteen boys and thirteen girls. The school was open 213.5 days. Of the seven students who attended more than 150 days, three were girls and four were boys. The student who attended most consistently was a ten-year-old boy (196.5 days) who lived a quarter mile from the school. On average girls attended 86.8 days and boys attended 98.5 days. There could be any number of reasons for the difference, (girls and boys on average lived almost the same distance from school: girls 2.5 miles and boys 2.38 miles) but this data is particularly interesting because it invalidates the myth that girls attended school more frequently than did boys who were supposedly kept home regularly to work as farm labourers.

Were Saskatchewan rural girls segregated from boys at school the way Veronica Strong-Boag argues in her study of the interwar period?<sup>29</sup> Apparently not. Although, for example, girls were channelled into home economics courses instead of manual training, there were still a few sections of the manual training course that girls were allowed to take if they

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<sup>28</sup>. Chapter V discusses women's waged work.

<sup>29</sup>. Veronica Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939, (Markham: Penguin Books Canada Ltd., 1988), p. 18.

so desired, including wicker work, plastic work, and leather work. Moreover, young girls and boys worked and played together not only at school but outside of school as well. Strong-Boag states that "children regularly divided according to sex, age and social group",<sup>30</sup> but in one-room-schools, and on playgrounds where only 20 or 30 students were in attendance, children, if they did divide at all, tended to do so by age: younger ones played together while older students did likewise. At recess children played tag, hide-and-seek, softball, "steal-the-wedge",<sup>31</sup> and "anti-i-over".<sup>32</sup> One respondent of the History Questionnaire recalled that she played "mainly with my brother who was nearer my age than my sisters. We played 'cops & robbers', ball, [and] hockey on a frozen slough or just [on] the hard, frozen snow-covered yard."<sup>33</sup> Another respondent explained that she played with "my classmates -- girls and

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<sup>30</sup>. Ibid., p. 18

<sup>31</sup>. The game was describes as follows: "two teams were chosen. A line was drawn between them. Each team had a pile of sticks or 'wedges'. They were placed several yards back of the line. The object of this game was to run quickly and steal one of the wedges without being caught. If you were caught you had to stand on the pile of sticks until one of your teammates sneaked through and rescued you. The object of this game was to see which team could end up with the most wedges. I always found this game kind of nerve-wracking as you had to be constantly on your guard and not let anyone get past you." Letter from N.Q. to A.C. Moffatt, October 1993.

<sup>32</sup>. The game was described as being "played over the school. Two teams were chosen, one on either side of the school. As one team threw the ball over the school they would shout 'anti-i-over'. The other team would try to catch the ball and if they did would run around the school and try to hit someone with the ball. If they did, that person had to go to the opposing team. The object of the game was to see which team ended up with the most players. Incidentally, the ball used was a soft rubber ball so that no one got hurt or windows didn't get broken in the school." Letter from N.Q. to A.C. Moffatt, October 1993.

<sup>33</sup>. History Questionnaire #6, August 1993, Indian Head.

boys."<sup>34</sup>

Recognizing that girls and boys worked and played together at school is essential to understanding how lived experience was central to identity formation in rural Saskatchewan girls. Magazines, newspapers, radio and the like imported from metropolitan Canada may have promoted segregation of young children by sex, but in rural Saskatchewan not only was this not practical, it was not encouraged. It may have been the custom in larger centres to advocate that boys and girls play separately, and contemporary wisdom may have suggested that it was never too soon to teach children their "proper" place in life (whether that be through the formal educational system, at church, or through other channels), but in rural Saskatchewan the practice was to let children play together. Frankly, in the settlement period there were simply not that many children to play with so kids enjoyed the company of those who were close-by. In periods subsequent to the settlement era children continued to play together because the cultural milieu condoned it. It was not until puberty (when girls became "young ladies" and boys became "young men") that girls and boys were directed into separate activities where they could learn to be "Women" and "Men".

Knowing what girls were taught at school is key to understanding how education was used as a tool to mold and form female behaviour in a particular way so that a "desirable" result (girls becoming "Women") would be achieved. Yet girls and boys studied the same subjects except for a few that were girls-only or boys-only in design and application. It is in these courses where students were divided by sex that overt training in contemporary gender roles is most apparent.

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<sup>34</sup>. History Questionnaire #1, August 1993, Indian Head.

Household science courses were directed specifically at girls from the first grade through high school; boys received manual training (modelling, basketwork, carpentry). Although early provincial Programmes of Study did not specifically state that only girls should study household science and only boys should do manual training, the implications of the directives were undoubtedly clear. In the 1926 Programme, for example, the introduction to the section on home economics never mentioned girls but rather used the words "the child" or "pupils".<sup>35</sup> The language in subsequent sections outlining the course of study did, however, make direct reference to "her" work and a lesson on "a girl's budget".<sup>36</sup> Additionally, in the sewing units students were instructed in how to sew items definitely considered feminine; younger students made doll's clothes while older students made kimonos and simple dresses. By 1945, however, there was no doubt left about who the audience was for the home economics course, as the official class objectives specifically referred over and over to things "girls" should learn.

The Saskatchewan Department of Education realized that rural schools did not have the same facilities as did many town or city schools, so some qualifiers for rural schools were attached to the Programmes of Study.<sup>37</sup> In 1922, for example, the section on household

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<sup>35</sup>. "The subject of home economics is intended to develop in the child an intelligent interest in the occupations of the home ... It should also make pupils more alive to the best methods of obtaining foods and clothing." Department of Education, Saskatchewan, Programme of Study for Public Schools, (Regina: J.W. Reid, King's Printer, 1926), p. 12; (SAB, Ed.6.54).

<sup>36</sup>. It is interesting to note that the teacher is also assumed to be female as outlines and directions refer to "her" responsibilities as instructor.

<sup>37</sup>. Separate specialized vocational courses of study in home economics were also developed but they were limited to schools with "qualified teachers and the necessary

science was introduced with the following statement: "For rural schools: A number of suggestions are made regarding application. Each teacher must choose the articles most suitable to her pupils."<sup>38</sup> The course of study was then outlined in some detail and rural teachers were directed to make selections appropriate to their school and students. This is one example where rural teachers (and local school boards) could guide the program of study so it would fit or reinforce local customs and practices.

A sampling of Programmes of Study from the Saskatchewan Department of Education between 1922 and 1945 indicates that the home economics program of study was supposed to be "scientific". Prior to the 1930s the program was called "Household Sciences"; during the 1930s it was renamed "Home Economics," which implied it was both scientific **and** rational.<sup>39</sup> The 1941 curriculum for elementary schools specifically states that the objective of home economics was "to help the pupil apply scientific knowledge to the selection,

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equipment." The course was three years in duration and "in the first two years approximately forty percent and in the third year approximately fifty percent of the time shall be required for practical work. The remainder of the time should be devoted to related subjects including English, and training for citizenship." Students could attend classes either during the day or at night but evening school was designed to "as far as possible meet the needs of those actually engaged in industrial pursuits in the locality." Department of Education, Government of Saskatchewan, Regulations and Courses of Study for Vocational Schools 1931-32, (Regina: Roland S. Garrett, King's Printer), pp. 2-3; (SAB, Ed 6.67).

<sup>38</sup>. Department of Education, Government of Saskatchewan, Programme of Study for Public Schools, (Regina: J.W. Reid, King's Printer, 1922), p. 12; (SAB, Ed 6.54). This qualifying statement appears in the curriculum in other years as well.

<sup>39</sup>. A new text book called Economics of the Household was also introduced for the course. Andrews, Economics of the Household, (The Macmillan Co.); cited in Government of the Province of Saskatchewan, Department of Education, Regulations and Courses of Study for High Schools 1934-35, (Regina: Roland S. Garrett, King's Printer). No date of publication is listed for the Andrews book.

preparation, and care of food, clothing, and house furnishings."<sup>40</sup> Moreover, this section is loaded with scientific jargon; teachers were encouraged to "use the school as a laboratory" and were instructed to have students "investigate" and "make a brief study"<sup>41</sup> of various aspects of household responsibilities.

The course of study for home economics remained almost the same year to year from the 1920s through the mid 1940s. Some additions were made as the course became more specialized and sophisticated but other sections were reprinted with no revisions for years in a row. In the early grades girls were taught the basics of household and domestic responsibilities. As the student progressed into higher grades, assignments became more complex and additional skills were taught. Grades one, two, and three did not do sewing, for example, but they did study "household management" and "foods and cookery". Very young girls were taught to keep the classroom and "[their] own desk in particular, in good order," and "to help with the noon lunch: setting tables, serving food, sweeping [the] floor, [and] dusting." Students were also instructed in "social customs and table manners."<sup>42</sup> The curriculum for grades four through eight included a "review and continuation of [the] work of [the] junior division"<sup>43</sup> but the level of difficulty was increased. In the sewing unit, girls learned how to darn stockings, make buttonholes, sew on lace, and purchase material. Under

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<sup>40</sup>. Department of Education, Province of Saskatchewan, Elementary School Curriculum Grades I-VII, (Regina, 1941), p. 331; (SAB, Ed 6.20).

<sup>41</sup>. Ibid., p. 330.

<sup>42</sup>. Department of Education, Government of Saskatchewan, Programme of Study for Public Schools (1922), p. 12; (SAB, Ed 6.54).

<sup>43</sup>. Ibid., p. 27.

household management, the program took girls from simply serving food to preparing it. Students were also taught to clean up after the meal, wash dishes, store food, and do laundry. One particularly interesting element of this section of the curriculum for older elementary school girls was that they were instructed on how to serve afternoon tea, an especially middle-class and typically British-influenced occasion. Clearly, this was not simply food preparation; serving tea was an event laced with presumptions about class, propriety, and etiquette.

Secondary school girls received more of the same type of instruction but again in more detail and with an emphasis on developing greater proficiency. Along with sewing, cooking, and cleaning skills, high school girls additionally were taught "infant feeding" and elementary home nursing which included a large dose of nurturing. The 1926 course of study, for example, covered "the sick room -- location, furnishing and care; the medicine chest; the tray; making and care of the bed; care of the patient; treatment of fainting, burns, scalds and cuts; simple bandaging; [and] preparation of plasters and compresses."<sup>44</sup>

As in the younger grades, some elements of the high school curriculum were undeniably middle-class as older girls were instructed in proper entertaining. Building on the knowledge they had gleaned in the younger grades, older girls learned about "the invitation [and the] duties of the host and hostess."<sup>45</sup> High school girls were also taught how to invite guests and how to prepare and serve tea. By 1934-35 instruction in this section had been

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<sup>44</sup>. Department of Education, Government of Saskatchewan, Regulations and Recommendations Governing Programme of Courses of Study for Secondary Schools, (Regina: J.W. Reid, King's Printer, 1926), p. 21; (SAB, Ed 6.68).

<sup>45</sup>. Ibid., p. 27.

expanded to include "proper placing of guests",<sup>46</sup> and in 1937-38 to include "refreshments for large numbers."<sup>47</sup>

Apparently, social skills associated with entertaining were deemed so necessary for young girls that they were included in the curriculum. It was not enough to teach girls how to prepare nutritious food; they also needed to know how to present it to their invited guests in a socially favourable manner. Practices such as inviting guests (as opposed to dropping in unannounced as had been the practice in the pioneer era) and serving specific "refreshments" in a ritualized fashion taught girls "proper" middle-class social protocol that would supposedly serve them well when they married and had homes of their own to manage.

All girls, whether elementary or high school students, increasingly were instructed in understanding their proper place within society and the family structure. Interestingly, at the same time as an increasing number of young women were moving into the work force (see Chapter V), the curriculum explicitly began to reaffirm the importance of the homemaker's role and included responsibilities for women other than just cooking, cleaning, and sewing. The 1934-35 curriculum introduced a section on "family [and] compromise",<sup>48</sup> the 1937-38 curriculum added "home ideals, privileges of participation in family life, division of duties and responsibilities; house planning -- location, cost, heating, plumbing, lighting, ventilation,

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<sup>46</sup>. Department of Education, Government of Saskatchewan, Regulations and Courses of Study 1934-35, (Regina, 1934) p. 27; (SAB, Ed 6.2).

<sup>47</sup>. Department of Education, Government of Saskatchewan, Regulations and Courses of Study for High Schools 1937-1938, (Regina: Thos. H. McConica, King's Printer, 1937), p. 66; (SAB, Ed 6.62).

<sup>48</sup>. Department of Education, Government of Saskatchewan, Regulations and Courses of Study for High Schools 1934-1935, p. 27. (SAB, Ed 6.67).



furnishing, design, decoration; [and] the mechanics and easy repairs of the various appliances used in the home,"<sup>49</sup> and the 1945 curriculum referred to home managers and "the meaning of management",<sup>50</sup> implying that domestic responsibilities were professionalized and homemakers were managers. Further, the 1945 curriculum was the most explicit in delineating exactly what roles girls were being prepared for. Among the listed objectives of home economics were, "to aid girls in developing good standards of work necessary for successful housekeeping," and "to help girls to appreciate the institution of the family and to understand its purposes and obligations to the end that they will desire to put into practice those principles which make for fine living."<sup>51</sup> The meanings were clear: the "management" skills girls learned at school were to be applied to the home, not to business or commerce.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>. Department of Education, Government of Saskatchewan, Regulations and Courses of Study for High Schools 1937-1938, pp. 48-49; (SAB, Ed 6.62).

<sup>50</sup>. Department of Education, Government of Saskatchewan, Tentative Outline of the New Programme of Studies Proposed for the High Schools of Saskatchewan, (Regina: 1945), p. 84; (SAB, Ed 6.94).

<sup>51</sup>. Ibid., p. 83. The other objectives are: "to lead girls to an understanding of the principles underlying the home care of the sick and injured and to provide opportunities for them to develop a measure of skill in such care. To assist girls to establish standards of judgement and ideals of achievement to the creating of an environment which will foster a higher state of aesthetic appreciation. To awaken a consciousness in the student of her opportunity to contribute to the creating of an environment which will foster a higher state of aesthetic appreciation. To assist girls to understand the family in its community relationships, so that they may interest themselves in community problems that bear directly on home life."

<sup>52</sup>. Jeff Taylor discusses the "professionalized" identities of farmers (men) and homemakers (women) in Manitoba created and reinforced through "agricultural education, education generally, and state structures"(p. 117). Taylor argues that courses designed by the Manitoba Agricultural College taught farm girls and women to become "household managers"(p. 78) and "scientific homemakers"(p. 79) with a "professional identity to complement her husband's professional status"(p. 81). He concludes that "together, the progressive, professional farmer

That real-life experiences differed from idealized social identities did not, however, stop educators from directing girls and boys into explicitly defined gender roles. Elementary and secondary teachers followed curricula that channelled boys into manual work and girls into homemaking. Church directors (ministers, Sunday School teachers, girls and boys clubs directors) did likewise. Although the type of instruction or the structure of the training girls received at church may have varied from that which girls learned in school, the desired result was still the same -- that rural Saskatchewan girls would learn how to become "Women".

## **Part II. Learning to be "Women" at Church**

The historiographic record on women, girls, and religion has, until the last decade, been meager. Most analyses have focused on women's sphere -- religion as a place where women's culture did or did not flourish -- or the connections between religion and reform work.<sup>53</sup> It was not until recently that scholars began to examine women's connections with

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and the progressive, professional homemaker created a farm, a home and a community, which all fitted neatly into a larger, society-wide community(p. 82). Jeffrey Taylor, Fashioning Farmers: Ideology, Agricultural Knowledge and the Manitoba Farm Movement, 1890-1925, (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1994).

<sup>53</sup>. For example, Christopher Headon's analysis of women's role in mid and late nineteenth century Canadian churches, published in 1978, considers how "women were believed by themselves and by men to be especially suited by nature for missionary and philanthropic work." Christopher Headon, "Women and Organized Religion in Mid and Late Nineteenth Century Canada", in Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society, Vol. XX No. 1-2, (March-June 1978), p. 14. Also see: Marilyn F. Whitley, "Modest, Unaffected and Fully Consecrated: Lady Evangelists in Canadian Methodism, 1884-1900", in Canadian Methodist Historical Society Papers, Vol. 6, 1987, pp. 18-31; Elizabeth Muir, "Methodist Women Preachers: An Overview", in Canadian Methodist Historical Society Papers, Vol. 6, 1987, pp. 47-57; and Elizabeth Gillan Muir, Petticoats in the Pulpit: The Story of Early Nineteenth-Century Methodist Women Preachers in Upper Canada, (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1991). On the ordination of women (or the lack thereof) see: Mary E. Hallett, "Nellie

and to religion from a cultural perspective. Ruth Compton Brouwer argues in a cogent review article that "like gender itself, women's seeming affinity for religion was a socially constructed phenomenon (or more accurately), an integral part of that social construct called 'womanhood'.<sup>54</sup> While not wanting to make gender, and in particular "women's sphere", the only focus of studies of women in religion, Brouwer entreats scholars also to consider the "status implications of a particular tradition ... [and] such related but distinct matters as

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McClung and the Fight for the Ordination of Women in the United Church of Canada", in Atlantis, Vol.4 No.2 (Spring 1979), pp. 2-19; Alyson Barnett-Cowan, "The Bishop's Messengers: Harbingers of the Ordination of Women", in Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society, Vol XXVIII No.2, (October 1986), pp. 75-91; Valerie J. Korinek, "No Women Need Apply: The Ordination of Women in the United Church, 1918-65", in Canadian Historical Review, Vol.LXXIV No.4 (December 1993). Historians have only more recently considered other aspects of women's church-related roles; see: Margaret Prang, "'The Girl God Would Have Me Be': The Canadian Girls in Training, 1915-39", in Canadian Historical Review, Vol.LXVI No.2, (June 1985), pp. 154-184; Nancy Hall, "The Professionalization of Women Workers in the Methodist, Presbyterian, and United Churches of Canada", in Mary Kinnear (ed.), First Days, Fighting Days: Women in Manitoba History", (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1987), pp. 120-133; Marilyn Barber, "The Fellowship of the Maple Leaf Teachers", in Barry Ferguson (ed.), The Anglican Church and the World of Western Canada, 1820-1970, (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1991), pp. 155-166; Lucille Marr, "Sunday School Teaching: A Women's Enterprise: A Case Study from the Canadian Methodist, Presbyterian and United Church Tradition 1919-1939", in Histoire sociale/Social History, Vol.XXVI no 52, (November 1993), pp. 329-344.

Studies of Catholic women and/or Catholic women's organizations published in English are even more scarce. The most widely used study is Marta Danylewycz, Taking the Veil: An Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood, and Spinsterhood in Quebec, 1840-1920, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987).

<sup>54</sup>. Ruth Compton Brouwer, "Transcending the 'unacknowledged quarantine': Putting Religion into English-Canadian Women's History", in Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol.27, No.3 (Fall 1992), p. 48. Brouwer qualifies this statement in the next sentence. "That assumption, however, should not lead us to underrate the significance of personal spirituality for women or to concern ourselves with their religious activism exclusively in terms of its utility for respectably enlarging their sphere" (p. 48).

denominational loyalty and association with national or ethnic identity."<sup>55</sup> Further, she admonishes historians because "we have generally paid insufficient attention to religion as a personal, spiritual phenomenon, concerned with issues of transcendence as well as immanence."<sup>56</sup>

Brouwer's point is well taken. Studies of prairie settlement have as of yet not addressed religion as a "personal, spiritual phenomenon". In some of the most widely read books on western communities, religion is interpreted as having rather a more practical attraction than a spiritual appeal. Some historians have considered Brouwer's first suggestion -- to address "the status implication of a particular tradition" -- but their interpretation ends there. Lyle Dick's study of Abernethy District (approximately 30 kilometres north of Indian Head), for example, concludes that religion was part and parcel of a growing movement towards middle-classness in that area.<sup>57</sup> Paul Voisey's examination of Vulcan, Alberta totally dismisses the role of faith in pioneer religion. Voisey interprets religion as "ancient rituals"

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<sup>55</sup>. Ibid., p. 51.

<sup>56</sup>. Ibid., p. 52. Five years earlier William Westfall, in Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth Century Ontario, (Montreal: McGill Queen's University Press, 1987), maintained that Canadian historians of religion had overlooked theoretical questions in favour of trying to answer empirical questions. The result was that important and key questions like "what is a religion and what functions do religions in general perform in society?"(p. 197), questions which explore religion as a cultural system, had been neglected. Westfall, explaining culture as "a set of ideas, beliefs, and attitudes through which an individual, society or group interprets existence"(p. 13) argued that culture as "a pattern of interpretation introduces the importance of religion" and that "religions are systems of belief that answer the questions that cultures ask"(p. 13).

<sup>57</sup>. Lyle Dick, Farmers "Making Good": The Development of Abernethy District, Saskatchewan 1880-1920, (Canadian Parks Services, 1989), Chapter 7.

in need of "a master of ceremonies",<sup>58</sup> and argues that "for most settlers, however, church-going had little to do with religion. Like for all organizational gatherings in the area, it became a social occasion -- a chance to meet friends after the service and to arrange Sunday dinner invitations and afternoon visits."<sup>59</sup> Both Voisey and Dick have overlooked the spiritual needs of individuals and of communities.

Granted, religion offered a form of social control and was often perceived as a favourable hallmark of middle-class society, but to suggest that the outward trappings of religion were what mattered (the spectacle of church and religious ritual, or the belonging to the "right" church) does not address the importance of religion to those who did not, or could not, gather to celebrate their spirituality with others. Particularly in the settlement period when neighbours were few and opportunity to worship with a minister or priest was not always available, people did not give up their faith until there was a church built that they "should" attend and only then deign to put in an appearance when it became a social necessity. On the contrary, many settlers were deeply religious and expressed their faith in more personal ways at home, with family and in small gatherings. Particularly in the early years, before churches were built, many families attended whatever church service happened to be offered in their area. Lois X. explained: "[we didn't] always [go to] church on Sunday because our church was held in the school house and we had a minister come to ours. Not always an Anglican minister; sometimes an Anglican, and sometimes, oh, I don't know what the other would have been, maybe United Church, it didn't make any difference. Most of the

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<sup>58</sup>. Paul Voisey, Vulcan, The Making of a Prairie Community, p. 195.

<sup>59</sup>. Ibid., p. 194.

people were English, Irish, Scottish so actually most of them were Anglican, the Church of England. There were quite a lot of Scottish but whatever minister came, everyone went. Period."<sup>60</sup>

Travelling ministers sent out from Britain or Ontario held services in homes, train stations, or anywhere that a group of persons could be situated. Their presence was eagerly anticipated by many settlers who subsequently went out of their way to accommodate the minister when he did arrive. Ella Garvin, for example, who had moved from Ontario to Saskatchewan in May 1886, recalled a personal anecdote about the travelling minister's visit. "We had a 1/2 storey house and the minister came to stay with us one time and we gave him our bed. The only other sleeping accommodation we had was a single cot mattress which was on the floor. We gave the minister our bed and my husband and I tried to sleep on the narrow mattress on the floor. In the morning the matt was between us and we were both on the floor. The minister, of course, did not know we only had one bed."<sup>61</sup> Ella's story is common. When the minister came to stay, or even to visit, he was usually treated as a very special and revered guest.

Indian Head and Rosetown were overwhelmingly protestant in character; at least three quarters of the population in each town was protestant. This had a tremendous effect on women and girls' identities because protestant culture pervaded local society. To be a "Woman" meant not only that a female person should be English-speaking, white and British-Canadian, but preferably she would also be Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist, or after 1925,

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<sup>60</sup>. Lois X, personal interview, April 1993.

<sup>61</sup>. Mrs. Ella Garvin, SAB, S-X2 Q#2.

United Church. Religion provided another link in the network of elements that defined "Womanhood".

This is not to suggest that those who were not part of the protestant circle were total outsiders or were not "Women". However, there remains the possibility that those women who were not protestant might have been excluded from activities other than just protestant church-related functions because church activities occasionally overlapped with activities and issues in the wider local community. The Rosetown Anglican Church, for example, played an early role in the development of the Rosetown Hospital. An agreement was worked out where the Anglican Church Mission would supply and pay the salaries of three Anglican nurses for three years. The agreement also stated that "the priest in charge of the Anglican Church [must] be a member of the [hospital] Board of Management."<sup>62</sup> Although it is nearly impossible to track exactly how much of the Hospital Ladies' Aid work stemmed from Anglican Church-originated initiatives, or what influence the bishop had on "recruiting" members to the Hospital Ladies' Aid, some Church influence is evident. Primarily, the composition of the Ladies' Aid board reflects an Anglican interest. At least two of the women on the board of the Rosetown Hospital Ladies' Aid when it formed in 1914 can be identified as members of St. Andrew's Anglican Church.<sup>63</sup>

Appendix IX shows that from 1901 through 1921, the three protestant denominations

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<sup>62</sup>. Town Minutes, June 27, 1913. Cited in A.F. Broadbridge, "The History of Rosetown 1904-1939", M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1949, p. 40.

<sup>63</sup>. Mrs. E. Bradish was secretary, and Mrs. P. Murphy was on the executive committee. "Rosetown Union Hospital, 75th Anniversary" and "Rosetown St. Andrews Anglican Church History Notes 1909-1989", both located in the Rosetown Library and Archives.

of Anglican, Methodist, and Presbyterian together totalled approximately 50% of religious affiliation in the province. Appendices X and XI, in contrast to the provincial figures, show that in Indian Head and Rosetown the percentage of persons affiliated with the three main protestant denominations was much greater and that the number of Roman Catholics was even smaller than were the provincial figures. In 1901 the total number of Methodists, Presbyterians, and Anglicans totalled 88% of Indian Head's population. This figure had dropped only slightly to 81% by 1921. In Rosetown in 1921, 77% of the population identified themselves as members of one of the three major protestant religions.

After the formation of the United Church in 1925,<sup>64</sup> almost one half of the province's population claimed to be one of the three protestant denominations of Anglican, Presbyterian or United Church. This trend continued through 1941. Again, in Rosetown and Indian Head, the percentage of persons identified as being one of these three protestant groups far surpassed the province-wide data: 94% in Indian Head and 75% in Rosetown. Additionally, almost half of the people in Indian Head and Rosetown were United Church, as compared to provincial figures of approximately 25% United Church.

Membership in the Catholic Church in both Indian Head and Rosetown remained below provincial figures of approximately 20% throughout the period 1901-1951. In Indian Head the local population of Catholics did not exceed thirteen percent; Rosetown's Catholic population was slightly closer to the provincial average at 16%. Moreover, Catholic women's church associations in Indian Head and Rosetown had smaller memberships than did the women's organizations associated with the protestant churches. Additionally, women's

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<sup>64</sup>. The Methodist Church merged with the new United Church.



organizations officially sanctioned by the Catholic Church formed much later than did similar organizations in the protestant churches. There are records dating back to 1901 for the Women's Missionary Society in Indian Head, and the Presbyterian Ladies' Aid at Wide Awake from at least 1909, but the Indian Head Women's Catholic League was not organized until 1931. In Rosetown, the Anglican Ladies' Guild was formed in 1912, but the Catholic Women's League did not organize until 1926.

For women and girls, there were several reasons for participating in church activities. First, spirituality and a sense of mission were fundamental elements of the protestant culture that was so prevalent in Indian Head and Rosetown. As William Westfall argues, religion was a cultural force that both united and caused tensions between the sacred and the secular. Of nineteenth century Ontario he argues, "People were religious because they accepted the reality of the sacred and believed that the sacred both informed and transcended their environment."<sup>65</sup> They were, Westfall explains, attempting to develop a tradition that would wed "progress" with "inspiration."<sup>66</sup> When this cultural force combined with the growing social gospel impulse (after approximately 1890),<sup>67</sup> and the myth that women were supposedly inherently religious, the result was a spiritual, mythical, and somewhat practical force that propelled women into religious activism of varying degrees. Most women in Indian Head and

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<sup>65</sup>. William Westfall, Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth Century Ontario, p. 203.

<sup>66</sup>. Ibid., Chapter 7.

<sup>67</sup>. Nancy Hall argues that "the rise of the Social Gospel impulse in Canadian Protestant churches parallels the rise of women's organizations in those churches." Nancy Hall, "The Professionalization of Women workers in the Methodist, Presbyterian, and United Churches of Canada", p. 121.

Rosetown fully accepted their obligations as "religious" women and participated in at least one church sponsored women's group. (Recall that the majority of people in these two communities came directly from Ontario or Manitoba with an Ontario pedigree). Their cultural heritage set these women up by virtue of their supposedly inherent religiosity and the force of the predominant protestant culture to "naturally" help mediate the challenges of the nascent capitalist economy in what would become Saskatchewan.

The secondary reasons for joining particular women's or girl's religious associations were often more practical: to seek friendship and to network with others who were like-minded. Mrs. O. from Rosetown, recalled that when she arrived there were only approximately six women in town. About a week after her arrival two of them came calling: "The reason they came calling on me you see, there was the Methodist Church and a Presbyterian and of course they were Presbyterian ... That's how I became a good Presbyterian."<sup>68</sup>

Most girls in Indian Head and Rosetown were raised believing that church and school were facts of life; participation in both was a given. However, whereas after 1917 school attendance was mandatory by law, going to church was purely voluntary. Still, as Ivy and Karen noted at the top of the chapter, attending church was as expected as was attending school because "both went together."

Girls attended church for several other reasons too. First, most had no choice. Rare were the parents who did not insist that the entire family attend church together. Attending church had many social and spiritual implications. It was considered a way to bond with God,

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<sup>68</sup>. Mrs. O., taped interview, no date.

the community, and the family. Second, church and church-related activities could be rather fun. With Sunday School<sup>69</sup>, Canadian Girls in Training (CGIT)<sup>70</sup>, and/or a girls church auxiliary<sup>71</sup>, there were plenty of interesting activities to consider. Besides, most, if not all, of a girl's friends participated in the same organizations, so church-sponsored activities for young people would not take her away from her peer group. On the contrary, church activities brought girls of similar backgrounds together.

Girls, therefore, at an early age -- even before they attended school -- received an education at church that reinforced notions of "Women's" "proper" domestic sphere. This educational foundation, reinforced in popular culture, taught girls to accept their "natural" role as wife and mother. It familiarized them with cultural expectations of women that were more broadly-based than were just local customs and practices. This is important because it was upon this imported and supposedly "traditional" model of woman that the identity of "Woman" in Indian Head and Rosetown was founded.

The social composition of the religious Ladies' Aid committees in Rosetown and Indian Head is difficult to determine because few records survive, but a cursory examination of memberships indicates that the women who were elected to executive positions on the Ladies' Aids were the wives of community leaders. For example, in September 1909 the

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<sup>69</sup>. Sunday School was generally held Sunday afternoon. It was not until the 1940s that it was moved to Sunday morning to coincide with the church service.

<sup>70</sup>. The CGIT met weekly. The Rosetown Eagle printed notices of meetings which were held each Wednesday after school.

<sup>71</sup>. The girls auxiliary does not appear to have been common. It only appears in the records of a very few churches, for example, St. Andrew's Presbyterian in Indian Head.

following women were elected to executive offices in the Rosetown Methodist Ladies' Aid: Mrs. C.B. Mark, president (husband owned the drug store, was the village secretary-treasurer and later Mayor in 1912-13); Mrs. L.F. Heartwell, vice-president, (husband owned a hardware and furniture store); Mrs. A.M. Stewart, secretary, (husband was a doctor), and Mrs. King, treasurer, (husband owned the first store in Rosetown and was the first overseer of the village). In the Methodist Church at Indian Head, the Women's Missionary Society (WMS), formed September 1901, was headed by Mrs. M.M. Bennett, president (the minister's wife); Mrs. H. Orchard, vice-president (husband was a pharmacist and a member of the Church Trustee Board); and Mrs. A.V. Gerry, treasurer, (husband was a town councillor and owned a hardware store and a tinsmith shop).

The sense of duty to become involved in the Ladies Aid' or the WMS was strong, and in some cases expensive. The Indian Head Methodist WMS charged a one-dollar annual membership fee in addition to collecting monies from members on a regular basis for special funds and offerings. The 1920 annual report proudly announced that twenty-seven members paid membership fees, one life membership (\$25.00) had been purchased, and that collections from Mite Boxes, the Thank Offering, and the Easter Service totalled \$133.00. Additionally, twenty-four members bought subscriptions to "The Outlook", the Methodist mission publication.<sup>72</sup> Apparently, to be a member, a woman had to have access to ready cash. This left out any number of women who did not have disposable income of their own or whose family could not afford to "donate" so frequently.

The influence of Protestant morals and ethics on Indian Head and Rosetown women

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<sup>72</sup>. Secretary's Book 1918-1922, St. Andrews United Church, Indian Head.

is not difficult to discern. In fact, although some historians now recognize the church as a place where women found opportunities for public expression and even career possibilities, the Protestant churches were also strict in the application of church teachings, doctrines, or practices. Policy that was developed in the national office or diocese (in eastern Canada) was to be followed closely by all congregations. There was, therefore, little deviation on behalf of local churches attached to national religious institutions. Women's church associations and auxiliaries in Indian Head and Rosetown were not very different than they were in Ontario or Manitoba, and church teachings subsequently reinforced "traditional" identities for women as pious, genteel, and feminine.

### **III. Educating "Women"**

Church and school were linked in many ways but education was the primary connection between the two -- an education that would result in a particular type of student, that of "Woman". The education each provided and the method in which it was delivered was, however, not the same. Both reinforced imported ideals, identities, and paradigms, but schools took some liberty with the program of study and its presentation to mix in a degree of local nuance; churches tended to follow their imported directives more closely. Additionally, churches organized their work along (generally) rigid gender lines, with separate girls and women's auxiliaries and groups; at school girls and boys usually learned and played together, at least until they were teenagers. Both institutions, therefore, taught and reinforced the female identity of "Woman" and were a mix of old and new, but schools definitely were more reflective of the local situation than were churches.

Catherine Motherwell of Abernethy, in a 1916 speech on women's roles explained, "We have a great avenue of service open to us through our church organizations and our schools; through the intelligent use of these, much can be accomplished."<sup>73</sup> Motherwell was right, and the schools and churches did accomplish much in both Indian Head and Rosetown. They provided familiar links to the wider world outside of the local community and in the process, reinforced British-Canadian myths, traditions, and practices. Moreover, they bolstered a specific type of "civilization" that was well-known and well-established in the rest of English-speaking Canada.

Yet while schools and churches both represented the familiar and the accepted, rural schools additionally were responsible for instructing students on how to be good citizens in their local community. Church and religion taught people how to be good universal citizens (on earth and later in the "hereafter"), but school brought those lessons home, modified them to "fit" local circumstances and educated young people to be rural citizens, "Women" and "Men" of the Saskatchewan prairie. The two did, as Ivy and Karen insisted, "go together".

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<sup>73</sup>. Catherine Motherwell, address on women's Present-Day Responsibilities, 1916. Cited in Lyle Dick, Farmers "Making Good", p. 161.

## CHAPTER V: "Women" & Waged Work

When they went on holidays I had to work every day but when they were there, Mrs. Cole would help some ... I'd have certain nights off but that was awful. My feet, they're still not very good but I finally had to break down and go to Regina for fitted shoes. My shoes that I was wearing were too short, you know, and now all my toes are all curled up and I suffered like everything but you know, a dance would come along on a Friday night and I'd always manage to go and I said, "Oh I wished I was a teacher". Next day was Saturday and the teachers could all sleep in and here I had to get up and go to work.<sup>1</sup>

In the 1930s Faye H. moved from her parent's rural home near Indian Head to the city of Regina and completed part of a business course before she "took sick and had to come home and I decided to get my course finished but I didn't."<sup>2</sup> Upon her return she worked as a drug store clerk in Wolseley, a general store clerk in Sintaluta, and finally returned to Indian Head to be near her mother (her father had since died) where she worked in a general store. The hours were long and the pay low, although Faye recalls she was able to "make it do" and still help out her family which was "kind of poor."<sup>3</sup> Of the fifty dollars a month she earned while working in Sintaluta, twenty-five went for room and board. But as she said, "things were cheap in those days, that was in the Dirty Thirties ... every time I came up to Indian Head ... I'd bring a few groceries with me, a can of corn, a can of sausage and something like

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<sup>1</sup>. Faye H., personal interview, February 1993.

<sup>2</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>. Ibid.

that so that we'd have a meal when I got here."<sup>4</sup>

When Faye went out to work her choice of occupation was influenced by many factors, tangible and intangible, including her personal expectations, her geographic location, and the gendered public discourses that mediate social identities. Saskatchewan women, like Faye, shared with other North American and British women the necessity of waged work. This obligation -- waged work -- both reinforced imported versions of identity and helped to establish new versions thereof. The identities associated with waged work on the prairies, however, differed because of the different context of the labour market and the rural economy.

Faye's biography is valuable to historians of rural women because it maps the relationship between lived experience and historical identity. In this chapter it is Faye's work identity that is considered. Her story is typical of many rural Saskatchewan women. She grew up on a farm, left home to take job-training and eventually returned to find paid employment near home where she could support herself and be close to her parents. Later she married. Although Faye's story may be typical, it also differs from many others. Faye chose to continue working after marriage; she did the bookkeeping for her husband's three garages. She had no children and her husband's mother did the housekeeping. So, while Faye went out to work, her mother-in-law acted as household manager. When Faye came home from her job, instead of immediately having to worry about children, dinner and domestic responsibilities, she relaxed by working in her prize-winning flower garden.

Previous scholarship on women and work in Saskatchewan has taken one of two

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<sup>4</sup>. Ibid.



directions. First, numerous studies focus on women settler's unpaid labour.<sup>5</sup> Second, relatively fewer studies centralize women in the paid work force.<sup>6</sup> Both types of studies tend to focus on the nature of work rather than the meaning or the identities associated with that work. This chapter offers some observations about "Women's" socially and culturally created waged-work identities and demonstrates how those identities were, in some respects, analogous to identities experienced by young women across North America and Britain. Moreover, it also demonstrates how certain female gender-marked occupations -- domestic service, nursing, teaching, clerical work -- "fit" characteristics associated with the identity of "Woman" and accordingly, reinforced it as a desirable identity for rural Saskatchewan females.

Thousands upon thousands of settlers relocated to Saskatchewan from Ontario,

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<sup>5</sup>. Following are some of the best discussions about Canadian rural women's many varieties of work: Seena B. Kohl, Working Together: Women & Family in Southwestern Saskatchewan, (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart & Winston of Canada Limited, 1976); R.G. Marchildon, "Improving the Quality of Life in Rural Saskatchewan: Some Activities of the Women's Section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers, 1913- 1920", in D.C. Jones & Ian McPherson (eds.), Building Beyond the Homestead, (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1985), pp. 89-104; Veronica Strong-Boag, "Pulling in Double Harness or Hauling a Double Load: Women, Work & Feminism on the Canadian Prairie", in Journal of Canadian Studies, Vol.21 No.3, pp. 32-52; Georgina Taylor, "'Should I drown myself now or later?': The Isolation of Rural women in Saskatchewan and their Participation in the Homemakers' Clubs, the Farm Movement and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, 1910-1967", in Kathleen Storrie (ed.), Women: Isolation and Bonding; The Ecology of Gender, (Toronto: Methuen Publications, 1987), pp. 79-100. There are also many interesting biographies, autobiographies and collections of sketches that detail rural women's work, such as: Georgina Binnie-Clark, Wheat and Women, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979(1914)); and Mary Pinder Hiemstra, Gully Farm, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1955).

<sup>6</sup>. See, for example, Christine Smillie, "The Invisible Workforce: Women Workers in Saskatchewan from 1905 to World War II", in Saskatchewan History Vol.XXXIX No.2, pp. 62-78; and Apolonja Maria Kojder, "The Saskatoon Women Teachers' Association: A Demand for Recognition", in Saskatchewan History Vol.XXX No.2, pp. 63-74.

Manitoba and Britain where separate spheres informed official and popular discourses (Appendix II). Along with their belongings and personal effects, these persons brought enough cultural baggage with them, consciously or unconsciously, to insure that at least some familiar cultural patterns would be recreated -- including those popularly associated with waged labour -- in their new Saskatchewan locale. Furthermore, once they settled in the West, most families were not totally cut off or completely isolated from the world from which they came. Letters from home and publications augmented and reinforced familiar cultural systems, practices and beliefs, including those relating to the sexual division of labour and "proper" occupations for women.<sup>7</sup>

Implicit in the societal framework for the Canadian Northwest Territories were notions of what was and was not appropriate work for women. If Canada was to be "a nation of homes",<sup>8</sup> as English immigrant Emily Weaver wrote in 1914, then the primary function of settlers was to establish those homes. Yet it was not just establishing any old home that mattered; the image promoted by eastern propagandists was to recreate the West with the same traditions and mores as prevailed in eastern Canada, and by extension, Britain. The

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<sup>7</sup>. Dawson and Younge noted in 1940 that "reading matter, such as newspapers and periodicals, is probably the most important means of secondary contact which farm families have with the outside world." C.A. Dawson and Eva R. Younge, Pioneering in the Prairie Provinces: The Social Side of the Settlement Process, (Toronto: The MacMillan Company, 1940), p, 156. Additionally, local newspapers frequently reprinted articles from larger regional or national journals. The Rosetown Eagle, for example, offered subscriptions as part of a package which included the Western Home & Weekly, the Weekly Free Press, or the Prairie Farmer, thus giving rural families a direct link to what was going on in the outside world.

<sup>8</sup>. Emily P. Weaver, Canada and the British Immigrant, (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1914) p. 275.

primary roles for women would thus be as homemaker and mother because contemporary British-Canadian wisdom charged women with being the arbiters of home and hearth. There was very little room in this vision for independent working women.

With the growth and expansion of both Indian Head and Rosetown, however, came opportunities for female employment and British-Canadian women like Faye H., either out of necessity or by choice, began to expand their primary social identity as maternal caregiver to include a newly created middle-class identity of working woman. Rural women had always worked, albeit not often for wages, but the custom of working outside of woman's traditional "proper sphere" clearly was familiar. The elasticity of rural "Womanhood" provided a framework in which redefining what it meant to be a "Woman" could be manipulated to fit a variety of circumstances, particularly if that definition could be reconciled with domesticity. Women's shifting public and private identities, therefore, were open to reinterpretation and could be negotiated within diverse and diverging contexts.

Several key contexts are relevant in the examination of the identities created by and for rural Saskatchewan working "Women". First, one should note the international phenomenon which began during the late nineteenth century of middle-class women seeking education and entering waged employment. Second, there also developed a Canadian framework that identified middle-class British-Canadian ideals as the cultural norm for womanhood -- rural or urban. Third, the conditions associated with the dawn of a distinctly western-Canadian female identity drew upon the imported middle-class norm of womanhood but were then molded into a regionally distinctive form by the social gospel, the rise of progressivism, the popularity of the farm movement and agrarian feminism, and most

importantly, by lived experience.

Thus, influenced by a mixture of international, national and local ideals which were subsequently blended with lived experience in the creation of an indigenous social identity for rural Saskatchewan "Women", and motivated by the personal experiences of other female relatives and acquaintances who were wage earners or had been so prior to marriage, single, rural women increasingly began entering the paid work force. Although some rural women like Faye originally sought paid employment out of necessity (ie. farm income was insufficient to support all members of a family, or widowhood forced them to become self-sufficient), others chose to go out to work. Younger women, in particular, were eager to pursue an individual identity that allowed them to establish some form of economic independence and achieve a measure of self-fulfillment prior to assuming the expected identity of Mrs. Somebody.

By the turn of the century there were two primary movements of women entering the paid workforce in the West: one, women who needed to work to survive; and two, women who wanted to pursue careers. Between 1910 and 1920 as the villages, towns, and cities of Saskatchewan grew, there was increasing demand for women workers in specific feminized occupations which had popularly become identified as suited to women's so-called feminine instincts. These included nursing, teaching, office work, domestic work and sales clerking.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>. Mary Poovey describes how nursing was established as an acceptable middle-class female occupation by Florence Nightingale. Poovey writes: "partly because admitting women into the wards as nurses could be used -- rhetorically at least -- to head off this threat by would-be women doctors, and partly because the increasingly specialized practice of medicine demanded some body of trained, obedient attendants, the medical establishment as a whole generally supported the establishment of female nursing." Mary Poovey, Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England, (Chicago:

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University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. 176.

Alison Prentice argues that the feminization of teaching "was made possible by three conditions. One was the eventual acceptance and promotion of the idea by leading educational administrators and propagandists of the day. Another and probably more basic condition was the growing tendency on the part of money-conscious school trustees to see women as having an increasingly useful role to play in their rapidly expanding schools and school systems." The third reason was "the interest in and acceptance of their changing role by women themselves, and the society that financed and used the schools." Further, Prentice adds, "the main reason for engaging female teachers was less their real or imagined qualifications, than the fact that they could be obtained relatively cheaply." Alison Prentice, "The Feminization of Teaching in British North America and Canada 1845-1875", in Histoire sociale/ Social History 8 (May 1975), pp. 7-8.

Graham S. Lowe examines women's entry into clerical work and concludes that "as the burden of office work increased, managers found that clerks performing simple tasks repetitively were cheaper to employ, produced more and could be easily regulated. The new jobs created in this manner lacked the skill components found in the more craft-like work of the bookkeeper. Consequently, they were unattractive to middle-class male clerks expecting upward mobility and comfortable salaries. Employers were pragmatic enough to recognize the clear advantages of women's higher average education, traditionally lower pay and greater availability for menial tasks. A permanent secondary labour market of female clerks thus developed." Graham S. Lowe, Women in the Administrative Revolution: The Feminization of Clerical Work, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), pp. 4-5.

Alison Prentice, Paula Bourne, Gail Cuthbert Brandt, Beth Light, Wendy Mitchinson and Naomi Black maintain that "domestic service provided an entry into the Canadian workforce not only for European women, but for many farm girls. It was a job for which they were considered ideally suited since they were familiar with household work and conditions in Canada. From their parents' point of view, the occupation sometimes seemed preferable to others since it took place in a family environment. Above all, domestic service was considered suitable for women since it prepared them for their eventual role as housewives." Alison Prentice et al., Canadian Women, A History, (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), p. 124.

Susan Porter Benson argues that by 1890 retailing had shifted into a new era. Most retailers, "were not, however, consciously striving toward a new type of firm, but simply making a series of tactical decisions for the immediate health of their businesses"(p. 13). There were two key reasons for hiring women as sales clerks; the first reason was part of the message conveyed by the new retailers that shops and department stores were a safe, protected and comfortable place for women shoppers. Women sales clerks, trained by the store as "professionals" were key to this new vision, as retailers exploited the idea of "women's culture". Porter notes, "qualities which had for a century been encouraged in women -- adeptness at manipulating people, sympathetic ways of responding to the needs of others, and familiarity with things domestic -- fit nicely into a new vision of selling. Managers urged saleswomen to transfer skills from their domestic to their work lives"(p. 130). The

However, many Saskatchewan women remained tied to cultural myths and images that delineated the boundaries of women's so-called "proper" sphere to home and hearth. Appendix IV shows that in this period more than ninety percent of Saskatchewan women did not work for wages. At least three rationalizations for the rejection of waged work by women seem to have been current: first, they had no choice (that is, Saskatchewan was unsettled and there were few opportunities for employment); second, they had no desire to seek outside employment, whether because they did not need the money or had no interest in waged work; and third, they had no time to think of outside employment (there was already too much work to be done at home as it was). Overall, during the period 1880-1950, the most common form of work Saskatchewan women engaged in was unwaged domestic or household labour. Yet even though the percentage of waged women is low, it is significant. In each census period the number of women working for wages increased, demonstrating an on-going trend of women entering the paid work force doing a variety of jobs.

The authors of Canadian Women: A History argue that there were many reasons why more and more women moved into paid employment. Perhaps the most important reason was that many families simply could not survive on one wage -- or as in farming situations, no wage at all. Despite conventional ideas that the husband was responsible for securing employment with a "family wage -- one that would support both the worker and his family,"<sup>10</sup> many women and children were forced to seek paid employment because the male head-of-

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second reason to hire women as sales clerks was that women were paid considerably less than men. Susan Porter Benson, Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers, and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

<sup>10</sup>. Alison Prentice et.al., Canadian Women, A History, p. 121.

household's wage was insufficient to maintain the family. In rural situations where the seasonal nature of farming meant men were often unavailable for off-farm paid employment, women took in boarders, sold their produce, or worked as domestic helpers to bring in needed money so the family would survive. Gail N., for example, remembers selling her homemade butter as late as the 1950s,<sup>11</sup> and Joan T. sold eggs and milk so she would have money "for things I wanted to buy for the house, for the children."<sup>12</sup> Still other women took jobs in stores, offices, and hospitals.

Many women, however, ventured into the paid labour force because they wanted to, not because they had to. As a result of changes in late nineteenth-century social attitudes suggesting that women were properly suited to specific public roles and occupations categorized as maternal or nurturing, middle-class women in particular sought employment outside of the home. Furthermore, as opportunities to pursue higher education became available to women, an increasing number enrolled in post-secondary institutions in pursuit of careers in nursing or teaching, for example.<sup>13</sup> Upon graduation these women wanted to

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<sup>11</sup>. Gail N., personal interview, February 1993.

<sup>12</sup>. Joan T., personal interview, April 1993.

<sup>13</sup>. Women's participation in Canadian post-secondary education has interested numerous scholars. The Saskatchewan context was examined by Michael Hayden in "Women and the University of Saskatchewan: Patterns of a Problem", in Saskatchewan History Vol.LX No.2 (Spring 1987), pp. 72-82. Also see the collection of essays edited by Paul Axelrod and John G. Reid, Youth, University and Canadian Society: Essays in the Social History of Higher Education, (Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1989). Several essays in this collection discuss women in higher education, especially, Chad Gaffield, Lynne Marks, and Susan Laskin, "Student Populations and Graduate Careers: Queens University, 1895-1900", pp. 3-25, where the authors argue, "the nature of female participation at Queens reflects a widening of women's sphere but also the continued force of the contemporary domestic ideology"(p.14); and Judith Fingard, "College, Career, and Community: Dalhousie Coeds,

use their skills and training. As they moved into the paid workforce, this generation set an example for other young women who would follow in increasing numbers.

Domestic work, although the least favourite occupation, drew the greatest number of employees because it required little training and finding work was relatively easy. In 1891 forty-five percent of Saskatchewan working women listed their occupation as servant (Appendix III). Although this percentage dropped precipitously over the next fifty years, in 1941 servants or domestic workers were still the largest category, (at twenty-six percent), of all Saskatchewan working women. Marilyn Barber argues that, "in spite of the expansion of alternative employment for women in factories, offices and shops, domestic service remained a common occupation for a young woman without professional qualifications who had to earn her own living or to contribute to the support of her family."<sup>14</sup> Barber further contends that between 1870 and 1930 the demand for domestic workers exceeded the supply.<sup>15</sup> Along with various specially created immigration societies<sup>16</sup> and women's organizations such as the

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1881-1921", pp. 26-50.

<sup>14</sup>. Marilyn Barber, "The Servant Problem in Manitoba 1896-1930", in Mary Kinnear (ed.), First Days Fighting Days: Women in Manitoba History, (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1987), p. 100.

<sup>15</sup>. Marilyn Barber, "The Women Ontario Welcomed: Immigrant Domestic Workers for Ontario Homes, 1870-1939", in Alison Prentice & Susan Mann Trofimenkoff (eds.), The Neglected Majority, Vol. Two, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), p. 104.

<sup>16</sup>. Barbara Roberts discusses the work of the British Women's Emigration Society by placing it in the context of imperialism. Barbara Roberts, "A Work of Empire: Canadian Reformers and British Female Immigration", in Linda Kealey (ed.), A Not Unreasonable Claim, (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1979), pp. 185-201. The rationalization for sending young British women to the Colonies was first, to alleviate the so-called "surplus" women problem, and second, to insure the Colonies remained sufficiently British.



National Council of Women,<sup>17</sup> business and government made arrangements to bring "suitable" young women to Canada to work as domestic servants. However, few immigrant domestics found their way to western households; most were employed in the east.

Domestic service involved hard work, long hours and low pay. Live-in servants often had no privacy and in rural settings, domestics could find themselves living in isolated areas. But, for those with no other job training or educational opportunities, domestic work was often the only employment option. Janet Downie explained, "In Scotland I was a servant in private houses. When I came to Western Canada, I helped my aunt and received seven dollars a month and did work that no girl would do now (mid 1950s) for sixty a month."<sup>18</sup> Phoebe Elizabeth Booth from New Brunswick who worked as a domestic servant "until the time of my marriage"<sup>19</sup> was in a similar situation. With no occupational training other than that which they had received at home, Janet and Phoebe had little choice but to accept positions as domestic workers.

Elizabeth D.'s story as a housekeeper is particularly poignant and intriguing. In 1905 Elizabeth was a young unwed mother from North Dakota when she received an offer of employment from a Qu'Appelle area family. The husband had cancer and the wife was unable to cope with the household responsibilities on her own so she hired Elizabeth to help her. The

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<sup>17</sup>. Veronica Strong-Boag concludes that "the search for servants constituted the mainstay of the Council's immigration policy during these early years (1883-1899)." Veronica Strong-Boag, The Parliament of Women, (Ottawa: National Museum of Man Mercury Series, History Division Paper No.18, 1976) p. 194.

<sup>18</sup>. Janet Downie, SAB, S-X2, Q#2.

<sup>19</sup>. Phoebe Elizabeth Booth, SAB, S-X2, Q#2.

husband died within a year and the wife moved to Winnipeg, to live with her daughter leaving Elizabeth again in need of employment. In March 1906 an Indian Head farmer, Trevor D., wrote to Elizabeth asking her to "come to me to keep house." He briefly outlined the situation: "I like nice people around the house and I do not want any women or girl to work hard. But I like nice company. I do not keep cows or anything to make a lot of work in the house and for your baby."<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth accepted the position and, with her daughter Helen, moved into Trevor's home.

Even though Trevor had promised that he would not make a woman work hard, Elizabeth's responsibilities as housekeeper/homemaker were extensive. Her journal lists an endless litany of jobs: "baking bread", "washing quilts", "planting raspberries", "making head cheese", "washing clothes all day", "making ice cream", "scrubbing the school house", "salting pork", "churning", "picking stones", "plucking chickens", "making shirts."<sup>21</sup> Although Elizabeth soon became Trevor's companion (a child was born just over one year after she moved into Trevor's house<sup>22</sup>), her duties did not decrease. She continued to do most of the same work she had done as the paid housekeeper.

Domestic work was the most common form of paid work available to young women,

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<sup>20</sup>. Trevor D. to Elizabeth D., March 19, 1906. Private collection of Wayne Horsman, Indian Head.

<sup>21</sup>. Diary of Elizabeth D., private collection of Wayne Horsman, Indian Head.

<sup>22</sup>. Elizabeth travelled to Winnipeg where she gave birth to Trevor's daughter. Elizabeth's mother collected the child in Winnipeg and raised her as one of her own eleven children. Trevor and Elizabeth never married because Trevor already had a wife and daughter who had returned to Winnipeg some years before Elizabeth's arrival as housekeeper. Trevor adopted Elizabeth's first child but had very little to do with his own child whom he rarely saw.

not only because the demand for "home helps" exceeded the supply of available labour, but also because most people assumed young women were "naturally" best-suited to domestic service. Employment in the so-called domestic sphere before marriage did not contradict or challenge the prevailing models of women as nurturing, loving caregivers. After all, women were thought to have an inherent aptitude for household responsibilities and childcare that stemmed from their maternal instincts. Thus, the elasticity required in the creation of an identity as female domestic worker was minimal. It was not much of a stretch to reconcile women working for wages as domestics when they were employed in what was considered their "proper sphere." Further, it was assumed that domestic workers were receiving training that would prepare them to be better wives and mothers when they had homes and families of their own.

In rural Saskatchewan women also worked as agricultural helpers and labourers. Yet, in a province where the population was overwhelmingly rural and agricultural (Appendix V), it is striking that the percentage of women listing their occupation as agricultural labourer never reached more than twelve percent (Appendix III). In their own homes rural and farm women often did field work, gardened, and cared for farm animals, besides doing their household and/or waged work, but it was unusual for this outside work to be accepted as a woman's primary responsibility or to be done for wages. Accordingly, despite the fluidity of gender roles and a defining of domesticity that included women's work outside of the traditional "woman's sphere", rural women found it difficult to secure employment as farm

labourers because they were not thought of as such.<sup>23</sup>

Pamela Horn, in a study of English rural women, argues that by the 1850s and 1860s rural women's roles "[were] increasingly coming under question."<sup>24</sup> She notes that the number of female farm labourers, for example, was greatly reduced between 1851 and 1901.<sup>25</sup> Horn posits that this number shrank because of the influence of the patriarchal ideology of separate spheres, but also because of technological improvements in agriculture which rendered obsolete much of the work of female farm labourers.

Unfortunately, there are no studies comparable to Horn's examining the influence of separate spheres ideology and agricultural labour on Canadian rural women.<sup>26</sup> However, Canadian scholars have examined how rural women's work was undermined by technological advancement and gendered notions of women's "proper sphere". Marjorie Griffin Cohen's analysis of women in Canadian dairying to 1900 concludes that "[dairying] was taken over by men as it moved from a household craft to factory production. The patriarchal structure

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<sup>23</sup>. Despite this, there are numerous recorded incidents of women, particularly in the early settlement period, helping men do "outside" work. For example, in A Harvest Yet to Reap there are photographs of women performing numerous male gender-marked jobs including helping clear the land (p.57), sawing wood (p.45) and summer fallowing (p.85), among other tasks. Linda Rasmussen, Lorna Rasmussen, Candace Savage, & Anne Wheeler, A Harvest Yet to Reap: A History of Prairie Women, (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1976).

<sup>24</sup>. Pamela Horn, Victorian Countrywomen, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), p. 146.

<sup>25</sup>. Horn cites statistics from the census outlining the drop in the number of recorded female agricultural workers: 1851 = 143,475; 1871 = 58,112; 1901 = 11,941. Ibid., p. 148.

<sup>26</sup>. There are studies that examine women's participation in various farm labour initiatives, but these studies focus on specific initiatives and do not address change over time the way Horn's study does. One example, Margaret Kechnie, "...this is not a paying job...": the Farmerette Movement in Ontario during the Great War", paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association, Carleton, June 1993.

of the household and the underlying assumptions between men and women were the most significant forces leading to male control of dairying as capital accumulation became a more important aspect of production."<sup>27</sup> What Marjorie Cohen calls "the underlying assumption" was also evident in Jean Burnet's study of Hanna, Alberta, 1909-1946, the period subsequent to Cohen's study. Burnet found in Hanna a "strongly patriarchal authority system," even though "all family members from an early age make vital contributions to the farm economy."<sup>28</sup> The patriarchal system was a "source of friction" because, despite the necessary work of all family members, "the father receives almost the whole of the family cash income and out of it pays the household expenses and distributes pocket money."<sup>29</sup> The assumption, Burnet concludes, was that men and women had distinct roles and functions. Women looked after home and hearth; men looked after capital accumulation and "work". Seena B. Kohl's examination of southwestern Saskatchewan extends this analysis into the post-War period. Kohl argues that "there is a general consensus as to the division of labour between husbands and wives," even though "there is flexibility in the role which the farm or ranch wife can play in the enterprise."<sup>30</sup> These three studies indicate that in over one hundred years, 1850 through 1960, rural women's roles often were dictated by gendered ideological boundaries relegating them to particular so-called feminine areas of expertise, and by technology that eventually

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<sup>27</sup>. Marjorie Griffin Cohen, "The Decline of Women in Canadian Dairying", p. 61.

<sup>28</sup>. Jean Burnet, Next Year Country: A Study of Rural Social Organization in Alberta, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951), p. 30.

<sup>29</sup>. Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>30</sup>. Seena B. Kohl, Working Together: Women and Family in Southwestern Saskatchewan, p. 67.

supplanted their value as agricultural workers. Women's roles in Indian Head and Rosetown, not surprisingly, also tended to be influenced by such contemporary gender paradigms, but at the same time, these rural women were redefining "womanhood" to better reflect the realities of their own lives.

Not all women, of course, were hustled out of the fields and into the kitchen when technological advancements were introduced on the farm. As the census demonstrates, between 1891 and 1941, on average ten percent of Saskatchewan women continued to identify themselves as farm labourers (Appendix III). Particularly in the settlement years, prior to the introduction of large scale technology into farming, every hand was needed to help run the farm regardless of the gendered origins of that hand. Mrs. Charles George Picard, for example, explained that "I helped my husband outside all I could. I would milk the cows and do what work I could to help so my husband could stay at the breaking."<sup>31</sup>

Ivy E. recalled that she always worked outside as a "general chore boy" and "flunky".<sup>32</sup> Upon marriage, she moved into her husband's family home where his mother controlled the domestic sphere and told Ivy "that as long as I'm here I'm mistress of this house."<sup>33</sup> Ivy looked after 150 head of cattle, worked in the garden, helped in the fields ... whatever needed to be done. She was often impossibly lonely and anxious for company.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>. Mrs. Charles George Picard, SAB, S-X2, Q#2.

<sup>32</sup>. Ivy E., personal interview, February 1993.

<sup>33</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>34</sup>. Ivy recalled that she used to go with her husband to cut wood so she would have some company; "and even if he just said to me 'Get out of the road so the tree doesn't fall on you', you know, somebody was talking to me." Ibid.

She would sit out in the field with the cattle and write long letters to her sister-in-law, telling her "every blessed thing I thought and did, you know, when the flowers started or what birds sang and I told her when I got my tomato seedlings planted and how many rows of potatoes I'd put in and, just anything."<sup>35</sup> She rarely went into town because her mother-in-law did not think it was necessary or appropriate. Ivy's husband curled, played baseball, and frequently met with his friends and colleagues. Even though Ivy did "men's work", she was clearly thought of as a "Woman" and was thus restricted in the social activities she could "properly" pursue. She lamented, "You know, sometimes I just wanted to play basketball."<sup>36</sup>

Domestic service and agricultural work, although the easiest jobs to secure for rural women,<sup>37</sup> were not most women's first occupational choices. Some wanted careers and independence not generally associated with housekeeping or farm work. Domestic service and agricultural labour usually meant living-in with no privacy. Nursing, teaching, or clerking could be equated with some measure of personal freedom because they frequently involved a move away from home -- even if only for the duration of a training period. For many young women, however, a move to town or the city was in itself an exciting prospect.

Between 1891 and 1911 almost the same percentage of women were teaching as were working in agriculture. By the 1921 census, however, this ratio had shifted dramatically. The percentage of women in nursing, business, teaching or retail increased, while the percentage

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<sup>35</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>. The total percentage of women engaged in domestic or agricultural work remained relatively high throughout the period 1891-1941: 1891 = 55.35%; 1901 = not available; 1911 = 44.98%; 1921 = 30.90%; 1931 = 36.42%; 1941 = 33.68%.

of women in agriculture and domestic service declined substantially. In examining the figures from the census of 1921, 1931 and 1941, (Table 1) it is interesting to note that the overall percentages in each of the largest categories (teacher, servant, office, nursing, sales and agriculture) remain relatively stable. The employment patterns established in the 1921 census appear to hold for at least 20 years, suggesting that the period of greatest change for women came before that point.

**Table 1**  
Percentage of women working in the top six occupations

	teacher	servant	office	nursing	sales	agric.
<b>1921</b>	16.49	21.89	16.61	4.73	5.98	9.01
<b>1931</b>	15.94	26.87	13.06	5.28	4.82	9.55
<b>1941</b>	12.50	26.25	13.83	5.79	5.96	7.43

Source: Census of Canada 1921, 1931, 1941

Nursing was one of the fields that attracted a growing number of trainees. Appendix III outlines a pattern of growth from less than one percent of Saskatchewan working women involved in nursing in 1891, to almost six percent in 1941. Although these numbers may at first seem insignificant, they are very important. While the other five categories (teacher, servant, sales, office, and agriculture) experienced a drop in female participation in at least one census period, the percentage of nurses continued to rise with each census.

Nursing was a growth industry that relied on inexpensive female labour. Kate



McPherson argues that rural women were on the one hand "pushed" out of their home districts because they had few opportunities to secure waged work, and on the other hand, were "pulled" into urban centres by the growing white-collar sector.<sup>38</sup> Because most native-born women were literate, they were suited to nursing and clerical work. McPherson explains that nursing suited rural women's needs because the three-year-nurses training course gave them an opportunity to become familiar with the urban setting and job prospects while acquiring portable skills and certification.<sup>39</sup> McPherson's findings are supported by Indian Head and Rosetown women, including Lois X. who said, "I didn't really choose nursing. Nursing sort of chose me because I wanted to have a profession."<sup>40</sup>

According to a study done by Marguerite E. Robinson for the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association, the first nursing services in the Saskatchewan area were offered by the Grey Nuns in 1860 at Ile-a-la-Crosse. However, it was the 1885 uprising at Batoche that focused attention on the lack of medical care available in the Territories.<sup>41</sup> As the population grew, small private hospitals with nursing services opened across the province, many with the assistance of the Victorian Order of Nurses. The Lady Minto Hospital in Indian Head, incorporated in October 1904 and renamed the Indian Head General Hospital

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<sup>38</sup>. Kathryn McPherson, "'The Country is a Stern Nurse': Rural Women, Urban Hospitals and the Creation of a Western Canadian Nursing Workforce, 1920-1940", paper presented to the Canadian Historical Association, June 1994, Calgary, p. 3.

<sup>39</sup>. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>40</sup>. Lois X., personal interview, April 1993.

<sup>41</sup>. Marguerite E. Robinson, *The First Fifty Years*, (Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association, 1967), Chapter One. Also see John Murray Gibbon, *Three Centuries of Canadian Nursing*, (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1947), Chapter XXIV.

in 1906, was one such hospital.<sup>42</sup> The Indian Head Hospital also operated a nurse's training school, offering two years of on-site training with the third year at a larger hospital such as the Regina General Hospital. Between 1912 and 1919 the hospital graduated ten nurses.<sup>43</sup> However, in 1925 the training school was discontinued because "the plan did not prove to be satisfactory."<sup>44</sup>

The nursing careers of three Saskatchewan women map opportunities and choices made by rural women seeking a professional designation. Nan Q. took her training in the early 1920s, Lois X. during the 1930s, and Diane X. in the 1940s. In each case their identification as professional working woman blended with their unmarried status. Only as a single woman or as a widow did they pursue individual careers. Upon marriage, their identity as wife and later mother pre-empted their identity as nurse. When widowed, all three women returned to nursing in order to support themselves and their family. The choice they had originally exercised as single women in entering nursing prior to marriage became a matter of necessity in widowhood. They did not resume paid employment because they wanted to, but rather because they had to.

Nan was born in Indian Head in 1902. She attended public and high school in Indian Head before going to Vancouver General to train as a nurse at the same hospital her aunt

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<sup>42</sup>. 1904 North West Territories Ordinances, Chapter 23, p. 221; 1906 Statutes of Saskatchewan, Chapter 52, p. 652.

<sup>43</sup>. These are the only years for which records are available. (Unfortunately many records from the hospital were destroyed in a 1954 fire.) There were three graduates in 1912, three in 1915, one in 1916, and three in 1919. See "General Hospital", pamphlet published by order of the Directors, 1919; Indian Head Library, file: Indian Head.

<sup>44</sup>. Marguerite E. Robinson, The First Fifty Years, p. 32. No further details are provided.

(mother's sister) had trained at. Another aunt and uncle also lived in Vancouver so, as she recalled, "It wasn't too bad"<sup>45</sup> because there was a familial connection relatively close by. Nan's nursing course was three years long, twelve months of the year, with some special vacation time. She lived in the nurse's residence attached to the hospital. Upon graduation, Nan worked in a homeopathic hospital in Vancouver "for a couple of years" before returning to Indian Head in 1925 to work in the local hospital.<sup>46</sup> Soon after, she married a local man and moved to Francis to farm. She noted, "I'd never farmed so that was an experience."<sup>47</sup> The experience, however, did not last long as in 1927 Nan's husband, a pilot, returned to flying and the family moved to Moose Jaw. Tragically, in 1927, Nan's husband died in a plane crash, leaving Nan on her own with a fourteen-month-old son. She returned to Indian Head and initially lived with her father-in-law until she moved to a home of her own and took in boarders. A few years later, when her son was "big enough",<sup>48</sup> Nan left him with her mother while she went back to Vancouver for a refresher nursing course. Upon Nan's return to Indian Head, she held a series of jobs including nursing, teaching at the Fort Qu'Appelle Sanatorium, and bookkeeping at the Indian Head Hospital. In 1940 Nan married a man from the Melfort area who was working at the Dominion Entomological Laboratory in Indian Head. Again Nan left her nursing job to work full-time as mother, wife and domestic manager. Over the next six years, three more children were born. Nan became involved in

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<sup>45</sup>. Nan Q., personal interview, February 1993.

<sup>46</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>. Ibid.

her volunteer work and demonstrated a keen interest in community development but she never resumed her nursing career.

Lois from Shellbrook decided to attend nursing school at the Victoria Hospital in Prince Albert as it was close to home and was relatively inexpensive. Lois's father was a farmer; her mother, previous to her marriage to Lois's father, had been a rural school teacher. The family was not well off but supported Lois's ambitions; her father cashed in his life insurance policy to pay for Lois's schooling. When asked if her parents approved of her decision to become a nurse Lois replied, "My father definitely, but mother, I think found it was ... at least I was going to be doing something and it was a profession because most of the girls in our area, young women in our area, went out and worked, helped in the homes or helped somebody look after their kids or something like this and very few of them even my age in our area went on to do anything constructive or they got married right out of high school and had their own family."<sup>49</sup> In pointing out that getting married right out of high school or looking after someone else's kids was, in Lois's opinion, not constructive, she implied that she believed there were other possibilities for young women between high school and marriage that were of greater value than was domestic work. She concluded by saying, "You had a choice and either you went (and did something else) or you didn't go and that was it."<sup>50</sup>

The combination of working and attending classes was gruelling. Lois recalled, "Your training was all on the job and then your class work fit in with your doctors' lectures. We

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<sup>49</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>50</sup>. Ibid.

worked twelve hour shifts and so you either worked days or nights, and when you worked days or nights too, you had your classes to attend whether you were supposed to be sleeping or not."<sup>51</sup> The food and living conditions were also of concern to the students. Lois explained, "Whatever vegetables or whatever things were brought in, that's what they had to serve and the nurses all started coming down with boils, bad ones, and so the doctor who treated the nurses told us to get a bag of raisins and keep them in our room and eat raisins, and the student council finally went to the powers that be and said we wanted milk on the table because we weren't getting milk to drink, so we got milk to drink and we ate raisins and it must have improved our general health because they finally let up."<sup>52</sup>

Immediately upon completing her exams Lois was recruited into a job at the Rosetown Hospital which hired only graduate nurses. In contrast to the Indian Head Hospital, there was no student nursing and no training school in Rosetown. Lois's salary was fifty dollars a month plus room and board in the nurse's residence but she sent half of her salary to her parents, leaving her with only twenty-five dollars each month (the same amount earned by Faye H., the sales clerk). Lois remarked, "That's why I couldn't smoke, waste ten cents on a package of cigarettes, write off ten cents!"<sup>53</sup> The nurses worked twelve-hour shifts with a two-hour break and maintained a strict and gendered social order even off duty. "Doctors were gods", Lois explained. "You stood up when a doctor came into the room and by the

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<sup>51</sup>. Lois X., personal interview, April 1993.

<sup>52</sup>. Ibid. Lois mentions "the vegetables or whatever things were brought in" -- this would be produce or meat that people used in lieu of cash to pay off their hospital bills.

<sup>53</sup>. Ibid.

later years when Charlie G. and those other younger men were here in the fifties, it was a lot easier between the doctors and nurses, but when I first came to Rosetown in 1942, oh, the doctors walked in and everybody jumped to attention and you didn't move a finger."<sup>54</sup>

Lois nursed until she married. In 1958 she was convinced to return to work part-time because "There were just no nurses and [the matron] called all the nurses in the area around and said 'Either you come back to work part time or we close the hospital.'"<sup>55</sup> In 1966, after the death of her husband, Lois "went back to work."<sup>56</sup> As in Nan's situation, Lois returned to nursing only because it was necessary. As a young wife and mother in the 1940s and 1950s it was not considered appropriate for her to work outside of her home, nor did she later express any regret in leaving her job. Her identity as (married) homemaker was not compatible with that of (single) working woman. She could be one or the other, not both.

Diane X., of Indian Head, attended the nursing school in St. Boniface during the 1940s. Like Nan, Diane's decision to enter nursing was partially influenced by having an aunt who was a nurse. Diane's father initially resisted her decision to enter nursing because, as she explained, "He said nurses were poor housekeepers and if I went into nursing I had to go to St. Boniface Hospital because when he had an attack of appendix and he just about died, that's where he went."<sup>57</sup> Diane did not at first expect to be able to go away to school because the one hundred dollars tuition (for the three year course) was prohibitive. "But", she

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<sup>54</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>. Diane X., personal interview, April 1993. Diane's younger sister also became a nurse.

revealed, "then my brother died overseas and my mother and dad got some money so they gave me this money so I could go into training."<sup>58</sup> Diane lived in the nurses' residence (which she called "a prison") with the other student nurses. She thought the conditions "were bad, like we worked 7:00 to 7:00 and we got three hours off and then you went to class too and that is how you learned. You had your lessons, your subjects you took, and then you'd get off the wards and go back to class and then go back to the wards ... and at night you signed in at 8:00 to study until 10:00. At 10:00 the lights went out, they just pulled the switch."<sup>59</sup>

After completing her training in 1946, Diane said that finding a job "wasn't hard."<sup>60</sup> She decided to return to Indian Head "for a while" where she did private nursing before returning to hospital work in the city. Diane married in 1948, two years after completing her training. She did not leave her job after marriage but did quit the following year because of a difficult pregnancy. In 1950 her husband died, leaving Diane with a two-year-old son and no insurance money. Like Nan, Diane returned to Indian Head. "I had no alternative but to move back to Indian Head," she explained, "because I could not afford to keep a home and a babysitter and work because you didn't make enough money."<sup>61</sup> Her mother helped look after Diane's son while Diane worked at the Indian Head Hospital. Eventually Diane became the hospital administrator. "That's how all these little hospitals were run," she said, "by the

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<sup>58</sup>. Ibid. Diane's brother was in the RCAF. He was killed in action in March 1942.

<sup>59</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>. Ibid.

directors of nursing."<sup>62</sup> She continued to work at the Hospital for another twenty years.

Diane's nursing career, like Nan's and Lois's, outlines a careful balancing of identities -- nurse, wife, mother -- at varying stages of her life. All three chose a profession that required an extensive commitment, both in time and in energy. As caregivers, nurses were expected not only to provide physical care; they were also assumed to be nurturing housekeepers.<sup>63</sup> Nursing was presumed to be "feminine" by design, and accordingly, nurses (who were by definition unmarried) were not at risk of forfeiting their femininity by working. Their nursing was seen as codependent on their basic female identity. Further, as Diane pointed out, "hospitals were mostly women's places. There were men in maintenance and there'd be a man to be secretary or something, and then the doctors, and all the rest were women."<sup>64</sup> Yet it is interesting to consider how it is that the two identities of nurse and wife/mother, although united in their ideal "femininity", also were seen as incompatible in their social positioning. People generally assumed that a woman could be a nurse because of her

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<sup>62</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>. Nurses, particularly when they were in training, were also used as hospital housekeepers. A 1919 Grain Growers' Guide column explains, "much of the time of the nurse is not taken up in training for her profession at all, but in doing menial and physical housework. This, so far as a training for the nursing profession is concerned, is quite superfluous. Scrubbing bath-tubs, sinks and kitchen floors for three to six months does not teach a nurse much about the profession which she proposes to enter. Indeed it discourages many girls who would like to enter the profession from doing so. Still, as someone else pointed out, it is cheaper for the finance board to pay a probationer \$4.00 to \$8.00 a month to do it than to pay a competent maid \$30 to \$35." "An Enlightened Fact", in Grain Growers' Guide, March 26, 1919, p. 82; cited in Angela Davis, "Country Homemakers': A Selection of Letters and Editorials From the Woman's Page of the Grain Growers' Guide 1908-1928", unpublished manuscript, Winnipeg, 1989.

<sup>64</sup>. Diane X., personal interview, April 1993.



inherent mothering/caring qualities but she could not be a nurse and a mother simultaneously. Nursing was not for wives/mothers; it was for unmarried or widowed women only.

It is also interesting to note that, as nurse trainees, the young women were required to live in residence where they were carefully monitored. Any deviation from the approved schedule was strictly prohibited. It was not just that the hospital found it easier to track their students that way; it was also to keep them from "getting into trouble". So, although the students were being trained as professionals able to make independent decisions, they were still perceived as flighty and naive enough that they needed to be protected and chaperoned.

Teaching held many of the same contradictory messages as did nursing. With the feminization of teaching during the latter part of the nineteenth century, more and more women became teachers. It soon became a commonly accepted dictum that teaching was an appropriate vocation for young women prior to marriage. Instruction of children, particularly young children, was perceived as a woman's job, an extension of her "natural" mothering instincts. "Teacher" was thus an identity a young, single, working woman could easily assume because it did not contradict or challenge the roles society presumed she had been groomed for -- those of wife and then mother.

"Rural teacher" was, however, a more complex identity with a wider range of responsibilities than was "teacher" in an urban environment. Rural teachers, in addition to their duties as educator, also had to make sure the fire was lit to heat the school, check that the students had their horses secured in the barn, and make sure there was water every day, among other "outside" duties. These were tasks with which rural women they would have been familiar and even comfortable, because they were duties that had already been worked

into the expanding and shifting definition of rural domesticity and "Womanhood". Therefore, teaching in a rural school and assuming responsibility for these additional jobs did not put their femininity at risk.

Marta Danylewycz, Beth Light, and Alison Prentice argue that the formalization of schooling (ie: longer school year, set curriculum, the need for more teachers), "correlated with growing proportions of women teachers almost everywhere ... By the early twentieth century there was a clear sexual division of labour in rural as well as urban schools."<sup>65</sup> Irene Poelzer explains that in rural Saskatchewan teachers with a Teaching Permit or a Third or Second-Class Certificate were cheaper to hire than those with university degrees or First-Class Certificates. Further, Poelzer discovered, "it was a general rule in Saskatchewan to have one salary grid for male teachers and another for female."<sup>66</sup> Of the two scales, women teacher's salaries were the lower because they were considered temporary employees on the road to a permanent position as wife/mother while males were thought to be career teachers. In 1906, for example, the average provincial wage for a male teacher was \$668.58, and for female teachers, \$601.26. By 1915 male teachers made on average \$901.78 while female teachers were paid only \$782.40.<sup>67</sup>

School administration and/or school board duty was considered a supervisory and

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<sup>65</sup>. Marta Danylewycz, Beth Light & Alison Prentice, "The Evolution of the Sexual Division of Labour in Teaching: A Nineteenth-Century Ontario and Quebec Case Study", in Histoire sociale/Social History Vol.XVI No.31 (May 1983), p. 85.

<sup>66</sup>. Irene Poelzer, Saskatchewan Women Teachers 1905-1920, Their Contributions, (Saskatoon: Lindenblatt & Hamonic Publishing Ltd., 1990), p. 44.

<sup>67</sup>. Ibid., pp. 57-58.

therefore primary male role; women taught but men taught *and* administered teaching. Joan T. of Indian Head described the only school board meeting she was party to: "I was at the chairman's for supper and then these other men came for the meeting and so Mrs. G. and Frieda and I were sitting in the kitchen and they were going to have their meeting and then they were going to consult me as to what I thought we should have for gifts and candy and that [at the Christmas concert]." <sup>68</sup> Apparently the board was only interested in Joan's ability to plan parties as this was the only issue on which she was ever consulted. This exchange is but one brief example of how socially-created identities for female teachers were reinforced. The board assumed that Joan, a woman teacher, automatically possessed this type of "social" knowledge.

Although the status associated with teaching "was very low", <sup>69</sup> rural women increasingly became teachers. A woman could train to be a teacher -- a professional -- without having to invest the time, energy, or money that was required of nursing students. Appendix III shows that the percentage of Saskatchewan women in waged work identifying themselves as teachers rose from 9.31 percent in 1891, to 16.49 percent in 1921. This number remained relatively stable in 1931 at 15.94 percent but dropped to 12.5 percent by 1941, reflecting the number of teachers who lost their jobs during the Depression.

Upon completing their training, many first-time teachers returned to rural

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<sup>68</sup>. Joan. T., personal interview, April 1993.

<sup>69</sup>. Apolonja Maria Kojder, "The Saskatoon Women Teachers' Association: A Demand for Recognition", p. 63. Kojder argues that women teachers "had to counter obstacles of an economic and attitudinal nature ... imposed on them by a male-dominated profession which was a reflection of the society of that day (apx. 1918)." p. 63.

Saskatchewan to embark on their teaching careers. They accepted positions in small schools with low salaries hoping to gain valuable experience that might qualify them for better, higher paying schools in towns or cities. Even though the Department of Education had regulations regarding teacher salaries, many communities simply did not have sufficient finances to meet the salary requirements, particularly during the 1930s. Appendix VI demonstrates how teacher salaries reflected the school district's economic situation. This Appendix is a compendium of teachers in the Indian Head and Rosetown areas and outlines their length of employment and salary. Jubilee School, four miles north of Indian Head, serves as an interesting case study of the impact of depression and drought on the operation of the local school. In 1922 the teacher's salary peaked at \$1320. Thereafter the salary dropped; in 1924 to \$1200, in 1926 to \$1032, in 1928 to \$900, in 1931 to \$585, in 1932 to \$295.<sup>70</sup> In 1933 the salary began slowly and continually to increase. Yet it was not until 1949 that the 1922 rate was again attained and then it was for a woman who had been teaching at the school for five consecutive years.

Other rural schools faced similar or worse situations during the 1930s. Fair Play school, approximately three miles south-east of Indian Head, for example, closed in 1931 because of insufficient funds to pay the teacher or operate the school.<sup>71</sup> Sunny Slope school, approximately four miles north-west of Indian Head, was so cash poor in 1932 that the board

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<sup>70</sup>. Album, "Jubilee School #1122", Indian Head Museum. It should be noted that the salary level also reflects the number of days the school was open. It is possible that in the early 1930s the school did not open as often as it should because money was not available.

<sup>71</sup>. Album: "Fair Play School 1890-1963", Indian Head Museum. The school re-opened the next year.

asked the teacher to accept two hundred dollars at the end of term with the balance of payment to be made when funds became available.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, in 1933 the Rosetown School Board notified teachers that they did not know "what salaries we can pay nor whether there will be a position for them in the coming term."<sup>73</sup>

Kay C., Norma T. and Joan T. all attended Normal School in Saskatchewan and then taught in the province's rural schools. Their initial teaching experiences, which cover the 1920s through the mid-1940s, had more similarities than differences. Upon completing their initial phase of training, each one felt unprepared and inadequately trained. Yet they struggled to do the best job they could. Like nurses, they worked long hours, expending much energy; but unlike nurses, their work often went unrecognized and unrewarded.

Following in her mother's footsteps, Kay C. became a teacher in 1926.<sup>74</sup> After completing a one-year course at the Saskatoon Normal School, Kay taught in a rural school near Kindersley her first year and in Flaxcombe the following year. She then went to Rosetown to teach because one of her friends taught there. Kay remembers Rosetown as an "interesting" place to be: "we had quite a social life and there were lots of nice young men and women, you know, and there was always a picture show; that really makes a difference in a place, doesn't it?"<sup>75</sup> Kay taught in the primary school for five years, until 1933, when she

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<sup>72</sup>. Minute Book of the Sunny Slope School District #1843, May 30, 1932; Indian Head Museum.

<sup>73</sup>. Minutes of the Rosetown School District #2534, June 29, 1933; cited in "Arthur Broadbridge notes for thesis", SAB, A34.

<sup>74</sup>. Kay's mother had been a teacher in Manitoba.

<sup>75</sup>. Kay C., personal interview, February 1993.

married and quit her job. In 1963 Kay went back to teaching after her children moved away from home. She taught at the Rosetown School until her retirement in 1970.

Unlike Kay's mother, Norma T.'s mother had not been a teacher but rather was a nurse in Weyburn prior to her marriage to Norma's father in 1913. Nonetheless, Norma chose teaching as her profession. She attended Regina Normal School in 1934-35 "on borrowed money ... the fee was \$100 and I never knew where they got it because my mother said, I'm not to tell so I suspect it was from her mother and I expect she wasn't to tell because if Grandma lent that money for me she didn't want the other grandchildren to know, so you can understand that too. But my mother raised turkeys and paid it back later."<sup>76</sup> Norma completed her ten-month teacher's course at the height of the Depression and had a good deal of difficulty in securing her first job. "So I got out, we all did at the end of June, and every time my father went to town I would hand him maybe five applications and every time he'd pick them up he'd say, who's paying for the stamps, but I knew very well he'd take them because they were the only way I'd get a job. And I sent them from the end of June until the end of December (1935) with not even a nibble and finally at the end of December ... this phone call came from ... just out of Estevan and they had accepted my application."<sup>77</sup>

But Norma did not feel at all prepared to be a teacher. She recalled that the training was inadequate, that she had not learned how to teach but instead had been instructed in drawing up schedules for teaching -- so much time for each grade, for each subject, for each day. Eventually, by attending summer school and taking correspondence courses while

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<sup>76</sup>. Norma T., personal interview, April 1993.

<sup>77</sup>. Ibid.

working, Norma received her first-class teaching certificate and continued taking credits towards a Bachelor of Arts degree. After "putting in her time" at rural schools, and with her first class certificate in hand, Norma found her first town-teaching job at the Imperial High School. She enjoyed her work there so much that she decided, "I'll just stay here and to heck with the University, and then the day before Good Friday the high school burned down."<sup>78</sup> Norma returned to university, completed a Bachelor of Education and accepted a position at the Indian Head High School so she could stay with her parents who were moving from the farm into town. Norma later married and moved to Saskatoon with her husband who taught at the University of Saskatchewan's Agricultural College.

Joan T. attended the Moose Jaw Normal School in the early 1940s. Originally she wanted to go into nursing but as she explained, "My dad said, 'Well I can't afford that,' so I thought, 'Well, I'll teach for two or three or four years and get some money and then go in training (nursing)' ... but I never got there. I don't think I would have. After I had taught a while I really enjoyed it, that's what I would have stayed with."<sup>79</sup> Joan's Normal School experience was in an intense summer school course with students attending classes between July 2 and mid-September. She recalled that she learned as much in three months as other students did during the regular ten-month term. "Lots of nights we were still doing homework at two in the morning", she said, "and then back to school, and then for our practice teaching they gathered city children up and brought them to the Normal School and

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<sup>78</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>. Joan T., personal interview, April 1993.

that's all the practice teaching we had."<sup>80</sup>

Unlike Kay, Joan was recruited while still at Normal School. Initially she accepted a position at Preeceville and went home to visit her parents before starting work. " My Mom's nerves were terrible" she explained (Joan's brother was a soldier overseas), "and she said, 'I don't know why you're going away up there for'. You'd have thought I was going clear up to the North Pole, and I said, 'Well, it's a school and it sounds great'. I said, 'I could have had one at Grayson but I had to live in the teacherage', and I didn't want to do that. 'Well,' Dad said, 'there's an ad in here for a school near Indian Head and they don't need you until October if you could get it', and I said, 'Well I can't do that. I've committed myself to this other school'. Well mother started to cry so I said, 'Well, OK, I'll go'. We didn't have a phone in the house so I went to the elevator and I phoned Indian Head and talked to Mr. England who was the secretary, gave him my qualifications. So he said, 'Well we'll call a meeting tonight'. And I told him the situation, there was no phone at home, so he said, 'You phone me back at ten o'clock tonight and I'll have an answer'. So I went and I phoned them . Well then I had to phone long distance to Preeceville to tell them the situation. And why I went to the town exchange, I don't know. Maybe it was because it was business hours and the elevator was noisy, I don't know. But I can still remember the old fellow saying, 'Well, that's not a very nice thing you're doing', and I said, 'I know it isn't, but I said, 'My mother's going to have a nervous breakdown over this'. So I explained to the people up there and they said, 'Well that's fine. We have two more applications'. So they said, 'Don't worry about us'.

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<sup>80</sup>. Ibid.



So that's how I ended up at Indian Head."<sup>81</sup>

Joan's first job was at Glenn Lynn School, approximately six miles south of Indian Head and relatively close to her family. There were 26 students from grades one through ten, 23 of whom had only passed the previous year on trial. Joan remembers thinking when she arrived, "What am I doing out here?"<sup>82</sup> But with a lot of hard work everyone passed that year. Joan taught for only one-and-one-half years before she married in 1944. As she said, "well, in those days when you got married you just didn't go back."<sup>83</sup>

Kay, Norma, and Joan identified themselves as teachers, educators, and professionals. Each exhibited pride in her teaching career. Yet the rate-payers in the communities in which they worked and lived, like those in so many other rural areas, devalued the work of "the teacher". In rural Saskatchewan education sometimes was secondary to work that needed to be done at home. This was the paradox: while settlers considered education necessary and important, making the establishment of schools in newly settled areas a priority, the level and degree of education parents desired for their children varied. Rural rate-payers also resisted taxation levels necessary to support higher salaries. Many did not think the teacher's work difficult and therefore worthy of a high level of recognition or compensation; after all, many thought, "How tough could it be for young, energetic women to supervise kids?" and "Was that not exactly what the teacher would be doing anyway when she married?" The frustration teachers experienced with local school boards and rate-payers was on-going. Whereas nurses

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<sup>81</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>. Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>. Ibid.

earned a measure of professional respect, female teachers more frequently were viewed as temporary employees on their way to a life of marriage and motherhood.

Pursuit of a professional identity as teacher/educator could result in a struggle between personal and social identities. In negotiating the difference between a "positive self-image"<sup>84</sup> as professional educator and an alternative social image of eligible wife/mother-in-waiting that undermined occupational identity, women teachers were cast into a liminal space reserved only for them. On one side of the space were personal expectations of professionalism and career; on the other side was a gendered social consciousness that did not permit young women teachers to claim the status of professional. Frequently, women teachers did exit this liminal space after only a few years, absorbed in a different type of work -- marriage and motherhood. There appeared to be few other "acceptable" options. Like nurses, the identity of teacher, although considered thoroughly feminized, was not compatible with society's ultimate identity for women, that of wife and mother. It was an either/or proposition; a woman could be an unmarried teacher or a married housewife, not both.

The retail and clerical sectors too were considered temporary social spaces for single women. Despite the length or type of training taken at business school or the level of skill attained on the job, women working as clerks, whether in retail, banking or offices, were expected to work only until they married. Graham Lowe argues that by 1930 the standards for women in clerical jobs were set and "future clerical recruits had to meet gender-based job requirements and expectations. In short, they had to be females who aspired to nothing more

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<sup>84</sup>. Apolonja Maria Kojder, "The Saskatoon Women Teacher's Association: A Demand for Recognition", p. 63.

than a few years of office employment prior to marriage."<sup>85</sup> Nora H., employed at the Royal Bank in Indian Head, recalled that the bank manager, for example, was always a man. She added, "One thing that griped me was that I was in the bank from '41 to just after the War in '46 and I remember there was a man came back from overseas and he had just started at the bank when he joined up and I was really put down and he was put right at the top and he was getting more wages than I was. Maybe it was because he was overseas but I also think because he was a man. They didn't want women to progress far."<sup>86</sup>

The percentage of Saskatchewan women employed as sales clerks between 1891 and 1941 never reached more than six percent of the total number of working women in the province (Appendix III). This may indicate that retail was still considered a largely male domain during that period, or that the work was not desirable to women. As Faye H. explained at the top of the chapter, retail work was exhausting and the pay was low. Additionally, as Susan Porter Benson argues, there was a public perception that sales clerks were at risk of being seduced by sexually predatory male employers and customers.<sup>87</sup>

Though the number of women retail clerks remained low, the percentage of women employed as office clerks dramatically increased, from one percent in 1891 to a high in 1921 of 16.61%. In 1931 and 1941 that number dropped to between thirteen and fourteen percent. It is interesting to note that between 1891 and 1921 the proportion of the female workforce

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<sup>85</sup>. Graham S. Lowe, Women in the Administrative Revolution: The Feminization of Clerical Work, p. 168.

<sup>86</sup>. Nora H., personal interview, April 1993.

<sup>87</sup>. Susan Porter Benson, Counter Cultures: Saleswomen, Managers and Customers in American Department Stores, 1890-1940.

in teaching and office work was similar. Change came after 1921. By 1931 there were three percent more teachers than office workers; in 1941 there was one percent more office workers than teachers. There are two possible explanations for this: (1) office workers did not lose their jobs during the depression years as frequently as did teachers; or (2) office work was preferable to teaching and therefore attracted more women. Although both scenarios are possible, the second is, according to the data collected in Rosetown and Indian Head, most likely.

**Table 2**  
Percentage of women working as teachers & office clerks

	teacher	office
<b>1891</b>	9.31	.099
<b>1901</b>	not included in 1901 census	
<b>1911</b>	10.40	9.40
<b>1921</b>	16.49	16.61
<b>1931</b>	15.94	13.06
<b>1941</b>	12.50	13.83

Source: Canadian census 1891, 1911, 1921, 1931, 1941

Teachers were poorly paid, often had no privacy, and had little or no social life when working in rural schools. Clerks at least lived where they chose, after working hours their time was their own, and perhaps most importantly, the educational requirements were less

than for nursing schools and most normal schools. This appealed to women such as Nora H. who said, "I know my mom and dad did the best they could by us, you know, as far as education goes, but we were very anxious to get out and earn money so after my grade eleven I went to Balfour Tech for a year and took a business course because that would be one year earlier that I could get out and earn."<sup>88</sup> Also, the training period at business school was not as lengthy as for teaching or nursing. Nursing was at least three years; to get a First Class Teaching Certificate usually required at least one year at Normal School and several years of university correspondence courses with some subsequent attendance at the university. A business course could be taken in approximately one year or less. Women also had the option to teach themselves clerical skills, as Ellen Q. did.<sup>89</sup> That was not an option for nurses or teachers. Some business schools also had a flexible schedule that allowed students to enter when it was convenient for the student. An October 1913 advertisement for the Saskatoon Business College read, "Farmers' Sons & Daughters: we need you. You need our training in book-keeping and stenography. Lay your plans now to enter for a course as soon as your work will allow you to do so. You cannot spend the fall and winter in a more profitable way. Enter any time."<sup>90</sup>

Depending on the type of clerical work, it was not always necessary to have any kind

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<sup>88</sup>. Nora H., personal interview, April 1993.

<sup>89</sup>. Ellen recalled, "When I wanted to enter the business world there were not funds in our family to send me to business college so I set myself a timetable and I did a sequel (sic) of study periods and I learned my shorthand by myself and I prepared myself and I learned to be a very good typist." Ellen Q., personal interview, April 1993.

<sup>90</sup>. The Rosetown Eagle, October 9, 1913.

of formal training. Women could work in shops or various retail outlets with little or no previous training. For those anxious to start working immediately after high school, for whatever reason, retail was the most likely occupational choice next to domestic service. Women also could create their own employment opportunities; not all waged women worked for someone else. Some opened their own businesses or established themselves as independent operators. They worked as seamstresses or tailors, music teachers, hairdressers, photographers, and boarding house proprietors or hotel keepers. This group of women were, however, in the minority. Appendix IV shows that between 1891 and 1941 the majority of waged women, between two-thirds and three-quarters, were employees in teaching, domestic service, clerical work, nursing, sales and agriculture.

It must be noted that not all women left their paid employment when they married. Two examples have already been noted: Faye H. did not quit her bookkeeping job; neither did Diane X. leave her nursing job until a difficult pregnancy forced her to quit. One further example warrants mention because of the important legal landmark connected with this case. Karen H. from Indian Head taught at the Success Business College in Prince Albert during the 1930s until she joined the federal civil service in 1937. Between 1937 and her retirement in 1972, Karen worked in various branches of the civil service. When she married in 1951, the law stated that married women could not be employed by the federal civil service. Karen's husband suffered from multiple sclerosis and Karen's supervisors in the Civil Service Commission, aware of her husband's condition and Karen's need to work, undertook to have the ruling changed on her behalf. They were successful and Karen was the first woman in the

Canadian federal civil service granted permission to continue working after her marriage.<sup>91</sup>

Although most women in this period married and subsequently quit their jobs, there were those who for any number of reasons remained as single working women.<sup>92</sup> Ellen Q. is a striking example of a woman who had a rich and varied career in several different capacities. Ellen did not marry although she was engaged twice. She explained, "It wasn't that I had anything against marriage but it didn't seem to be the right thing for me ... I couldn't accept answering to anybody. I'm a very independent and private person and to completely share everything with any one person, I couldn't seem to accept that."<sup>93</sup> Ellen worked as a secretary, office manager, counsellor, administrator, and was the first woman salesperson for a large life insurance company. Her life was, in her opinion, every bit as rewarding and fulfilling as that of her female contemporaries. Her identity as single woman afforded Ellen the opportunity to pursue many options other women could not. Her unmarried status did not, however, "unsex" her, nor did she become "one of the boys". When Ellen recounted her experiences, she made several comments that clearly indicated that she realized she had transgressed common gender boundaries. For example, of the period when she worked for the life insurance company she said, "I don't think I ever accepted or tried to become one of the boys because, for instance, when somebody would be relating an experience they'd had in their work and so on, some of the stories got to be a little bit shady and they would say, 'Oh I guess I shouldn't have said that Ellen, my apologies.' And I said, 'I'm sorry I didn't hear

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<sup>91</sup>. Karen H., personal interview, March 1993.

<sup>92</sup>. Of 44 women interviewed for this project, only two had never married.

<sup>93</sup>. Ellen Q., personal interview, April 1993.

you, I had my hearing aid turned down'. And I didn't want to embarrass them. But I ... off-colour stories or things which could have made me sort of uncomfortable, I just sort of tuned them out because *I was the person invading their group*."<sup>94</sup> Thus, regardless of Ellen's successes in this predominantly male industry, she was always different from her colleagues in her eyes as well as in theirs. She was the *woman salesman*, not just another employee. And, as she noted, she was the interloper in their male public space, the "person invading their group", as if she knew that she did not really belong there.

Over the course of their lives, women in rural Saskatchewan negotiated many courses of work employing both waged and unwaged labour. Although the hard realities of living in the developing West forced a reconceptualization of gender roles and hence identities, there was no radical departure from socially acceptable standards evident in Indian Head or Rosetown. Women did not set in motion dramatic challenges to contemporary gender paradigms. Instead, women pushed the boundaries of "women's sphere" until the concept itself reflected the reality of their lives. Rural women had always worked long hours performing a variety of jobs and therefore the tradition of women working outside of woman's so-called "proper sphere" was familiar in most circles. The flexible boundaries of rural domesticity established the point of departure for the myriad of identities assumed by British-Canadian women in rural Saskatchewan. Women's shifting public and private identities, therefore, were open to reinterpretation and could be negotiated within a growing number of contexts, particularly if those identities could be reconciled with a flexible and changing perception of rural domesticity.

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<sup>94</sup>. Ibid.



The data presented here shows an on-going negotiation between personal choice and cultural dictates in a variety of circumstances. Women successfully charted courses that allowed them to take advantage of employment opportunities for single women without jeopardizing their "femaleness" because rural femininity, and by extension domesticity, was fluid and could be manipulated to fit a variety of circumstances and occasions. Waged work both reinforced imported identities and helped to establish new identities that were more representative of evolving local realities. The precedent of working women, albeit not usually engaged in work for wages, was set at home and in the local community in a period when rural women's sphere widened to include responsibilities not traditionally assumed to be domestic in nature. Coupled with national and international trends of middle-class women seeking careers and fulfilling employment, this became a powerful incentive for unmarried rural women to perceive waged employment as desirable.

Even so, the resulting identities associated with women's waged work on the prairies differed from working women's identities elsewhere because of the context of the labour market and economy. Working women's identities in Indian Head and Rosetown, therefore, were a blend of old and new female identities: first, and most important, was the imported identity of women as domestic angel; second, was the popular image of the "new woman"; and third, were evolving local realities and female identities based in lived experience. These images fit together in the creation of the identity of working "Woman".

Throughout the period 1891-1950 many British-Canadian women in rural Saskatchewan sought job training so that they might have an independent profession and self-fulfillment, but once married they left their jobs and gave up their independence. Most

women adjusted to married life and motherhood, returning to paid employment only when they had little other choice. Marriage was seen as a career alternative. Time after time respondents said that marriage and motherhood were indeed jobs, and often more difficult work than they had done when they were single. Their new household obligations represented a variety of tasks and additional stages in a rural Saskatchewan woman's life.

The relationship between lived experience and identity with respect to women's work was, therefore, elastic. Clearly, notions of female domesticity anchored most roles "Women" came to play. However, many rural Saskatchewan women stretched domesticity and femininity in the creation and recreation of their occupational identities. Accordingly, whether as nurse, teacher, domestic servant, or housewife, their "Women's work" was defined by whatever task needed to be done at any particular time and their identity adjusted accordingly. They simply "worked it out".

## CHAPTER VI: "Women's" Organizational Identities

We went to a great deal of trouble in the early days.  
You see ... I belonged to the SDB ... I was in it  
six years, that's right, and then I married.<sup>1</sup>

The SDB that Kay C. refers to above was an organization for unmarried, young, working women which was active in Rosetown between 1913 and 1954. Similar to many clubs, associations and organizations for women from the 1910s through the immediate post-World-War-II era, the SDB provides an interesting point of departure in a discussion of identity and women's organizations for two reasons: one, because of its clearly articulated mission: to provide a socially appropriate setting in which women could socialize and become involved in philanthropic work; and two, because of its unarticulated mission: to reinforce social identities steeped in gender, class, religion, race and ethnicity. This chapter examines how and why "Women" came to identify with particular organizations, such as the SDB, and considers the identities associated with various organizations to which rural "Women" belonged.

Rural women in Saskatchewan had the opportunity to participate in numerous women's groups that served a variety of purposes. Women associated for any number of

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<sup>1</sup>. Kay C., personal interview, February 1993. The name of the SDB club was only recently made public. Previously, women who had been members kept their pledge never to tell anyone what SDB stood for. The constitution of the club specifically stated, "This club shall be known as the SDB Club of Rosetown, the name for which these initials stand to be divulged to members only." Rosetown Library and Archives, "The SDB Club", Minute Book January 1924-November 1930. The result of the secrecy led to much speculation over the years as to what the initials stood for, including Single Daughters of Britain and Sure Death to Bachelors. In fact, SDB stands for Societe de Boite, and members believed this was French for Society of Chatterboxes. Letter from C.G. to A.C. Moffatt, 1995.

reasons including philanthropic, social, political, economic and cultural ones. Some organizations focused on one aspect of women's experiences, homemaking for example, while others were multifaceted. All women's clubs, however, had at least one thing in common -- they were designed as a forum for women's interests. This does not mean that women's clubs were only concerned with what have today become known as "women's issues" (those things deemed specifically feminine for one reason or another). On the contrary, women's interests consisted of any issue, concern or activity in which club members wished to be involved as a collectivity. Members of the Women's Section of the Saskatchewan Grain Grower's Association and the United Farm Women of Saskatchewan, for example, commonly examined economic questions associated with tariffs and railway rate schedules, hardly issues traditionally considered "feminine". Women's interests were thus as diverse as the population from which they were drawn.

Women's club work has fascinated historians for several generations. It may even be appropriate to suggest that the genesis of twentieth-century Canadian women's history came as the result of the writing of institutional histories under club sponsorship. Often these amateur histories were chronicles of an organization's accomplishments compiled by members. Occasionally authors employed narrative forms to weave the stories into a chronological format with the idea of demonstrating the organization's progress and growth.<sup>2</sup> Academic historians too have demonstrated interest in women's organizations.

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<sup>2</sup>. For example see, Marguerite E. Robinson, The First Fifty Years, (Saskatchewan Registered Nurses Association, 1967); or the four publications sponsored by the Homemakers' Clubs of Saskatchewan (Women's Institute), Homemakers' Clubs 1910-1920, (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, College of Agriculture, 1920); Retrospect and Prospect, (Saskatoon: The Silver Cord and the Golden Chain, 1939); Homemakers'

Since the early years of what has become known as second stage-feminism during the 1960s, women's associations have been a favourite topic in women's history. Scholars have posited that some women's clubs were variously sites of resistance and agency with feminist agendas and in some cases were successful in creating bastions of female culture, while other analysts have concluded that not all women's clubs were feminist-driven but rather may have been motivated by particular issues, for example patriotism.<sup>3</sup> However, scholars have not generally considered women's associations from the standpoint of identity and the process of identification that is involved when a woman joins an organization. An even more complex issue historians have not commonly addressed is

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Clubs of Saskatchewan 1911-1961, (Saskatoon: n.p., 1961); and Legacy: A History of Saskatchewan Homemakers' Clubs and Women's Institutes 1911-1988, (Regina: Focus Publishing, 1988).

<sup>3</sup>. There are hundreds of studies which examine women's organizations in Canada, including Veronica Strong-Boag, The Parliament of Women: The National Council of Women of Canada, (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, History Division Paper No. 18, 1976); Apolonja Maria Kojder, "The Saskatoon Women Teacher's Association: A Demand for Recognition", in Saskatchewan History, Vol. XXX No.2, (Spring 1977), pp. 63-74; Marcia A. McGovern, "The Women's Christian Temperance Union Movement in Saskatchewan 1886-1930: A Regional Perspective of the International White Ribbon Movement", M.A. Thesis, University of Regina, 1977; Nancy Sheehan, "The WCTU on the Prairies 1886-1930: An Alberta-Saskatchewan Comparison", in Prairie Forum, Vol.6 No.1, 1981, pp. 17-33; Georgina Taylor, "'Should I Drown Myself Now or Later?': The Isolation of Rural Women in Saskatchewan and the Participation in the Homemakers' Clubs, the Farm Movement and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, 1910-1967", in Kathleen Storrie (ed.), Women: Isolation and Bonding: The Ecology of Gender, (Toronto: Methuen Publications, 1987), pp. 79-100; Nadine Small, "Stand By the Union Jack: The Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire in the Prairie Provinces During the Great War 1914-1918", M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1989; Catherine Tomlinson Wylie, 'God's Own Cornerstone: Our Daughters': The Saskatoon YWCA 1910-1939", M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1989; Janet Harvey, "The Regina Council of Women 1895-1925" M.A. thesis, University of Regina, 1991; Cheryle Jahn, "'Class, Gender and Agrarian Socialism': The United Farm Women of Saskatchewan, 1926-1931", in Prairie Forum, Vol.19, No.2, (Fall 1994), pp. 189-206.

how multiple organizational identities are negotiated when a woman affiliates with more than one organization.<sup>4</sup> Scholars have considered the identities associated with individual organizations, and have compared the identities of like and unlike organizations but few have analyzed the cross-organizational implications of holding membership in multiple organizations.<sup>5</sup> It is the intersection of these various identities that is most interesting, and how, in Rosetown and Indian Head, they reinforced the identity of "Woman".

Apart from the obvious reasons for affiliating with specific clubs or organizations, such as joining the Indian Head Ladies Chorus to further an interest in singing, there were additional reasons for choosing to participate in women's associations. First, for some women the reason for joining a women's club may have been as simple as an excuse to get out of the house and visit with other women. Second, in some cases membership in a particular association was necessary if women wanted to participate in special activities only offered by that club. Third, membership in one organization sometimes followed as an obligation of membership in an affiliated association. Most women who were members

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<sup>4</sup>. Political Scientist Louise Carbert argues that "while a woman's multiple identities, in terms of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, and class, usually reside quite happily together in a single, well-adjusted personality, they less often cohere in a single organization. It is virtually impossible for a woman to join a single organization that corresponds to the complexity of her life." Louise I. Carbert, Agrarian Feminism: The Politics of Ontario Farm Women, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995).

<sup>5</sup>. Carol Lee Bacchi's study of female suffrage in Canada is one of the few examples where members in one organization are traced to other organizations. Bacchi concluded that prominent suffragists were by and large the same people prominent in other reform organizations. Bacchi implies that this elite group shared an identity-in-kind as "members of an Anglo-Saxon, Protestant elite, dominated by professionals and the wives of professionals" (p. 149). Carol Lee Bacchi, Liberation Deferred? The Ideas of the English-Canadian Suffragists, 1877-1918, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983).

of St. Andrew's Church in Indian Head, for example, also were members of the Women's Missionary Society and later the United Church Ladies' Aid. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the reasons for seeking membership in an organization were to participate in and perhaps influence the activities in the community in which one lived. Associations and clubs that focused on specifically local concerns, for example the Glenn Lynn Circle near Indian Head or the Fortune Community Club near Rosetown, provided an avenue for assisting one's neighbours, benefitting the community, and making a name for oneself.

Single-sex organizations were not unique to western Canada. Both men's and women's societies, associations, and clubs had existed for generations in Canada and Britain. Moreover, during the Victorian era, popular notions of "separate spheres" reinforced the premise for separate men's and women's clubs, and women and men generally did not hold "promiscuous" meetings. Since society in the territories that would become Saskatchewan was dominated by settlers of British heritage, and since we know that they imported many British and British-Canadian traditions (and myths) into the territories when they came to settle, it is possible to conclude that, when setting up formal organizational structures, these settlers would also have attempted to replicate the familiar patterns of separate male and female clubs and associations when they did decide to organize. Women would have drawn upon their previous experience with single-sex organizations and thought this was the just the way things were done in proper society.

In examining women's clubs and associations, feminist scholars have determined that women benefitted in many ways from membership in single-sex organizations.

Annette K. Baxter argues that "clubs strengthened collective confidence and afforded their

members a more complete sense of identity."<sup>6</sup> Karen Blair concludes that clubs allowed women to "develop pride in their strengths". Additionally, Blair states that "club life taught women the speaking and organizing skills which they later applied to civic reform."<sup>7</sup> The authors of Canadian Women, A History would agree with Blair, stating that Canadian club women "learned organizational and public skills essential to their participation in the urbanized and industrial world."<sup>8</sup> Further, they argue that women's organizations provided a "training ground for politics."<sup>9</sup> Historians who favour a "women's culture" approach to history argue that separate clubs for women were vitally important, not only for "grooming" women to be leaders,<sup>10</sup> but that they were a key link in the chain of female networks. Veronica Strong-Boag, a leading advocate of the women's culture paradigm, states that "female networks, often originating in kin but extending well into workplaces and organizations of all kinds, nurtured women's sense of self-worth and empowered them in the search for individual expression."<sup>11</sup>

Judith Butler, in a recent study of feminism and the subversion of identity, offers a

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<sup>6</sup>. Annette K. Baxter, "Preface" to Karen J. Blair, The Clubwoman as Feminist: True Womanhood Redefined, 1868-1914, (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers Inc., 1980), p. xiii.

<sup>7</sup>. Ibid., p. 118

<sup>8</sup>. Alison Prentice et al., Canadian Women, A History, (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988), p. 210.

<sup>9</sup>. Ibid., p. 270

<sup>10</sup>. Veronica Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled, The Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada 1919-1939, (Markham: Penguin Books, 1988), p. 198.

<sup>11</sup>. Ibid., p. 218.



useful interpretive model that helps to explain how the term "woman" is in itself a complex, manufactured identity. Butler explains that "clearly, the category of women is internally fragmented by class, colour, age and ethnic lines, to name but a few".<sup>12</sup> After exposing this fragmentation, Butler adds another element that further explodes the supposed coherence of the term "woman" by explaining that not only is the term "woman" unstable, but that "gender", commonly purported to be a constitutive element of "woman" (or "man"), is also not a coherent, unifying expression. Instead, Butler argues, "the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence."<sup>13</sup> Gender may provide the illusion of sameness or coherence among "women" because it is constructed to regulate a particular cultural identity, but it is exactly that, an illusion.

The difficulties encountered by female subjects wanting to participate in women's associations were first, in knowing, and second, in accepting the qualifications for being a "Woman" in any given context. In both Indian Head and Rosetown, women's organizations were supposedly open to all local females. However, an examination of the many women's clubs in both areas indicates that Indian and Metis women, for example, were not members of local women's clubs.<sup>14</sup> Although they were female, Indian and Metis

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<sup>12</sup>. Judith Butler, "Gender Trouble, Feminist Theory and Psychoanalytic Discourse", in Linda J. Nicholson (ed.), Feminism/Postmodernism, (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 327.

<sup>13</sup>. Judith Butler, Gender Trouble, Feminism and the Subversion of Identity, (New York: Routledge, 1990), p. 24.

<sup>14</sup>. There was an Indian reserve (Assiniboine Reserve #76) south-east of Indian Head, and a growing Metis population at Lake Katepwa just north of town. Rosetown did not

women did not fit the local definition of "Woman" because they were not white, educated, or of British heritage. Obviously, "Woman" was not an all-inclusive term, but was instead a discursive tool which excluded those who did not fit the prevailing standards.

Identity, which is most certainly gendered at all points, is also performative. Accordingly, the notion that a woman can perform a series of identities helps to explain the ability of persons to participate in associations with diverse points of identification. It also explains how it was possible to assume different institutional identities without becoming schizophrenic. A Catholic, Rosetown woman, for example, could easily participate in the Catholic Women's League and the Women's Hospital Aid with little or no confusion because, although each organization had its own focus, each spoke to some aspect of her identity. Further, these organizational identities intersected at various points; in this case they were all linked through a common identification as "Woman's" club and shared a definition of "Woman".

If a woman joined a women's sewing club, church organization, or poetry group, her identity as sewer, church-goer or poet/critic remained secondary to her primary club identification as "Woman". In most cases secondary club identities were straightforward and easily identified; one could not mistake the role of the Indian Head Ladies Chorus or the Rosetown Hospital Auxiliary. Identities were complicated when associations had more than one mandate. The SDB club of Rosetown, for example, was promoted as a social club for single working women but in fact was intimately involved in all kinds of community activities.

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have a significant Aboriginal population in the immediate area.

Clubs for single working women were finding a wider audience in western Canada as a result of the increasing numbers of single women in the paid workforce. The National Association of Stagettes, for example, had branches in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.<sup>15</sup> The Club was open to single, working women who were sponsored by two members. The Club's Creed outlined a set of appropriate behaviours for single women that included thoughtfulness, service to others, and efficiency.<sup>16</sup> Susan G. of Indian Head joined the Regina chapter when she moved to Regina to attend business school in the early 1940s. She recalls there were approximately twenty-five members and that there was always a waiting list. Club activities can be characterized broadly as falling within contemporary ideas of "women's proper sphere" -- nurturing, mothering, and community service. Members in Regina prepared hampers for needy families, distributed layettes to mothers, made quilts for a day nursery, and assisted and entertained the aged. The Club also provided entertainment (and very likely mentoring) for teenage girls who had become government wards. Club members were also active fund-raisers and donated their monies to various organizations such as the United Nations Children Fund, the Red Cross and the Salvation Army.

The Stagette Clubs provided a forum for single working "girls" to socialize, but

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<sup>15</sup> In 1950 Saskatchewan branches were located in Moose Jaw, Regina, Saskatoon, Meadow Lake, North Battleford, Biggar, Wilkie, Kindersley, and Prince Albert.

<sup>16</sup> Personal letter from Susan G. to A.C. Moffatt, September 1993. The Creed is as follows: "Smile and have others smiling; Try always to tell the truth; Act wisely and promote action; Greet all our friends gladly; Educate ourselves to be efficient; Treat all as we would be treated; Take time to be thoughtful; Enjoy life, it is ours to enjoy; Serve others and not be selfish."

they also served as a training ground for philanthropy and charity work expected of married women. In addition, and perhaps even more important, the Clubs reaffirmed that the appropriate behaviour for "Women" was to be gracious, charitable, and hard working. The articulated message was that "girls" could and should participate in community service; the unarticulated messages were more complex -- that women were responsible for specific "feminine" areas of life and that they should serve in these areas efficiently and unselfishly.

Single working women in Rosetown did not belong to the Stagette Clubs but rather joined the SDB Club which was formed in 1913 by Mrs. William King.<sup>17</sup> Mrs King, the only married member, was the Honourary President until at least 1948 after which time her name no longer appears in the minutes. The aims of the Club, as per its constitution, were "(1) to provide a means of social intercourse for the girls of Rosetown twenty years of age and over, (2) to deal with cases requiring relief as recommended by committees appointed for this purpose, and (3) to assist as far as possible in any worthy causes".<sup>18</sup> The language used in Club documents and by members is particularly informative; unmarried females were called "girls"; married females were known as "women". Therefore, there was no need for the constitution to explicitly say that the Club was for single women; it was understood that by calling members "girls", they were by definition

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<sup>17</sup>. According to Kay C. (a former SDB member), teachers, nurses, and "girls in the shops" were "automatically" asked to join the Club. Kay C., personal interview, February 1993.

<sup>18</sup>. Minute Book January 1924 - November 1930, "The SDB Club", Rosetown Library and Archives.

unmarried. In 1933 the constitution was amended to cap the number of members at forty-five, and in 1936 this number was raised again to fifty members total. Members paid dues of fifty cents per year and were expected to attend sixty percent of all monthly meetings. If they did not comply "their membership automatically cease[d]".<sup>19</sup>

Membership in the SDB was strictly controlled; only so many members, drawn from a specific segment of the population, were accepted. When members married they left the club, or as a former member described it, "you graduated."<sup>20</sup> It was presumed that married women had different interests than did single girls.<sup>21</sup> Initially the Club was only open to "girls" who lived in Rosetown, but in 1937 this geographic requirement was changed to include the entire Rosetown School District. The intention was to increase membership which had started to decline.<sup>22</sup> Colleen G., a former SDB member, recalled

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<sup>19</sup>. Minute Book Dec. 1930-May 1938, "The SDB Club", Rosetown Library and Archives.

<sup>20</sup>. Kay C., personal interview, February 1993.

<sup>21</sup>. Veronica Strong-Boag argues that middle-class women whose family responsibilities were reduced (ie: children moved away from home) were most likely to be active in clubs and associations. Women with young children and perhaps less access to household conveniences had less time for activities outside of the home. See Chapter Six of Veronica Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled.

<sup>22</sup>. Membership records prior to 1924 do not exist. In subsequent years membership lists were sporadically maintained and then the format was not consistent. The following chart lists as accurately as possible, the average number of active members per year. The first two entries show only how members paid dues; the rest indicates the average number of members attending meetings throughout the year.

1924	20	dues paid	\	1945-46	18	average
1926	23	dues paid	\	1946-47	17	""
1931	30	average	\	1947-48	12	""
1937-38	33	""	\	1948-49		not available

that membership seemed to fall off during the war because "most working women were married",<sup>23</sup> defeating the need for a club for single working women.

A membership committee regulated who was and was not nominated for SDB membership. The only way to secure membership was to be nominated by persons already in the club; however, this was a highly formalized process. Members were warned that "no member shall invite anyone to join the club or come to a meeting until [the] proposed member's name has been brought up at a regular meeting of the Club and endorsed by the Club. A committee of three, to be known as a membership committee, shall be appointed and the names of prospective members shall be placed in the hands of this committee and subsequently discussed at a regular meeting. Invitations to new members shall be issued by the above committee."<sup>24</sup> So, to become a member of the SDB, a woman had to be

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1939-40	31	""	\	1949-50	12	average
1940-41	29	""	\	1950-51	14	""
1941-42	27	""	\	1951-52	16	""
1942-43	29	""	\	1952-53	10	""
1943-44	21	""	\	1953-54	11	""
1944-45	not available		\			

<sup>23</sup>. Colleen G., personal interview, March 3, 1993

<sup>24</sup>. Minute Book, January 1924 - November 1930, "The SDB Club", Rosetown Library and Archives. In January 1929, the members amended the constitution with regards to membership. The following articles were added: "that girls be in town at least one month before being invited to the Club", and "that if the ballot on any name be unfavourable, the name cannot be brought up again until six months has lapsed". In March 1933, members voted in favour of the following amendments and additions: "the name of each prospective member shall be handed to the membership committee accompanied by the signatures of five members of the Club", and "three unfavourable ballots shall bar any prospective member from admission to the Club". In 1946 the constitution was once again amended to reduce to two the number of signatures required with an application. This was at a time when the Club was experiencing a decline in membership.

first, nominated by insiders, second, screened by a selection committee and, third, approved by a vote of the existing members. These steps protected the club from bothering with candidates who did not fit the club's membership criteria and ensured that persons unknown to the group would not inadvertently be allowed to become members.

SDB members shared a number of identities. Their primary identity in common was as "Woman", while secondary identities were as unmarried and employed. Of these two secondary identities, being unmarried was most important. Women qualified as members because they were *single* working women, not just because they were employed; they were a particular type of working woman. However, the only real recognition of their identity as working women came in 1947 when the Club voted to affiliate with the Canadian Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs . This arrangement did not last long, though, as six months later the minutes indicate that the secretary was instructed to "sever our connections with the Business and Professional Women's Clubs".<sup>25</sup> No reasons were provided.

The SDB was also laden with tertiary identities such as philanthropist, patriot, and social worker because the Club was active in so many different kinds of activities. Over the Club's life, though, members continually demonstrated an interest in areas commonly considered to fall within the contemporary "women's sphere." The SDB was particularly concerned for the welfare of "under-privileged" children. At Christmas members donated money to the Boy Scouts and/or the Relief Committee to buy candy for "children of needy

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<sup>25</sup>. April 1948, Minute Book May 1945 - May 1949, "The SDB Club", Rosetown Library and Archives.

families".<sup>26</sup> In 1936 the Club inquired into a summer camp for under-privileged children that the Saskatoon IODE ran but then did not pursue the matter any further. In November 1937 members discussed the "advisability of the Club sponsoring a milk fund for undernourished school children," but members decided they would rather "give the children in question Cod Liver Oil and Malt instead of milk; this to continue for the winter months".<sup>27</sup> This episode is also particularly instructive in demonstrating the Club's local influence. That the SDB could decide what they thought was best for Rosetown school children and then have a program implemented that supported those decisions, indicates the Club held some sway with at least the school board (if not the parents of children involved). In 1950 the Club donated three dozen diapers to the Canadian Appeal for Children to be sent to babies overseas.

Another very important focus of Club energies that was not specifically outlined in the constitution was war work. During both World Wars, the SDB was extensively involved in war-related activity. It briefly returned to war work again in 1951 by sending parcels to soldiers in Korea.<sup>28</sup> By the time of the Korean War the SDB had considerable practice in preparing parcels for soldiers.<sup>29</sup> Throughout World War I, members made up

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<sup>26</sup>. *Ibid.*, December 1931.

<sup>27</sup>. *Ibid.*, November 1937.

<sup>28</sup>. February 1951; Minute Book, September 1949 - June 1952, "The SDB Club", Rosetown Library and Archives.

<sup>29</sup>. Preparing the Red Cross parcels turned out to be a gendered affair. While the SDB members looked after the feminine activities of knitting and baking items to be included in parcels, the Club decided to ask local men's clubs to make donations that would go to the purchase of cigarettes to be included in the packages. The SDB also sent its list of names



packages that were sent overseas to Rosetown-area soldiers. The Rosetown Eagle in turn printed thank you letters from soldiers who had been fortunate enough to receive these parcels. SDB records indicate that, during World War II, Club members were very active in war work particularly in the years 1939 through 1943. It appears the War gave the SDB direction and a purpose other than just to socialize and raise money for its favoured charities (the Rosetown Library Fund and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind).

In October 1939 the Club appointed two members to attend the Rosetown Red Cross Society meeting "to find out what the Organization intends to do for War Work and in what way the girls can aid."<sup>30</sup> In the first year of the War, the Red Cross requested that Rosetown clubs and organizations not only do war work at their monthly meetings but that members of the various clubs also work individually so "more can be accomplished."<sup>31</sup> Effective and efficient organization was vital to the success of Red Cross programs. In September 1940 the Red Cross again wrote to the SDB, this time requesting "that the SDB take charge of the preparation and mailing, at regular intervals, of parcels, cake, candy, cigarettes etc., to members of His Majesty's permanent forces from this district".<sup>32</sup> The SDB secretary followed up by placing an advertisement in the Rosetown Eagle asking

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and addresses of area men in the permanent forces to the Sweet Caporal Cigarette Co. requesting cigarettes also be sent directly to the soldiers. November 6, 1940, Minute Book, September 1938 - April 1945, "The SDB Club", Rosetown Library and Archives.

<sup>30</sup>. Ibid., October 4, 1939.

<sup>31</sup>. Ibid., November 1, 1939.

<sup>32</sup>. Ibid., September 4, 1940.

for names of men who should receive such parcels.<sup>33</sup> One year later the structures for coordinating war work in Rosetown were changed when the Rosetown War Auxiliary Services asked the SDB to affiliate with it so as to "eliminate duplication in war work as well as save us considerable postage on parcels".<sup>34</sup> The SDB agreed and appointed three of its members to represent the Club on the War Auxiliary Services committee.

Besides preparing packages for soldiers overseas, the SDB was also active in other war-related activities. In April 1942 the SDB sponsored a dance to raise proceeds for the Milk for Britain Fund. One hundred dollars was raised at that event. The Club also made regular donations to the Red Cross Blanket Fund, and made bandages and quilt blocks for the Red Cross. Additionally, in May 1942 the SDB sponsored a visit from Mrs. F. Pratt of the Recruiting Centre of the RCAF Women's Division in Saskatoon, who wanted "to come out to Rosetown and speak to the women of the town and district to clear up some

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<sup>33</sup>. Although the SDB asked for the names of area men who were in the services, it should also be noted that the club did send parcels to the few area women who enlisted. In September 1942, for example, the Club sent parcels to three women.

<sup>34</sup>. Ibid., September 3, 1941. A review of the SDB ledgers show how much of the Club's expenditures were categorized as "War Work":

year	\$war work	\$total club expenditures	% war work to total
1940-41	102.40	281.79	36.34
1941-42	154.85	351.55	44.05
1942-43	106.89	301.38	35.47
1943-44	51.83	382.10	13.56
1944-45	15.21	468.07	3.25

Note: The large decrease in % of war work to total club expenditures between 1942-43 and 1943-44 correlates with the drop in the number of members at exactly the same time (see note #23).

misunderstandings about women's enlistments in the Air Force".<sup>35</sup>

In 1943-44, SDB membership declined by 27% from the previous year and the Club's involvement in war work was curtailed. In January 1944 the Rosetown War Auxiliary Services wrote to the Club "urging the SDB to send a representative to its meetings",<sup>36</sup> but there is no indication that the SDB heeded the War Auxiliary Services' request. The SDB had gone from sending three of its members to the War Auxiliary Services meetings in 1941 to not having any representatives in 1944. Two months later, March 1944, the SDB minutes indicate that the Club was asked to "take over the sale of war savings stamps on Saturdays" but members moved "that we politely refuse this responsibility".<sup>37</sup> The Club was gradually absenting itself from responsibilities it could no longer handle with a declining membership. After the War the Club returned to the same routines it had followed before 1939, with "suitable" social activities for its members and fundraising for primarily local causes.

Apart from the SDB's war work, the Club also supported local relief efforts. Twice yearly, once in the spring and once in the fall, the SDB held a dance or ball as a fund-raiser. Proceeds from these dances went to a variety of local causes. In some years the Club helped pay for eye glasses for needy persons, bought children's books for the hospital, donated money to the Ladies Rest Room, and presented a gold medal to the best student in grade twelve English. During the depression years of the 1930s, the SDB

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<sup>35</sup>. Ibid., May 6, 1942.

<sup>36</sup>. Ibid., January 1944.

<sup>37</sup>. Ibid., March 1944.

worked with the Rosetown Relief Committee in orchestrating local relief efforts. Along with SDB cash donations, the Club also collected clothing which was then given to the town Relief Committee.<sup>38</sup>

For all of the SDB's involvement in charitable activities, it was still a "Women's" social club. And, even though members raised and donated a lot of money to various causes, its largest expenditure remained gifts and flowers for SDB members.<sup>39</sup> At each meeting there was always some form of recreation; members might play bridge, enjoy some kind of musical entertainment, do crafts, or have a fashion revue. "Lunch" was always served.<sup>40</sup> The club also organized skating parties, hikes, and wiener roasts but

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<sup>38</sup>. Following is a table of the amount listed in the (available) yearly financial statements as "relief":

year	amount
1926	15.25
1927	10.00
1928-29	20.00
1929-30	43.63
1931	0
1931-32	100.00
1932-33	100.00
1934	25.00
1935	50.00 (this is the final entry marked "relief")

A May 4, 1938 entry in the minutes lists the approximate total expenditures of the Club between 1924 and 1938. The total for Direct Relief is \$295; for the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix Relief Fund \$45.25; and for Christmas Help \$139.63; total:\$479.88.

<sup>39</sup>. Ibid., May 1938. Between 1924 and 1938, SDB expenditures on flowers and presentation for members totalled \$475.68. The next highest expenditure was Direct Relief at \$295.00.

<sup>40</sup>. The SDB owned its own china and silver spoons. These items were purchased from monies raised at various SDB functions.

these activities were always carefully monitored. Plans for the May 1933 picnic at Crystal Beach (Harris), for example, included a requirement for each member who wanted to bring "a gentleman", to submit her guest's name to the Club prior to the date of the picnic.<sup>41</sup> The Club then extended an invitation to the "gentleman". The following year, 1934, there was a motion "that no boys be invited [to the picnic] this year", but that motion was defeated.<sup>42</sup> Apparently there was some issue about having men at the picnic that made someone suggest a single-sex outing. Perhaps it was because not all members had a "gentleman" they would or could ask. Previous to the picnic of 1935, the question of "gentlemen" guests was again raised. This time members passed a motion stating that "those who wish to stay to dance will advise the above committee and at the same time state the name of the person they wish invited or whether they wish someone to be chosen by the committee and invited for them."<sup>43</sup> Not only was the SDB picnic to be supervised, but the Club then planned to regulate the behaviour of members attending the public dance later that evening. In addition, by insuring that members who did not have an escort might have a guest chosen for them by the picnic committee, club leaders could be certain that no members were left unattended and thus could reduce the possibility that members might "get into trouble". After all, part of the Club's mandate was "to provide a means of

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<sup>41</sup>. May 1933, Minute Book, December 1930 - May 1938, "The SDB Club", Rosetown Library and Archives.

<sup>42</sup>. *Ibid.*, May 1934.

<sup>43</sup>. *Ibid.*, May 1935. Crystal Beach was a resort area until the late 1930s when the "lake" dried up. Previous to the disappearance of the water, summer cabins, beaches and at least one very popular dance hall were located there.

social intercourse for the girls of Rosetown", implying that it would be "proper" social intercourse. Notions that "girls" were vulnerable and unworldly, and therefore, in need of supervision, seemed to play a part in their decisions.

Although the SDB Club was only for "girls", it had much in common with associations and clubs for "Women". SDB members were actually "women" in training, learning to assume the organizational responsibilities which would be theirs after marriage. Members also learned that charity, philanthropy, nurturing, and planning social activities were largely women's domain. The identity of what it was to be a "Woman" was reinforced through Club activities and the manner in which those activities were pursued. Further, the networks established through SDB membership continued after members "graduated" and moved on to other things.

How does the SDB Club compare to other women's associations? As in Rosetown, Indian Head women were active in a network of women's organizations. It is very interesting to note that Indian Head women did not formally begin to organize into women's groups until approximately twenty years after the town was settled. The timing is significant because it places Rosetown and Indian Head on a similar trajectory. There are numerous possible reasons why Indian Head women did not formally organize until approximately 1910. Practically, before that time only a small number of women might have been available to join such clubs. Additionally, it was not always feasible for women to make the necessary arrangements that they might attend a meeting on their own. A less tangible but another very likely reason is that since many Indian Head residents approved of and followed the hierarchical social codes originally instituted by Major Bell and Lord

Brassey's clique, women from different levels of this society did not perceive that they had enough in common to associate with one another. One woman said that because the town was so "cliquey", it was "a very hard place to get anything started."<sup>44</sup>

What finally was the impetus to start separate women's associations and clubs after the turn of the century? Again, there are a number of plausible reasons. First, the population was increasing rapidly and now warranted separate women's clubs. Second, the influence of the social gospel encouraged persons to play an active role in community betterment and assume "a passionate commitment to social involvement" by both women and men.<sup>45</sup> Third, and perhaps most important, women's clubs were in vogue across the country, making Saskatchewan women part of a wider national and international trend. The influence of "the new woman" in Canada had been growing since the 1880s and was intimately connected to the rise of women's clubs and associations in the same period.<sup>46</sup> Wendy Mitchinson argues that part of this growing trend toward the creation of women's movements was also the result of "the ability and desire of many Canadian women to

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<sup>44</sup>. Mrs. Newton to D. Quigley, December 9, 1977; D. Quigley, "Indian Head: An Essay on its Development"; file, "Indian Head", Indian Head Library. Quigley reports that Mrs. Newton was born in Indian Head in 1895.

<sup>45</sup>. Richard Allen, The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-28, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), p. 16.

<sup>46</sup>. For a cogent discussion of "the new women" see : Wayne Roberts, "'Rocking the Cradle for the World': The New Woman and Maternal Feminism, Toronto 1877-1914", in Linda Kealey (ed.), A Not Unreasonable Claim Women and Reform in Canada 1880s-1920s, (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1979), pp. 15-45.

become active outside the domestic sphere."<sup>47</sup> Although this was primarily a middle-class and urban movement, the settlers in Indian Head and Rosetown came out of that tradition. Further, Saskatchewan women were not immune to the goings-on in the wider world. Most families subscribed to several newspapers and magazines, and correspondence with family and friends in other locales provided a constant source of news. This was a period of rapid growth and settlement and there were always new neighbours moving in, bringing news and information from out-of-province.<sup>48</sup> It is reasonable, therefore, to argue that all three factors contributed to the rise of women's movements in Saskatchewan in the early twentieth century.

Among the first women's organizations formed in Indian Head after the turn of the century were the Women's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Ladies Aid, and the Women's Hospital Aid.<sup>49</sup> The Ladies Aid societies of

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<sup>47</sup>. Wendy Mitchinson, "The WCTU: 'For God, Home and Native Land': A Study in Nineteenth-Century Feminism", in Linda Kealey (ed.), A Not Unreasonable Claim, pp. 151-167.

<sup>48</sup>. For a more detailed discussion of the growing "women's movement" in Canada post 1890, see Alison Prentice et al., Canadian Women, A History, Chapter 7, "The Women's Movement", pp. 169-188.

<sup>49</sup>. "An Auxiliary of the Manitoba and North-west Conference Branch of the Women's Missionary Society of the Methodist Church was organized at Indian Head, Assiniboia, NWT, on the 5th day of September 1901". Recording Secretary's Book, 1901-05, St. Andrews United Church, Indian Head.

The date of the formation of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Ladies Aid is not available, but the club was in existence in 1907 when it donated \$400 towards the electric fixtures for a new church building. Indian Head: History of Indian Head and District, (Regina: Brigdens Photo Graphics Ltd, 1984), p. 119. The Ladies Aid and Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church at Wide Awake (approximately eight miles north of town) was likely started at the same time as it is mentioned in the Church's records in 1909. Minutes of the fifth annual meeting, February 1, 1909, Minute Book of the Presbyterian Church,



local churches were also among the first women's organizations in Rosetown, with the Methodist Ladies Aid and the Women's Auxiliary of St. Andrews Anglican Church leading the way.<sup>50</sup> Note these are protestant churches; the Catholic Women's League was not formed in either Rosetown or Indian Head for two more decades.<sup>51</sup> Between 1910 and 1920 several more women's organizations were started in both communities including the Rebekah Lodge and the Ladies Orange Benevolent Society in Indian Head, and the Rosetown Ladies Hospital Aid.<sup>52</sup> All of these associations were affiliates of other organizations or churches. They were not independent and did not stand alone.<sup>53</sup> Even

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Wide Awake, 1905-1912, Indian Head Museum.

The Women's Hospital Aid, formed in 1904, held socials to raise money for the hospital. Each year there was a Hospital Ball which was held as close to the 12th of January as possible to celebrate the opening of the hospital in 1905. In 1915 the group disbanded as "we could not get a President," but was re-formed in 1919. This time the group was active until 1921 when "our services were not required by the Union Hospital, so after paying our accounts we spent our balance on hand on the Nurses Home, installing hardwood floors." Mrs. A. Leach, "Indian Head Hospital Auxiliary", Indian Head: History of Indian Head and District, p. 137. The Auxiliary did not re-organize until 1950.

<sup>50</sup>. The Methodist Ladies Aid was formed in 1909 and the St. Andrews WA was started in 1913.

<sup>51</sup>. The Catholic Women's League began in Rosetown in 1926 and in Indian Head in 1931.

<sup>52</sup>. The Rebekah Lodge was founded in 1913; the Ladies Orange Benevolent Association in 1919. The Girl Guides were also started in Indian Head in this period, (1913), but this was a club primarily for teenage girls. The Rosetown Ladies Hospital Aid was formed in 1914.

<sup>53</sup>. St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church was built in 1882; the cornerstone for the Methodist Church was laid in 1898; the Union Hospital opened in 1905.

The Girl Guides were part of the larger Scouting movement (organized in 1913); the Rebekah Lodge was affiliated with the Independent Order of Oddfellows (1897); the Ladies Orange Benevolent Association was affiliated with the Loyal Orange Association (1895).

though the women's sections planned and executed most of their own activities, as auxiliaries they were responsible to another (generally male) body and their identity was linked to that of another organization which ultimately set the tone for the auxiliary.

One of the first independent women's clubs formed in the town of Indian Head was the HLP Club organized during World War I by three unmarried women, Elizabeth Holden, Ethel Livingstone and Estelle Pearen.<sup>54</sup> Throughout the War, the HLP club organized many fundraisers similar to those the SDB arranged in Rosetown. They planned dances, picnics, revues and other activities. What is unique about the HLP is that their work did not immediately end with the armistice. Instead, the HLP organized "welcome home" receptions and continued its fund-raising efforts for another year. The Club subsequently presented cheques for twenty-five dollars to sixty-seven local servicemen and nurses as they returned home.<sup>55</sup> In 1920 Holden, Livingstone and Pearen were presented with certificates signed by the Mayor and Councillors commending them for their efforts.

During the 1920s only a few new independent or affiliated organizations were formed in either the Rosetown or Indian Head areas. One organization the two towns did share an interest in was the Ku Klux Klan. The Ladies of the Benevolent Order of the Ku Klux Klan, an affiliate of the popular Klan, was organized in Indian Head in 1928. On

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<sup>54</sup>. The Club's name is the first initial of the founder's last names.

<sup>55</sup>. Two nurses were among the group to whom the club made presentations. A letter was attached to each cheque which read: "Kindly accept this cheque, not for its intrinsic value, but as an appreciation for your services to King and Country. Signed, the HLP Girls." "The HLP Club", Indian Head Museum.

November 1, 1928, the Indian Head News reported that the Ladies held a "whist drive and dance in the Orange Hall. The affair patriotically decorated and illuminated by the uplifted fiery cross under which all sang the Doxology, was attended by many of the citizens of the town and district."<sup>56</sup> William Levi Wait recalled the Klan having a local in Indian Head in 1926. Additionally Wait states that "the Klan found ready support from the members of the Orange Lodge, some of the clergy of the Protestant denominations, [and] many of the conservative members in my own constituency."<sup>57</sup> The Klan similarly attracted much interest in Rosetown.<sup>58</sup> On March 22, 1928 the Rosetown Eagle reported that "huge crowds attended the meeting in the Unique Theatre on Thursday afternoon and night of last week. People were present from the surrounding town and country. In the evening all who sought admission could not get in, the place being packed to its utmost capacity ... On Monday night in the Orange Hall a meeting in the interests of the Klan was addressed

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<sup>56</sup>. Cited in Indian Head: History of Indian Head and District, p. 200. Local lore says that one (married) man from the area "went away with the KKK" then came back after 22 years, (having changed his name), "and ended taking his wife and off to the coast they went." N.N.D.Q., personal interview, March 1993.

<sup>57</sup>. "William Levi Wait", family history, personal collection of Harriet Dixon, Indian Head.

<sup>58</sup>. Although it is difficult to assess the real impact the Klan had in Rosetown, its anti-Catholic rhetoric must have had some resonance. Klan organizers could have pointed specifically to the new Catholic Convent of Adoration which opened in Rosetown in 1928. Fifteen Sisters of the Sacred Hearts who arrived from Europe in 1929 to work at the Convent only stayed until the end of the 1934 school term because "they never witnessed a bountiful crop" and "added to these extreme physical discomforts was the sense of insecurity caused by the antagonistic attitude of the Ku Klux Klan of the district. The Provincial government in power was also strongly anti-Catholic and made the education field the target of their abuses" (p. 3). M. DuBois, "History of St. Joseph's Convent", (pamphlet) 1987, Rosetown Library and Archives. It was not until July 1935 that five Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto arrived to take charge of the convent and school.

by Dr. J.H. Hawkins. The Hall could not nearly accommodate the crowd".<sup>59</sup> Kay C. recalls the Klan's influence near the time of the 1929 provincial election and links the Klan's organizing to the efforts of the Saskatchewan Conservative Party. "I hated the Conservatives because I was rooming with a girl ... she was just a lovely person and a Catholic and you know the Conservatives were so hot to get in and they introduced this [man] ... and they brought him in from the States and he had public meetings for women only sometimes and telling about the Catholics, how bad the priests were, you know, and the nuns and, oh it was terrible. I didn't attend but the people with whom I boarded went to every one ... they'd come home from these meetings, you know, and say the worst things and it made me SO MAD ... I'll never forget that. They burned effigies."<sup>60</sup>

Indian Head women did not demonstrate the same interest in provincial or national organizations as did women in Rosetown. Apart from the few "outside"<sup>61</sup> women's clubs Indian Head area women joined, local women found their needs were best served by clubs they initiated themselves that benefitted their own community or school districts, or

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<sup>59</sup>. Cited in Arthur Frederick Broadbridge, "The History of Rosetown, 1904-1939", MA thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1949, p. 77.

<sup>60</sup>. Kay C., personal interview, February 1993. Kay continued, "I didn't realize it was so well organized and the head mogul or whatever you call him lived right back of me and then the secretary lived about, just, both lived on this street behind me and I just couldn't BELIEVE IT. They were really, really so eager, I guess, to get their party in and maybe that's why they would ... Lost all sense of right and wrong because they didn't advocate anything that was good, that's for sure."

<sup>61</sup>. By "outside" I mean clubs and organizations that were provincially or nationally organized and had chapters that reported to the "outside" central office.

addressed their own interests.<sup>62</sup> Perhaps they understood that affiliation with a provincial or national organization would come at the expense of local interests. The "outside" associations Indian Head women did join were mostly church related and in those cases these women's auxiliaries were often directed by national organizers.<sup>63</sup>

Non-affiliated women's groups, on the other hand, made greater inroads in the Indian Head area. Some examples of these types of general-appeal clubs were the Musical Club, the Book Club, and the Ladies Chorus.<sup>64</sup> Organizations that had a wider community focus were also of interest to women. The Glenn Lynn Circle, for instance, created in April 1928, appealed to women in the Glenn Lynn School District because the club's energies focused on local concerns. Unlike the SDB Club, where all members were single, working women, the Glenn Lynn Circle was composed of married women who did not do waged work. Originally Glenn Lynn Circle members raised money to help pay for the minister's salaries of the United and Anglican Churches, but their generosity was later extended to other causes as need was demonstrated. During World War II, the Circle, like the SDB, the Homemakers's, the WGGa and almost every other woman's

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<sup>62</sup>. Community here refers not only to a specific geographic location, but also to perceived communities, for example, those based in ethnicity or religion.

<sup>63</sup>. Chapter IV discusses how local study programs and fund-raising schemes were influenced by programs developed by Church directors often hundreds, if not thousands, of miles away.

<sup>64</sup>. Although it is not clear as to when the Musical Club was started or how long it lasted, there are minute books that record the Club's activities between 1912 and 1923. This was a popular club, which met twice each month, with an average attendance between 16 to 18 members. Personal collection of Ruth Fay, Lake Katepwa. The Book Club was formed sometime during the 1930s and the Ladies Chorus began in 1944.

organization in the province, donated money to the Red Cross, the Milk for Britain Fund, the Salvation Army and the British Relief Fund.<sup>65</sup> The Circle also maintained a congenial relationship with other area women's clubs as noted by the club president in 1937: "We were entertained by the Sunny Slope Circle on June 10 and by the WA (Women's Auxiliary) of the Anglican Church on June 23 and by the United Farm Ladies on August 4. These entertainments were enjoyed very much by all. And our Circle entertained the WA of the Anglican Church on September 15th."<sup>66</sup> This brief notation made by the Circle's president is interesting for two reasons: on the one hand it demonstrates that various clubs and associations, even when they shared similar interests, had differing identities which some women decided to adopt and some did not; on the other hand it shows that the various women's clubs in the area maintained connections because there were some things they held in common or some interests that they shared.

The Sunny Slope Circle was formed in 1935 by women who lived in the Sunny Slope School District (approximately seven miles south of Indian Head and four miles west of Glenn Lynn). The purpose of the club was to have a meeting of the "ladies".<sup>67</sup> As with the Glenn Lynn Circle, members of the Sunny Slope Circle were all married and brought their children to the meetings because, as one respondent recalled, "you had to ...

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<sup>65</sup>. Glenn Lynn Circle scrapbook, Indian Head Museum.

<sup>66</sup>. *Ibid.* This notation is revealing because it points out that members of the Circle did not necessarily include all members of the Anglican WA even though the Circle's primary function was at one time to raise money for the Anglican and United Churches.

<sup>67</sup>. Indian Head: History of Indian Head and District, p. 190.

they'd put the kids outside [to play]."<sup>68</sup> Members met one afternoon per month to do quilting (or knitting or whatever was the club's activity at the time), enjoy a program of entertainment, conduct the meeting, and enjoy lunch. As with the SDB, the Glenn Lynn Circle and other non-affiliated women's clubs, the Sunny Slope Circle was primarily interested in its own community. Members recall, "At that time (early in the Circle's history) there were different people needing help, and there used to be a Rest Room in Indian Head, you know, where people could go like on Saturday nights and change their babies if you had them or feed them or just go to the bathroom and they did help them out a lot. And then there was a young lad who had both his legs taken off and they helped him a lot and he was a boy from the district, and they used to help the Red Cross, did a lot of knitting and that sort of thing. It was just a social get together really at the beginning and this is what they did, you know, they worked and then of course when the war came we worked very hard then."<sup>69</sup>

Two of the most active provincial rural women's associations, the Women's Grain Growers' Association (WGGA) and the Homemakers' Clubs, were never successful in the Indian Head area.<sup>70</sup> The Rosetown area, on the other hand, eventually had both

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<sup>68</sup>. N.N.D.Q., personal interview, March 1993.

<sup>69</sup>. *Ibid.* The name of the Sunny Slope Circle was changed in 1946 to the Friendly Neighbours because membership was no longer only drawn from the Sunny Slope district. This group is still very active and continues to meet monthly. I attended a meeting in 1993 where almost twenty members were in attendance.

<sup>70</sup>. That the Women's Grain Growers' Association did not exist in Indian Head is particularly interesting because the Territorial Grain Growers Association (fore-runner to the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association) was started in Indian Head in 1902. There is some evidence that in 1937 the United Farm Women had at least some members in the

organizations. The R.M. of St. Andrews, where Rosetown is located, had two WGGAs -- one in Fortune and one in Idaleen. In 1926 when the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association (SGGA) and the United Farmers amalgamated, the Fortune women "decided to form an entirely local organization calling it 'the Fortune Community Club'".<sup>71</sup> Apparently members did not have as great an interest in the political/educational agenda of the United Farm Women and opted for a more familiar social/philanthropic program that focused on the local community.<sup>72</sup>

A similar type of experience ensued with the WGGA local formed at Camberley, just north of Rosetown. Members did similar work to that of the SDB Club in that they raised money for the Canadian National Institute for the Blind and the Red Cross. But they too were interested in strictly local concerns; in 1920 they held "a joint meeting with the men for the purpose of deciding on a rest room for the ladies in Rosetown", and in

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area because the president of the Glenn Lynn Circle reported that they had been entertained by the "United Farm Ladies" on August 4. Glenn Lynn Circle President's Report 1937, Indian Head Museum. This is the only reference I have seen and current residents only recall the Saskatchewan Farmer's Union which was started in Glenn Lynn in 1950.

<sup>71</sup>. St. Andrews Book Committee, R.M of St. Andrews No.287; History of the Land, (Biggar: Independent Printers, n.d.), p. 56.

<sup>72</sup>. Kathleen Stangland, Past President of the Saskatchewan Women's Institute, offered the following explanation as to why some women preferred local clubs rather than "outside" clubs: "I know that we've had WI clubs, or Homemakers' as they were known in the early days, that formed and then later disbanded because they only wanted to do local community work so that could have been some of the force of why in the early years they would [disband] ... a lot of them just wanted community clubs and they do community service and they're not too much into the educational and that's the only thing I can distinguish between them, whereas if you want a larger link, if you want a communication network with educational programming, not just community meetings, then you would look towards something [else]." Kathleen Stangland, personal interview, April 28, 1993.



1925-26 the women raised money to purchase a piano for the school."<sup>73</sup> In April 1927, after the SGGGA/United Farmers amalgamation, members voted to become a local of the United Farm Women of Saskatchewan (UFWS), an affiliate of the United Farmers of Canada Saskatchewan Section (UFCSS).<sup>74</sup> Then, ten years later, members once again voted to re-form their club, this time into a Homemakers' Club. The focus of the former local did not change much, however, as apart from its war-related work, the local had almost always focused on what contemporaries called "women's proper sphere", for example, work with and for children, and learning and practising domestic arts (quilting, sewing etc.). Accordingly members of this local were more suited to the Homemakers' Clubs than to the WGGGA or the UFWS. They had not engaged in political action and had demonstrated little interest in the issues which were priorities for the organized farm women -- the economic and political consequences of farming.

The Saskatchewan Homemakers' Clubs were popular with rural women and "did much to improve conditions in rural communities and to brighten the lives of rural women", but the Homemakers' were non-partisan and non-political.<sup>75</sup> The Clubs were not, for example, "represented on the Equal Franchise Board of Saskatchewan ... nor was

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<sup>73</sup>. "1919-1927: The Camberley Club"; personal collection of Kathleen Stangland, Rosetown.

<sup>74</sup>. The Grain Growers' Association and the Farmers Union merged in 1926 to become the United Farmers of Canada Saskatchewan Section. For additional information on the UFWS see Cheryle Jahn, "'Class, Gender and Agrarian Socialism': The United Farm Women of Saskatchewan, 1926-1931", in Prairie Forum Vol.19 No.2 (Fall 1994), pp. 189-206.

<sup>75</sup>. Grain Growers' Guide, January 21, 1920, p. 67.

it ever to openly endorse, or even discuss franchises for women because [the director, Abigail] DeLury was sensitive to the University's concern that controversial issues be avoided."<sup>76</sup> Yet, the two organizations of farm women in Saskatchewan did share some common ground and on occasion worked together; Mary McCallum, an avid supporter of the Grain Growers and an executive member of the Interprovincial Council of Farm Women, addressed the Homemakers' Convention of 1918, and the following year, in 1919, Violet McNaughton was invited to the convention as a guest speaker.

Although this indicates there were periods when the two groups co-operated, there were more issues which divided these women than brought them together. For example, when it came to access to services and programs offered by the University that should have been available to all Saskatchewan women, the WGGGA felt slighted by the University's support of the Homemakers'. This continued until Zoe Haight's term as President of the WGGGA, 1918 to 1920, when she "successfully fought to receive (sic) the extension services for her organization already provided by the University of Saskatchewan to the Homemakers' Clubs of the province."<sup>77</sup> The primary difference between the two organizations was that the Homemakers' were more philanthropic and geared towards homemaker training and the WGGGA was not. Although the organized farm women of the WGGGA were deeply involved in reform and charity work and

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<sup>76</sup>. Kerrie A. Strathy, "Saskatchewan Women's Institutes, The Rural Women's University, 1911-1986", Master of Continuing Education thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1987.

<sup>77</sup>. L.J. Wilson, "Educating the Saskatchewan Farmer: The Educational Work of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association", Saskatchewan History, Winter 1978, p. 27.

wholeheartedly participated in war work, they did not consider their association a social service agency. There were, therefore, specific reasons why women chose to join the WGGGA which affiliated with the Grain Grower's Association instead of joining the Homemaker's Clubs. They sought a comradeship with their male partners in the rural unit and as citizens they wanted to exercise their franchise in a meaningful and informed fashion. As farm women they believed they needed to understand the issues central to their lives -- tariffs, railroad policies, inequities of the east-west dichotomy. Homemaker training, although useful and often necessary, was only a small part of the reality of being a farm woman.

Two of the most well-known national women's organizations of the first two decades of the twentieth century, the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and the International Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE), also did not make much headway in Rosetown or Indian Head. According to Nancy Sheehan, the WCTU was first organized in what would become Saskatchewan when Mrs. A.A. Andrews in 1887 organized unions at Qu'Appelle (fourteen kilometres west of Indian Head), Wolseley (thirty-three kilometres east of Indian Head) and Broadview (forty-one kilometres further east of Wolseley)<sup>78</sup>. A union was also formed in Indian Head, but evidence supporting the union's existence is sketchy at best. Mrs. Euphemy Dixon of Wide Awake (eight miles north of Indian Head), who claimed to have been active in the temperance movement since

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<sup>78</sup>. Nancy M. Sheehan, "The WCTU on the Prairies, 1886-1930: An Alberta-Saskatchewan Comparison", in Prairie Forum, Vol. 6 No.1, (1981), pp. 17-33.

she was ten years old,<sup>79</sup> played a leading role in WCTU's activities in the Indian Head area. Although it is not clear how many members there were, or even when this particular union began (or folded), it must have had at least a measure of local support because a letter of tribute presented to Dixon in 1915 is signed by ten executive members, all married and all residents of Wide Awake or Indian Head. The letter, which was rather effusive in its praise of Dixon's leadership, is instructive because it helps to illuminate both the articulated and unarticulated missions of this particular union: "we your fellow workers in the WCTU wish to extend to you our hearty congratulations, and express to you our wish that you may be still spared to us, that we may have the benefit of your counsel and the inspiration of your presence with us in our Master's work ... You have been a mother among us and we want you to know that we appreciate it ..."<sup>80</sup>

The obvious mission of the Indian Head WCTU was Christian temperance, as revealed in the organization's name, and further emphasized in the tribute to Euphemy Dixon. Hence, members identified as Christians and supporters of temperance.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>. The Dixon family history indicates that Euphemy (who was from Scotland) married William Dixon in London in 1860. For Euphemy to have joined the WCTU when she was ten years old (as the family history claims) she would have had to have joined in the WCTU in 1844. However, the World WCTU was not formed until 1884 and "there was no equivalent of the broad-ranging WCTU in Britain." Christine Bolt, The Women's Movements in the United States and Britain from the 1790s to the 1920s, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), p. 133. The British Women's Temperance Association, the largest national temperance association in Britain, did not begin until 1876, so Euphemy could not have been a member of it in the 1840s. The only possible explanation is that Euphemy belonged to a local or regional British temperance society.

<sup>80</sup>. The letter was presented to Euphemy Dixon on her 81st birthday. "William Levi Wait", family history, personal collection of Harriet Dixon, Indian Head.

Somewhat less obvious was the "maternalism" of the union and its focus on "charitable and benevolent activity."<sup>82</sup> Members praised Euphemy Dixon for being "a mother among us", demonstrating that acting "as a mother" was for this group, a behaviour worthy of respect. The links here then, are motherhood, temperance, and Christianity, a powerful blend no doubt, but apparently not appealing to all women in the Indian Head area as the local union did not enjoy an extensive membership. Motherhood and Christianity certainly appealed to many area women as noted in the early formation of ladies church auxiliaries. The conclusion to be drawn, therefore, is that temperance itself made the WCTU less appealing to area women, or that there were other local organizations which offered a satisfactory substitute.

Although in Rosetown the WCTU does not appear to have been formally organized, there was a local temperance movement. As Arthur Broadbridge reported, early in 1915 "several prominent citizens ... formed a local organization. The Methodists and Presbyterians threw their weight behind the movement."<sup>83</sup> It is likely that women who

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<sup>81</sup>. Of the eleven known members of the Indian Head union, three were members of the Presbyterian Church and one a lifetime member of the Methodist church.

<sup>82</sup>. Nancy M. Sheehan, "The WCTU on the Prairies", p. 27. Sheehan argues that "in Saskatchewan the WCTU, sticking to traditional, charitable activities at a time when reform was popular elsewhere, was largely pre-empted by the more progressive male leaders and by the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association Women's Section"(p. 30) . By comparison, "the Alberta WCTU adopted a more progressive philosophy, opting to stress legislative and suffrage work, and to push for scientific temperance instruction in the public schools"(p. 30).

<sup>83</sup>. Arthur Frederick Broadbridge, "The History of Rosetown 1904-1939", p. 49. Recall that the WCTU in Indian Head was also supported by Methodists and Presbyterians.

were active in the "Banish-the-Bar" and prohibition movements in Rosetown<sup>84</sup> did so either through participation in the organization created by the "prominent citizens" or in the Ladies Aid societies of their churches.

The situation of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire (IODE) in Rosetown and Indian Head was directly opposed to that of the WCTU: there was an IODE chapter in Rosetown but not one in Indian Head. That Indian Head did not have a chapter is consistent with the absence of other provincial or national women's organizations in the Indian Head area. The Rosetown chapter of the IODE was formed in 1916 and, like almost every other woman's organization in Rosetown, it proved to be interested in strictly local concerns as well as in serving IODE goals of promoting "patriotism, service and loyalty to the King."<sup>85</sup> For example, The Rosetown Eagle reported in 1918 that the IODE had approached the town council to petition for "sanitary closets in the stores and offices where girls are employed in this town."<sup>86</sup> The council recommended that something be done as soon as possible.

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<sup>84</sup>. For a discussion of the history of prohibition in Saskatchewan see, John H. Archer, Saskatchewan A History, (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), especially pp. 176-178 and pp. 197-200.

<sup>85</sup>. Nadine Small, "The 'Lady Imperialists' and the Great War: the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire in Saskatchewan 1914-1918", in David DeBrou and Aileen C. Moffatt (eds.), "Other" Voices: Historical Essays on Saskatchewan Women, (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1995), p. 77.

<sup>86</sup>. The Rosetown Eagle, January 17, 1918. The IODE's complaint further noted that "if there are outside closets in connection with any of said places, they are unsafe for girls to use by reason of their condition or being publicly used by men. It is needless to mention the grave menace to the health of the girls. We ask that some action be taken to make it necessary for places where girls are employed to have these comforts for them or that public comfort stations be built in town for men and women."

The IODE had a clearly articulated identity -- that of "lady imperialists". Nadine Small argues that "most of the women who joined the IODE were of British descent, and therefore had a natural interest in an organization devoted to patriotic work for the British Empire."<sup>87</sup> IODE members were particularly concerned about immigrants of non-British heritage. These defining statements allow IODE members to be characterized with some ease. Certainly they were of British heritage, and were very patriotic. They would definitely have identified themselves as imperialists and loyal subjects of the British crown. And, most certainly, IODE members were "Women" -- proper, educated, white, and of British heritage.

What do these women's organizations have in common that permitted a woman to identify with several clubs that had different objectives? At what point did the organizational identities of these diverse associations intersect? The element that linked these various organizations and their corresponding identities was that they were all "Women's" clubs -- associations by and for white, educated, rural, Saskatchewan women of British heritage -- and therefore were the products of a particular constituency. These clubs were not intended to serve all of the female population in either district. Those few "outside" women's associations or clubs that Indian Head and Rosetown women did initiate in their own communities were either to meet a demand for a particular service or to provide a forum for a specific mode of expression, for example, the WCTU and temperance in Indian Head, or they were modified to incorporate local concerns into the broader organizational objectives such as the IODE and "ladies public facilities" in

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<sup>87</sup>. Nadine Small, "The 'Lady Imperialists' and the Great War", p. 78.

Rosetown.

This is not to say, however, that the term "Woman" was static or inflexible. To the contrary, within the category "Women", there were obvious subcategories, particularly in Indian Head which tended to be more "cliquey" than Rosetown. Farm women and town women often were perceived to be of different classes, with town women seemingly more urbane than farm women.<sup>88</sup> This is reflected in the types of clubs organized in town as compared to those started by women in the surrounding farm communities. The focus of town clubs was generally singular, for example the Hospital Aid or the Book Club, while farm women formed clubs that were multifaceted and addressed a multiplicity of community issues, such as the Glenn Lynn Circle or the Sunny Slope Circle. Additionally, between the two towns and their surrounding farm communities, there were differences in the types of clubs and associations that were successful -- Indian Head area women enjoyed fewer provincial or national women's associations than did women in Rosetown. This was the result of local conventions in both areas that had originated with two different traditions. The foundation of Indian Head society was laid in the last twenty years of the nineteenth century and was influenced by wealthy British landowners. Rosetown, on the other hand, was settled by individual settlers and their families during a period of rapid growth, twenty to twenty-five years later than was Indian Head. Therefore, not only was the class structure different in the settlement phase of each

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<sup>88</sup>. See Nancy Grey Osterud, "Gender and the Transition to Capitalism in Rural America", in Joan Jensen and Nancy Grey Osterud (eds.), American Rural and Farm Women in Historical Perspective, (Washington DC: The Agricultural History Society, 1994), pp. 14-29.



community, but they were of two different generations -- the first heavily influenced by end of the Victorian era, the latter by a modernizing and maturing Canadian society.

The cross-organizational implications of membership in a variety of associations and clubs obviously meant a mixing of members and memberships. Women would pick and choose between the associations which they might join. For example, not all Christian women became members of a church association, and not all singers joined a chorus. Further, women frequently were members of more than one club or society, creating the opportunity for interlocking memberships. Nettie N. was a member of the United Church Women and the Red Cross;<sup>89</sup> Euphemy Dixon was a member of the WCTU and the Methodist Women's Missionary Society;<sup>90</sup> and Kay C. was a member of the SDB and later joined the United Church Women and the Red Cross. The ideas and objectives of one club might, therefore, be shared with another club particularly when the constituency was similar.

A woman may have joined a club because it addressed one aspect (or several aspects) of her identity, or quite possibly, because she wished to cultivate an identity that was associated with an organization. But whatever the reason, the identities associated with particular clubs and associations reinforced prevailing social identities which were based in tradition, myth, and lived experience. Those clubs that were the most successful or survived the longest, were those whose identities were fluid enough to adapt to changes in community interests and identities. The Friendly Neighbours, for example, founded in

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<sup>89</sup>. Nettie N., personal interview, February 1993.

<sup>90</sup>. Indian Head, History of Indian Head and District, p. 348.

Indian Head in 1934, is still active today because the club's mandate has evolved along with the membership and the shifting definitions of rural "Womanhood".

Women's associations and clubs in both Rosetown and Indian Head were thus influenced by the wider Canadian society, the heritage and traditions of each community, and the day-to-day exigencies of rural Saskatchewan life. This combination of elements resulted in a framework that found rural women co-opting "outside" organizational identities to suit their rural situation, or creating new organizational structures that addressed the reality of their lives. The influence of old and new, therefore, was found in each organization; the old in that women's "traditional" domestic role was generally adhered to, and the new in that most of the organizations accommodated the new rural "Woman". The SDB best exemplifies that, as it was an organization for working women but members "graduated" once they married and assumed their "natural" or "intended" role as wife and mother. In the end, however, "Women's" various organizational identities blended so easily because they adhered to a common definition of a "Woman" -- white, educated, middle-class, and of British heritage.

## CONCLUSION: Experiencing "Women"

A.C. Moffatt: "Well, thank you."

Nora H.: "Amen! Because that was a long epistle."<sup>1</sup>

The days of monocausal historical interpretations are, fortunately, long gone. Although many historians would be loathe to characterize themselves as "postmodern" and in doing so align themselves with scholars who "descend into discourse",<sup>2</sup> most do now agree that the once popular triad of race, class, and gender is insufficient on its own to provide a suitable entrée into historical interpretation.<sup>3</sup> Paying attention to religion and spirituality, geographic location, sexuality, and lived experience, among other factors, many would agree, also helps to explain how we identify our past. In the final analysis, however, it is how we as historians prioritize and present our impressions that determines the scholarly direction of our profession.

Lived experience is a key factor in this study of British-Canadian "Women" in rural Saskatchewan. It is not, however, uncontested experience that is highlighted here. Rather, it is experience as constructed within a particular context and subjected to specific historical constituents. "Experience is a subject's history", argues Joan Scott; she adds:

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<sup>1</sup>. Nora H., personal interview, April 1993.

<sup>2</sup>. Bryan D. Palmer, Descent into Discourse: The Reification of Language and the Writing of Social History, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), p. 47.

<sup>3</sup>. Class can be a particularly tricky issue for rural historians. Definitions of "what defines class boundaries in an agricultural society" is a fundamental question that scholars continuously puzzle over. In early February 1996, for example, the H-Rural internet history discussion list generated a lively discussion that resulted in as many definitions and qualifiers as there were discussants.

"identity is tied to notions of experience."<sup>4</sup> Consequently, identities are not "inevitable or determined."<sup>5</sup> Identities are learned and are supported by behaviours, discourses, and various traditions and myths, along with lived experience and how it is interpreted.

The identity of "Woman", prevalent in Indian Head and Rosetown between approximately 1880 and 1950, was the product of specific social and cultural behaviours and activities common to British-Canadian females who were in all cases educated, white, and English-speaking, and more often than not, middle-class and protestant. Based on an imported social ideal of women as pious, proper, professional mothers, "Woman" was a blend of the traditions associated with "separate spheres", the competing myths of women's "proper" role in the developing West (women as sturdy and robust helpmate in a new society, as opposed to women as genteel, delicate, maternal angel), and reality, life as it actually was experienced in rural Saskatchewan. This blend resulted in a representative new type -- an ideal -- of rural woman.

At the heart of "Womanhood" was a fluid definition of rural domesticity that sustained on-going reinterpretation and new meanings of what it meant to be a "Woman". This was, as other scholars have noted, a response to the impossibility of inherited gender roles and resulted in a loosening of sex-role expectations for rural women that opened the door for alternative visions of gender and female identity.<sup>6</sup> However, the new female

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<sup>4</sup>. Joan W. Scott, "Experience", in Judith Butler & Joan W. Scott (eds.), Feminists Theorize the Political, (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 33-34.

<sup>5</sup>. Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>6</sup>. The best examples are: Seena B. Kohl, Working Together: Women & Family in Southwestern Saskatchewan, (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart & Winston of Canada Limited,

identity created was not a radical departure from contemporary norms. Instead, "Woman" reinforced what most folks then perceived was the "natural" way of doing things (separate spheres for men and women). At the same time, however, this new female identity also redefined separate spheres into a distinctly British-Canadian rural female identity that reconciled rural women's day-to-day life with domesticity and femininity. It was a fluid identity that on the one hand included the wide range of sometimes rugged experiences rural women faced daily, and on the other hand allowed the same women to be considered genteel, feminine, and above all "Women".

Expanding definitions of rural domesticity reflected rural women's actual lived experience and included new roles and opportunities for "Women". The flexible boundaries of rural domesticity represented a point of departure for "Women's" shifting public and private identities. Certain female gender-marked occupations, for example (domestic service, nursing, teaching and clerical work), "fit" characteristics associated with "Woman" and, therefore, reinforced this amalgam as a desirable identity for rural Saskatchewan females. Additionally, women's clubs, associations, and organizations that were most successful in Indian Head and Rosetown were those which adapted to changes in community interests and identities and supported "Women's" activities.

Not all aspects of "Woman", however, were new or redefined. Some elements

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1976); Nancy Grey Osterud, Bonds of Community: The Lives of Farm Women in Nineteenth Century New York, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991); Jane Marie Pederson, Between Memory and Reality: Family and Community in Rural Wisconsin 1870-1970, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992).

worked to support the imported traditions and myths popular in the wider world. Religion and church activities, in particular, provided links to familiar British-Canadian practices and paradigms. In Indian Head and Rosetown the sacred was not generally questioned. Other elements too were influenced by movements outside of the local or regional setting. National and international trends of middle-class women seeking careers or professions, for instance, provided a powerful incentive for unmarried rural women to perceive waged work as desirable.

The construction of femininity in rural Saskatchewan was, therefore, both part of a continuum of Euro-North American trends, and the result of the influence of local events. Three dimensions of life in rural Saskatchewan are important in this analysis: the ways in which rural schools permitted girls and boys to learn and play together; the ways in which the boundaries of women's work were flexible, allowing rural women to take on household and farm duties usually signified as male and allowing rural women to see paid work as the logical extension of their household and familial economic contributions; and the ways in which women's organizations were created or adapted to meet the specific interests of women in rural communities.

First, in rural schools, children learned that while girls and boys (and later Women and Men) had specific roles, they also were expected to act somewhat differently than the imported models suggested. Teaching girls how to be Women with home economics units, for example, taught girls to assume the role of cook, housekeeper, and nurse that was familiar to most women across North America. However, the local situation also required of women that they be able to do manual labour and assume responsibility for

chores that urban women, for instance, usually did not do. Second, across North America and Britain women were becoming more involved in the paid workforce, and women in Indian Head and Rosetown were no exception. But local conditions had already set in motion the precedent for an expanded sphere of influence for rural women. Working for pay away from home was not such a great stretch for these rural women considering that women in Indian Head and Rosetown had already begun to stretch the boundaries of what was and was not considered feminine by local standards. And third, women in Indian Head and Rosetown began joining organizations for women at the same time as women's associations were becoming popular throughout the English-speaking world. However, Indian Head and Rosetown women preferred to join clubs that dealt specifically with their local issues and concerns more than they enjoyed clubs that addressed wider issues such as imperialism or prohibition.

The purpose of "Experiencing Identity" has been to demonstrate that the experiences of women cannot be universalized and that, without question, there is no possibility for an all-encompassing identity or "women's culture" that applies to all women, historical or otherwise. What has been described as a prominent social identity in rural Saskatchewan is exactly that, the product of a multitude of factors that uniquely came together at that time, in that place. The significance, then, or in other words, the answer to the "why should we care?" question, is that this study demonstrates that identity is self-consciously selected. Identities are not omnipresent; they exist because of social, cultural, political, and economic needs. They define hierarchies, power, and authority. But because identities are fluid and possess the capacity for on-going change and reinvention,

the boundaries of identities are constantly negotiable. In the example of "Woman", it was precisely because the definition of rural domesticity and what it meant to be a "Woman" evolved as the communities evolved, that rural women were able to own their femininity and not forfeit it because they could not measure up to "outside" models. "Woman" provided an identity that gave rural Saskatchewan females of British heritage agency and the ability to define themselves in a relatively distinct and somewhat independent image.

Furthermore, sisterhood and women's culture, as has been proven here, is merely a discursive tool that has no currency. Women cannot be grouped into one category because their experiences are unique and *must* be historically located. In this instance, context *is* everything. "Women" in Indian Head and Rosetown 1880-1950, created a social identity that "fit" their circumstances, which were, for example, far different from those of an English-speaking, middle-class, protestant, educated woman in Toronto or even Regina. And, most certainly, their lives were far different from those of the Metis or Native women who lived in their locale. It was a matter of being part of the group with which "Women" identified that allowed them the knowledge -- the code, if you will -- to fully participate and be accepted.

On a secondary level, "Experiencing Identity" frames the stories of rural women -- farm *and* town women. Frequently town women have been overlooked by historians. This study links town and country and shows how women in both locations were able to share a similar identity. Of course, the country women addressed here are not living in remote areas; they are women who lived relatively close to town. Moreover, both town and country women in Indian Head and Rosetown were dynamic, involved participants in



their communities. They were not the stereotypical lonely drudges all too frequently described in historical literature. On the contrary, rural "Women" were vital and active citizens who designed a place for themselves in rural Saskatchewan.

"Woman" was, therefore, in the Indian Head and Rosetown example, an identity created out of imported British-Canadian cultural patterns that were redefined and renegotiated into a uniquely western, Canadian female identity. Born out of ideals that originally arrived intact, the dominant female identity soon changed to reflect new norms and a new range of possibilities for rural females. "Woman" was thus a fluid identity that combined elements of the old and the new and, therefore, contained continuity with the past while remaining solidly based in the present. It was launched in locally-run institutions, including schools, churches, and organizations, and coincided with a growing international movement of single women working for wages.

Moreover, "Woman" became the standard or ideal against which other rural women were measured. It was, therefore, an identity -- an experience -- that was both inclusive and exclusive; inclusive in that it accommodated the work that rural women actually did, and exclusive because in order to have the requisite experience to qualify as a "Woman", one had to be white, educated, middle-class, English-speaking and preferably protestant. In the final analysis, however, "Woman" clearly reconciled tradition, myth, and lived experience and in the process opened the door for further reinterpretations of rural women's identities.

**APPENDIX I****Population of Indian Head and Rosetown**

	Indian Head	Rosetown
<b>1901</b>	768	---
<b>1911</b>	1285	317
<b>1921</b>	1437	865
<b>1926</b>	1313	1412
<b>1931</b>	1438	1553
<b>1936</b>	1365	1520
<b>1941</b>	1349	1470
<b>1951</b>	1569	1865

sources: census of Canada, 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931, 1941, 1951; census of the Prairie Provinces, 1926, 1936.

## APPENDIX II

## Birthplace of residents of the Territories/Saskatchewan

	Canada	Britain(*)	Total	% of prov. population
<b><u>Territories</u></b>				
<b>1881</b>	23,939	233	24,172	94.7
<b>1891</b>	47,967	12,859	60,826	91.06
<b>1901</b>	55,084	10,638	65,722	72.0
<b><u>Saskatchewan</u></b>				
<b>1911</b>	248,751	81,071	329,822	67.0
<b>1921</b>	457,833	100,355	558,188	73.7
<b>1931</b>	603,240	101,001	794,241	76.4

sources: Canadian census 1881, 1891, 1941 (Vol. I, Table 21)

(\*) includes Nfld., England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and "other British possessions" (as per the census)

## APPENDIX III

**Occupations of women in the Territories and Saskatchewan (\*)  
(number and percentage to total number of Sask. working women)**

	teacher	servant	office	nursing	sales	agric.
<b><u>Territories</u></b>						
<b>1891</b>						
#	94	458	1	9(**)	3	102
%	9.31	45.35	.1	.89	.29	10.1
1901 "occupations of the people" not collected in 1901 census						
<b><u>Saskatchewan</u></b>						
<b>1911</b>						
#	1381	4363	1249	299	508	1604
%	10.40	32.90	9.40	2.25	3.82	12.08
<b>1921</b>						
#	4099	5441	4129	1177	1488	2241
%	16.49	21.89	16.61	4.73	5.98	9.01
<b>1931</b>						
#	5974	10068	4895	1980	1806	3581
%	15.94	26.87	13.06	5.28	4.82	9.55
<b>1941</b>						
#	5341	11215	5910	2475	2391	3176
%	12.50	26.25	13.83	5.79	5.96	7.43

sources: Canadian census 1891, 1911, 1921, 1931, 1941.

notes: (\*) figures for 1891 are for the Territories, as Saskatchewan did not become a province until 1905. Although data from this year does not strictly compare to data in this table from subsequent years (because they represent different geographic areas), the 1891 data does demonstrate the relatively small number of women employed at all in the entire Territories

(\*\*) the 1891 census category includes nurses and midwives.

## APPENDIX IV

**Percentage of working women to total  
Territories/Saskatchewan population**

	% of women employed in teaching, domestic service, office, nursing, sales, & agriculture	% to total population of Sask. women
<b><u>Territories</u></b>		
<b>1891</b>	66.04	2.28
<b>1901</b>	not available	
<b><u>Saskatchewan</u></b>		
<b>1911</b>	70.85	4.67
<b>1921</b>	74.71	5.40
<b>1931</b>	75.53	5.88
<b>1941</b>	71.66	7.29

sources: Canadian census 1891, 1911, 1921, 1931, 1941.

note: (\*) figures for 1891 are for the Territories, as Saskatchewan did not become a province until 1905. Although data from this year does not strictly compare to data in this table from subsequent years (because they represent different geographic areas), the 1891 data does demonstrate the relatively small number of women employed at all in the entire Territories

## APPENDIX V

## Territories/Saskatchewan population by rural/urban division

	Total pop.	Rural	%rural	urban	%urban
<b><u>Territories</u></b>					
<b>1881</b>	25,515	25,515	100.	--	--
<b>1891</b>	66,779	66,779	100.	--	--
<b><u>Saskatchewan</u></b>					
<b>1901</b>	91,279	77,013	84.37	14,266	15.63
<b>1911</b>	492,432	361,037	73.32	131,395	26.68
<b>1921</b>	757,510	538,552	71.10	218,958	28.9
<b>1931</b>	921,785	630,880	68.44	290,905	31.56
<b>1941</b>	895,992	600,846	67.06	295,146	32.94

sources: Canadian census 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931, 1941

note: prior to 1921, incorporated centers with 500 or more persons were classified urban;  
from 1921 on, incorporated centers of 1,000 or more were classified urban

## APPENDIX VI

## Sample of teachers and salaries, Rosetown and Indian Head

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1890	Albert Bunting	Fair Play(*)	30.00 month
1891	John Crawford	Fair Play	40.00 month
1892-94	John Crawford	Fair Play	500.00
1895-98	Mary Donald	Fair Play	35.00 month
1899	Mary Donald	Fair Play	360.00
1904-05	Maggie Bones	Fair Play	45.00 month
1905	Miss McMorris	Jubilee(*)	500.00
1906	Miss Jones	Fair Play	45.00 month
	Miss Mc Morris	Jubilee	600.00
1907	Miss L. Mclean	Fair Play	600.00
	Miss Bertha Powell	Fair Play	625.00
	Miss McMorris	Jubilee	360.75(**)
	Miss Bessie Smith	Jubilee	235.70
1908	Miss Powell	Fair Play	700.00
	Mr. W.J. Hudson	Jubilee	600.00
1909	Miss Bristow	Fair Play	45.00 month
	Mr. W.J. Hudson	Jubilee	650.00
1910	Miss Harriet Gerry	Fair Play	45.00 month
	Mr. W.J. Hudson	Jubilee	625.00
1911	Miss Clark	Fair Play	60.00 month
	Mr. W.J. Hudson	Jubilee	75.00
	Miss C.H. Dayfoot	Jubilee	604.66
	Miss D. Hepburn	Jubilee	55.00
1912	Miss Clark	Fair Play	60.00 month
	Miss D. Hepburn	Jubilee	452.40
	Miss Gerry	Jubilee	30.00
	Miss K. Chisholm	Jubilee	160.00
1913	Miss Salvon	Fair Play	60.00 month
	Miss K. Chisholm	Jubilee	494.86
	Miss H. Robertson	Jubilee	240.00
1914	Miss King	Fair Play	60.00 month
	Helena Robertson	Jubilee	480.00
	Jean Drummond	Jubilee	?
1915	Jean Drummond	Jubilee	808.57
	Miss Railton	Fair Play	60.00 month
1916	Miss N.M. Martin	Jubilee	260.00
	Miss W. Mustard	Jubilee	470.00



1917	Luella Gerry	Fair Play	60.00 month
	Miss W. Mustard	Jubilee	870.00
1918	Miss Terry	Fair Play	950.00
	Miss W. Mustard	Jubilee	764.00
1919	Miss Crawford	Fair Play	950.00
	Miss W. Mustard	Jubilee	540.00
	Miss L. Fairbairn	Jubilee	400.00
1920	Jeanetta Thompson	Fair Play	520.00 Sept-Dec
	Miss. L. Fairbairn	Jubilee	1219.70
1921	Ruth McDonald	Fair Play	1250.00
	Miss L. Lavis	Jubilee	1080.00
1922	Marion Bell	Fair Play	1200.00 (asked to resign- wages too high)
	Miss M. Lavis	Jubilee	1320.00
1923	Janet Johnson	Fair Play	1050.00
	Miss M. Lavis	Jubilee	1080.00
1924	Janet Johnson	Fair Play	1050.00
	Miss M. Lavis	Jubilee	1200.00
1925	Janet Johnson	Fair Play	1050.00
	Miss M. Lavis	Jubilee	842.00
	Miss L. Clement	Jubilee	332.50
1925	Miss I. Douglas	Rosetown(d)	1300.00 (Gr.8)
	Miss Roy	Rosetown	1200.00 (Gr.6-7)
1926	Janet Johnson	Fair Play (teacher asked to resign because of small enrolment and would be replaced by a teacher with a smaller salary)	
	Miss Lyster	Fair Play	900.00
1927	Miss L. Clement	Jubilee	1032.50
	Miss Olive Ferguson	Rosetown	1500.00 (High School)
	Miss Lyster	Fair Play	900.00
	Miss L. Clement	Jubilee	1000.00
	Mr. D. Hubbs	Sunny Slope(*)	1150.00
	Miss Olive Ferguson	Rosetown	1600.00 (High School)
	L.J. Wort	Rosetown	1800.00 (High School)
	Miss E.H. Tapp	Rosetown	1850.00 (High School)
	Hazel Lee	Rosetown	1100.00
	Elsie Cameron	Rosetown	1100.00
	Miss J. Douglas	Rosetown	1300.00
	N.L. Stewart	Rosetown	1350.00
	May Roy	Rosetown	1250.00
	Jean MacEwan	Rosetown	1200.00
	Jean Ferguson	Rosetown	1100.00
1928	Miss Liversage	Fair Play	920.00

	Miss Belva Howatt	Jubilee	900.00
	Olive Ferguson	Rosetown	1850.00 (High School)
	Miss J. Douglas	Rosetown	1300.00
	N.L. Stewart	Rosetown	1350.00
	Jean Ferguson	Rosetown	1200.00
	Miss J. Venables	Rosetown	1700.00
	M. McPherson	Rosetown	1700.00
	M. Cluff	Rosetown	1150.00
	G. McNee	Rosetown	1100.00
	M. Fossett	Rosetown	1100.00
	H. Knowles	Rosetown	1100.00
1929	Miss Liversage	Fair Play	980.00
	Miss Belva Howatt	Jubilee	570.00
	Miss Leah Stephens	Jubilee	427.50
	Olive Ferguson	Rosetown	1800.00 (High School)
	Miss J. Douglas	Rosetown	1300.00
	N.L. Stewart	Rosetown	1350.00
	M. McPherson	Rosetown	1700.00
	G. McNee	Rosetown	1150.00
	M. Fossett	Rosetown	1100.00
	M.G. Huffman	Rosetown	1150.00
1930	Miss Kelly	Fair Play	1000.00
	Miss Leah Stephens	Jubilee	858.00
	Mr. D. Hubbs	Sunny Slope	1150.00
1931	Fair Play school closed because of insufficient funds		
	Miss Leah Stephens	Jubilee	585.00
	Mrs. S. Harrop	Jubilee	50.00
	Miss S. Spafford	Jubilee	16.50
	(Jan.) Mr. D. Hubbs	Sunny Slope	1100.00
	(July) Mr. D. Hubbs	Sunny Slope	950.00
	Olive Ferguson	Rosetown	1650.00 (High School)
	Miss J. Douglas	Rosetown	1150.00
	N.L. Stewart	Rosetown	1200.00
	May Roy	Rosetown	1100.00
	M. McPherson	Rosetown	1500.00
	G. McNee	Rosetown	1050.00
	M. Fossett	Rosetown	1050.00
	M. Gailside	Rosetown	1500.00
	M.G. Huffman	Rosetown	1050.00
	F. Lang	Rosetown	1050.00
1932	Miss Kelly	Fair Play	550.00
	Mrs. F. Holden	Jubilee	10.00
	Miss S. Spafford	Jubilee	219.50
	Mrs. S. Harrop	Jubilee	66.05

	(Jan.)	Mr. D. Hubbs	Sunny Slope	750.00
	(July)	Mr. Smith-Windsor	Sunny Slope	500.00
	(Jan.)	Olive Ferguson	Rosetown	1550.00 (High School)
		Miss J. Douglas	Rosetown	1100.00
		N.L. Stewart	Rosetown	1150.00
		May Roy	Rosetown	1050.00
		Jean Ferguson	Rosetown	1000.00
		M. McPherson	Rosetown	1400.00
		G. McNee	Rosetown	1000.00
		H. Knowles	Rosetown	1000.00
		M. Gailside	Rosetown	1400.00
		M.G. Huffman	Rosetown	1000.00
		F. Lang	Rosetown	900.00
	(Nov.)	Olive Ferguson	Rosetown	1395.00 (High School)
		Miss J. Douglas	Rosetown	990.00
		N.L. Stewart	Rosetown	1035.00
		May Roy	Rosetown	915.00
		G. McNee	Rosetown	900.00
		H. Knowles	Rosetown	900.00
		M. Gailside	Rosetown	1260.00
		M.G. Huffman	Rosetown	900.00
		F. Lang	Rosetown	900.00
		G.M. Munroe	Rosetown	1200.00 (High School)
<b>1933</b>		James Strain	Fair Play	550.00
		Miss Mrytle Wright	Jubilee	363.90
	(Jan)	Olive Ferguson	Rosetown	1200.00 (High School)
		Miss J. Douglas	Rosetown	800.00
		N.L. Stewart	Rosetown	830.00
		May Roy	Rosetown	760.00
		G. McNee	Rosetown	725.00
		M. Gailside	Rosetown	1100.00
		M.G. Huffman	Rosetown	725.00
		F. Lang	Rosetown	725.00
		G.M. Munroe	Rosetown	1200.00 (High School)
		H. Brookbank	Rosetown	650.00
	(Sept)	Olive Ferguson	Rosetown	900.00 (High School)
		Miss J. Douglas	Rosetown	640.00
		N.L. Stewart	Rosetown	660.00
		May Roy	Rosetown	600.00
		G. McNee	Rosetown	570.00
		M.G. Huffman	Rosetown	570.00
		F. Lang	Rosetown	570.00
		H. Brookbank	Rosetown	570.00
<b>1934</b>		James Strain	Fair Play	550.00

	Miss Myrtle Wright	Jubilee	419.50
	Olive Ferguson	Rosetown	900.00 (High School)
	Miss J. Douglas	Rosetown	640.00
	N.L. Stewart	Rosetown	660.00
	May Roy	Rosetown	600.00
	G. McNee	Rosetown	570.00
	M.G. Huffman	Rosetown	570.00
	F. Lang	Rosetown	570.00
	H. Brookbank	Rosetown	570.00
<b>1935</b>	Muriel Mears	Fair Play	400.00
	Miss Myrtle Wright	Jubilee	400.80
	Olive Ferguson	Rosetown	1200.00 (High School)
	Miss J. Douglas	Rosetown	730.00
	N.L. Stewart	Rosetown	750.00
	May Roy	Rosetown	700.00
	G. McNee	Rosetown	700.00
	M.G. Huffman	Rosetown	700.00
	F. Lang	Rosetown	700.00
	H. Brookbank	Rosetown	700.00
	G.M. Munroe	Rosetown	1250.00 (High School)
	G. Busshe	Rosetown	1150.00 (High School)
<b>1936</b>	Muriel Mears	Fair Play	400.00
	Miss Mrytle Wright	Jubilee	496.20
	G.M. Munroe	Rosetown	1350.00 (High School)
	Lillian Stephens	Rosetown	1000.00
<b>1937</b>	Muriel Mears	Fair Play	450.00
	Miss Mrytle Wright	Jubilee	447.05
	Mr. H.D. Hubbs	Sunny Slope	500.00
<b>1938</b>	Muriel Mears	Fair Play	500.00
	Miss Myrtle Wright	Jubilee	268.80
	Miss M. McQuaig	Jubilee	224.50
	Miss McClenigghan	Sunny Slope	500.00
<b>1939</b>	Muriel Mears	Fair Play	700.00
	Miss M. McQuaig	Jubilee	140.30
	Miss E. Ramsay	Jubilee	340.70
<b>1940</b>	Florence Williamson	Fair Play	700.00
	Miss E. Ramsay	Jubilee	566.40
	Miss J. Douglas	Rosetown	850.00
	G. McNee	Rosetown	850.00
	M.G. Huffman	Rosetown	850.00
	G.M. Munroe	Rosetown	1500.00 (High School)
	G. Busshe	Rosetown	1275.00 (High School)
	Lillian Stephens	Rosetown	1100.00

	N.M. Briese	Rosetown	1050.00
	A. Friesen	Rosetown	1200.00
	G. Olafson	Rosetown	800.00
<b>1941</b>	Bessie Bell	Fair Play	700.00
	Miss E. Ramsay	Jubilee	359.25
	Miss J. Anderson	Jubilee	284.90
<b>1942</b>	Eunice Link	Fair Play	700.00
	Miss J. Anderson	Jubilee	351.73
	Miss Joan Taylor	Jubilee	305.53
<b>1943</b>	Miss Webster	Fair Play	700.00
	Miss Joan Taylor	Jubilee	407.68
	Mrs. B. Mayer	Jubilee	317.58
<b>1944</b>	Miss Webster	Fair Play	800.00
	Mrs. B. Mayer	Jubilee	438.07
	Miss Iola Ronning	Jubilee	393.13
<b>1945</b>	Miss Walshaw	Fair Play	800.00
	Miss Iola Ronning	Jubilee	512.81
	Miss E. Baird	Jubilee	489.64
<b>1946</b>	Miss Ruby Barber	Fair Play	800.00
	Miss E. Baird	Jubilee	1029.16
<b>1947</b>	Miss Ruby Barber	Fair Play	1200.00
	Miss E. Baird	Jubilee	1105.52
<b>1948</b>	Marion Johnson	Fair Play	200.00
	Miss E. Baird	Jubilee	1252.32
<b>1949</b>	Marion Johnson	Fair Play	1400.00
	Miss E. Baird	Jubilee	1332.48
<b>1950</b>	Marion Johnson	Fair Play	1400.00
	Miss E. Baird	Jubilee	1382.40

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sources: Album: "Fair Play School 1890-1963", Album: "Jubilee School #1122", Minute Book of the Sunny Slope School District #1843, Indian Head Museum; Arthur Broadbridge notes, SAB A-34.

Figures are given for all available years. In some cases documentation was missing. Notation for High School teachers is made where indicated in the records.

notes: (\*) Fair Play, Jubilee and Sunny Slope are the names of school districts surrounding the town of Indian Head.

(\*\*) "The Teacher's salary figures represent the net take home pay after all deductions such as income tax and pension fund deductions have been made". Album: "Jubilee School District #122".

## APPENDIX VII

Percentage of students attending school for any period of time,  
aged 7-14 years

	MALE	%	FEMALE	%
<b>1911</b>	<u>24,804</u> (*) 36,935(**)	67.2%	<u>23,512</u> (***) 35,491(****)	66.2%
<b>1921</b>	<u>63,857</u> 72,372	88.2%	<u>61,067</u> 69,670	87.7%
<b>1926</b>	<u>75,609</u> 82,646	91.5%	<u>73,798</u> 80,873	91.3%
<b>1931</b>	<u>84,837</u> 89,736	94.5%	<u>82,823</u> 87,829	94.3%
<b>1936</b>	<u>79,923</u> 85,135	93.9%	<u>77,592</u> 82,548	94.0%
<b>1941</b>	<u>71,267</u> 75,290	94.7%	<u>69,107</u> 73,166	94.4%

sources: Census of the Prairie Provinces 1936, Census of Canada 1941

notes: (\*) total number of male students at school aged 7-14

(\*\*) total male population aged 7-14

(\*\*\*) total number of female students at school aged 7-14

(\*\*\*\*) total female population aged 7-14

## APPENDIX VIII

Percentage of students attending school for any period of time,  
aged 15-19 years

	MALE	%	FEMALE	%
<b>1911</b>	<u>3,108</u> (*) 22,776(**)	13.6%	<u>3,333</u> (***) 17,882(****)	18.6%
<b>1921</b>	<u>7,198</u> 32,889	21.9%	<u>8,339</u> 30,393	27.4%
<b>1926</b>	<u>11,071</u> 41,787	26.5%	<u>12,071</u> 38,798	31.1%
<b>1931</b>	<u>16,212</u> 51,657	31.4%	<u>19,143</u> 49,376	38.8%
<b>1936</b>	<u>18,252</u> 52,716	34.6%	<u>20,670</u> 52,017	39.7%
<b>1941</b>	<u>19,350</u> 48,857	39.6%	<u>22,098</u> 47,152	48.9%

sources: Census of the Prairie Provinces 1936, Census of Canada 1941

notes: (\*) total number of male students at school aged 15-19

(\*\*) total male population aged 15-19

(\*\*\*) total number of female students at school aged 15-19

(\*\*\*\*) total female population aged 15-19

## APPENDIX IX

### Population by major religions for Saskatchewan and percent to total provincial population

	1901		1911		1921		1931		1941	
	#	% (*)	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Anglican	16155	17.7	76402	15.5	116355	15.4	126984	13.8	117827	13.2
Methodist	12145	13.3	79390	16.1	100970	13.3				
Presbyterian	16396	18.0	97929	16.2	162356	21.4	68034	7.4	54,927	6.1
United Church					2894	.4	243686	26.4	230795	25.8
Roman Catholic	17828	19.5	91351	18.6	147517	19.5	189925	20.6	201173	22.5
Total Anglican Methodist Presbyterian	44696	49.0	253721	51.5	396681	50.1				
Total % Anglican United Presbyterian							438704	47.6	403549	45.0

Sources: Census of Canada 1941, Vol. I, Table 48



APPENDIX X

Population by major religions for Indian Head  
and percent to total town population

	1901		1911		1921		1931		1941		1951	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Anglican	262	23.0	331	25.8	366	25.4	373	26.0	270	20.0	271	17.3
Methodist	357	31.3	304	23.7	292	20.3						
Presbyterian	383	33.6	409	31.9	512	35.6	152	10.6	263	19.5	197	12.6
United Church							689	47.9	588	43.6	751	45.3
Roman Catholic	69	6.1	195	15.2	175	12.2	134	9.3	100	7.4	203	13.0
Total Anglican, Methodist, & Presbyterian	1002	88.0	1044	81.3	1170	81.3						
Total Anglican, United, & Presbyterian							1348	93.7	1121	83.1	1219	77.7

Sources: Census of Canada 1901-1951

APPENDIX XI

Population by major religions for Rosetown  
and percentage to total town population

	1911		1921		1931		1941		1951	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Anglican	46	14.5	129	14.9	262	16.9	242	16.5	154	8.3
Methodist	79	24.9	240	27.7	8					
Presbyterian	80	25.2	298	34.5	148	9.5	193	13.1	249	13.4
United Church					754	48.6	703	47.8	980	52.6
Roman Catholic	30	14.6	138	16.0	226	14.6	252	17.1	338	18.1
Total Anglican, Methodist, & Presbyterian	205	64.7	667	77.1						
Total Anglican, United, & Presbyterian					1164	75.0	1138	77.4	1383	74.2

Sources: Census of Canada 1911-1951

**APPENDIX XII**

Attached is a list of the persons interviewed in the course of the oral history project.

Most interviews were recorded and have been transcribed. All interviews were conducted between January and July 1993.

Jean Black  
Louis Boucher  
Grace Boucher  
Yvonne Brown  
Fred Brown  
Ivy Buttar  
Mary Collins  
Eldon Colton  
Eva Colton  
Arnold Dales  
Harriett Dixon  
Hazel Downton  
Ruth Faye  
Bulah Flach  
Art Flach  
Jean Gardiner  
Mavis Gray  
Roger Gray  
Eva Guild  
Joan Halford  
Mary Hamilton  
Andy Hamilton  
Wayne Horsman  
Winnie Kerr  
Irene Kidd  
Lillian Leach  
Calvin Lowey

Marjorie Milroy  
Florence Moffatt  
Hazel Nerby  
Doris Pals  
Lloyd Peterson  
Muriel Peterson  
Jo Prior  
Beth Prior  
Joe Prior  
Connie Prior  
Myrtle Prior  
Murial Prior  
Alice Scrivens  
Isobel Simpson  
Jean Smith Windsor  
Freddie Stanger  
Kathleen Stangland  
Graham Staples  
Evelyn Staples  
Edna Stewart  
Myra Stilborn  
Art Stilborn  
Ida Thompson  
Edith Walter  
Connie Willerth  
Doug Wilson  
Kay Wilson

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Wayne Horsman, personal collection, Indian Head.

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