

**“A PLACE OF AWAKENING”: THE FORMATION OF THE
WINNIPEG INDIAN AND MÉTIS FRIENDSHIP CENTRE 1954-1964**

BY,

LESLIE ELIZABETH MACDONALD HALL

A Thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

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Winnipeg, Manitoba

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the Winnipeg Indian and Métis Friendship Centre (IMFC) during the period of 1954-1964. The IMFC records combined with the Social Planning Council records and the Beatrice Brigden files at the Archives of Manitoba provide the archival component to the research. Interviews with people involved in the early years of the IMFC including members of the Board of Directors, Indian Advisory Council, church workers and volunteers provide the oral history component to the research. The combination of these resources allowed a fuller perspective on the dynamic between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal administrative bodies at the Centre. Although it is often difficult to combine oral and written sources because of the different contexts in which they are constructed, a critical examination of both was necessary for this thesis in order to include Aboriginal perspectives. The archival sources are considerably lacking in Aboriginal voice during the early years because the Indian Advisory Council, the main mechanism for Aboriginal influence at the Centre, left no written records. This thesis will argue that the early years of the IMFC are significant because of the co-operative and inclusive dynamic between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people involved in the Centre. Aboriginal people actively sought and used the opportunities for leadership through the Indian Advisory Council and by seeking positions on the staff and the Board of Directors. Meanwhile the non-Aboriginal Board of Directors and Executive Director encouraged Aboriginal involvement and followed Aboriginal suggestions for programming and organisation at the IMFC. This dynamic of co-operation, and the shift to an nearly all Aboriginal Board of Directors, and an entirely Aboriginal staff, is a successful example of the community development movement popular at that time.

Acknowledgements

Writing the acknowledgements to my thesis makes me aware of the incredible support network of people who have helped me along the way, and I could not be more grateful to my friends, family, professors, and members of the IMFC for their help and guidance. I would not have been able to complete my MA without their constant support and guidance, I only hope to be able to return the favour someday.

Thank you to the people to allowed me to interview them, without these oral accounts this would be a very different paper. For the patience and time you took in answering my questions and helping me to understand the excitement and significance of the early years of the Friendship Centre I would like to thank: Percy Bird, Billy Jo DelaRonde, Grant Froman, Mary Guilbault, Bernice Pilling, John Pilling, Stan McKay, Verna McKay, and Flora Zaharia. Also thank you to the IMFC for assisting me with my interviews and allowing me access to their records.

Thank you to my family and friends who have been a constant source of inspiration and support. Thank you to my Winnipeg family - Kathy, Paul, Elliot, and Jay- for giving me a place to stay, many delicious meals, wonderful company, thoughtful advice, and occasionally offering a little cousinly nagging. My parents also read many of the earlier drafts of this thesis, helped typed the bibliography, gave me library related advice, and provided many other helpful suggestions and criticisms. I would also like to thank my friends for their good humour and unwavering patience in my constant thesis talk, as well as for editing assorted drafts and term papers, helping me prepare conference presentations, listening to me present parts of my thesis, and for suggesting books, articles, and many other helpful things, especially for helping me to not lose sight of the big picture. In particular I would like to thank to (alphabetically) thank Riel Dion, Kathryn Gibbons, Lea Langille, and Jean Lomas. I hope to be able to return the favour soon.

The professors at the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg have also been an invaluable source of knowledge and guidance. This thesis began as a term paper for Gerald Friesen's class in Western Canadian History, I appreciate his help in assisting me to find a topic suited to my interests. My classmates were also very helpful in offering suggestions for my term paper that were very useful when expanding it into a thesis. I am also particularly thankful for the thoughtful suggestions and challenging criticisms provided by my advisor Adele Perry, and the members of my committee Alexander Freund, Gerald Friesen, and Chris Trott. All provided me with assistance during the year by suggesting sources and answering my many questions on oral history methodology and other topics. During my defense the committee offered challenging questions and comments that greatly helped me to refine this thesis. All errors and oversights are mine alone.

I would also like to thank the organisers and participants at the "Intersecting Worlds: Rural and Urban Aboriginal Issues Graduate Student Colloquium" and the "Fort Garry Lectures in History" for allowing me to present earlier versions of chapters two and three. The questions and suggestions I received at these conferences were very helpful. Also thank you to the Alumni Association and the Intersecting Worlds Conference Committee for providing the necessary travel funds. Finally, I would like to thank the Winnipeg Foundation for providing the grant that inspired me to choose a Winnipeg based topic, and funded my research.

For the people at the Indian and Métis Friendship Centre

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Winnipeg Indian and Métis Friendship Centre (IMFC) was the result of attempts by federal and provincial governments, community groups, and Aboriginal leaders to address the so-called “urban Indian problem.” The creation and early years of the Centre were an example of a mutually beneficial alliance negotiated between Aboriginal leaders and Welfare Council volunteers with federal and provincial policy makers in order to address the needs of the urban Aboriginal people in Winnipeg. Between 1954 and 1958 the annual Winnipeg Indian and Métis Conferences were sponsored by the Welfare Planning Council of Winnipeg as research and discussion forums relating to the needs of Aboriginal people in Winnipeg. Aboriginal people had limited opportunities to participate during the first few years of the Conferences, although they were included in increasing numbers over time. In 1958, at the fourth annual Conference, a resolution was passed to open a referral centre to assist Aboriginal migrants to the city in accessing social services. After a year of planning by a provisional Board of Directors selected by the Winnipeg Welfare Council, and by an Indian Advisory Council selected by the Board of Directors, the IMFC opened in the spring of 1959. The IMFC became a member organisation of the Welfare Planning Council, and many of the people involved in the IMFC continued their association with the Welfare Planning Council through the annual Indian and Métis Conferences.

The Aboriginal people involved in the Centre initially gained most of their influence through an “Indian Advisory Council” which was an administrative body composed of Aboriginal people elected by people who used the Centre. The Council was

responsible for making recommendations to the Board of Directors on programming and staffing, and for raising funds to supplement government grants. The majority of the Board of Directors was initially composed of non-Aboriginal people appointed by the Welfare Planning Council of Winnipeg, and nominated for their experience in fundraising and in other community organisations. Sixteen of the eighteen original Board members were non-Aboriginal business leaders and community volunteers known for their experience in leading welfare organisations. The two Aboriginal members of the Board were appointed by the Advisory Council when the Centre first opened. The significance of the two separate organising bodies at the Centre is found in the co-operative relationship between the two. As positions opened on the Board they were filled by members of the Indian Advisory Council. The Board of Directors relied on the Indian Advisory Council to research and articulate the needs of urban Aboriginal people. The inclusion of Aboriginal people in research and design of programming at the IMFC, is significant because the parent organisation, the Welfare Planning Council, did not include many Aboriginal people in the same tasks. The relationship between the Board of Directors and the Indian Advisory Council appears to be unequal because the Council was responsible for much of the planning and day-to-day operation of the Centre but did not have final authority over programming initiatives. Although the Board of Directors reported to the Welfare Council and had final authority over decisions at the IMFC, the Board based their decisions on the recommendations of the Indian Advisory Council. The Board actually appears to have considered their role at the IMFC as more of an advisory group to the Aboriginal people on the Indian Advisory Council.

The creation of separate administrative spheres of influence at the IMFC was in keeping with the community development movement which was popular among welfare workers at that time. Community development is the practice of concerned members of the dominant culture (in this case the non-Aboriginal Board of Directors) creating the opportunity for the marginalised culture (in this case the Indian Advisory Council) to have local involvement in creating, and self-directing, programming.¹ This is not to be confused with the failed federal and provincial Community Development Programs (CDP) of the same time period. The community development principle of encouraging local involvement in decision-making is reflected first in the Board of Director's consultations with Aboriginal people during the planning phase before the IMFC opened, and by the creation of the Indian Advisory Council; second in the Board of Director's willingness to turn positions on the Board and staff over to Aboriginal people. The relationship created by elites attempting to create "community development" for Aboriginal people can be construed as a form of internal colonialism. However, since in the case of the IMFC Aboriginal people were ultimately allowed to take over the administration and staffing at the Centre, community development seems to be a not very destructive agent of colonialism.

The years leading up to the resolution to open the Centre, 1954 to 1958, were dominated primarily by non-Aboriginal people through the Welfare Council. Similarly the positions of official authority during the first few years of the IMFC were occupied by a primarily non-Aboriginal staff and Board of Directors. Though the positions of influence that were most visible to the public were occupied by non-Aboriginal people,

the early years of the IMFC are actually significant for the level of Aboriginal involvement and mutual co-operation. The Board and Executive Director made a concentrated effort to include Aboriginal people in the research into the needs of the Aboriginal population and in decisions regarding programming and staffing at the Centre. Although memories of this process vary and the written record is occasionally vague, it is clear that the original Executive Director of the Centre, Joan Adams, and the majority of the Board did deliberately include Aboriginal people in decisions at all levels of the organisation through the Indian Advisory Council. It is also significant that Aboriginal people actively sought positions of power or authority at the Centre through both the Indian Advisory Council and the Board of Directors in order to have influence in the organisation, even if it was initially in a less “powerful” or visible nature. This indicates that Aboriginal people at the IMFC were active agents in researching the needs of Aboriginal people in Winnipeg, and in creating programming to meet these needs.

What is unclear in both the written and oral sources is the level of consensus between Aboriginal people at the Centre, and the Board of Directors. It is possible that, although the Board Minutes indicate an intention to turn the Board and staff positions over to Aboriginal people, this intention was not fully made clear to the Aboriginal people at the IMFC. Whether or not all Aboriginal members of the IMFC were aware of the Board’s willingness to encourage the shift to an all Aboriginal Board and staff, there is a strong indication that Aboriginal people at the Centre used the opportunities made available at the Centre to their advantage regardless, and that it was a co-operative venture between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. During the first five years the

members of the Indian Advisory Council gradually increased to make up two thirds of the Board of Directors and by 1963 the staff at the Centre was also entirely Aboriginal. It appears that the early years of the Centre were thus a series of co-operative partnerships, or strategic alliances between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

The IMFC is also significant as the first one of its kind in Canada, and because it served as a model for the creation of similar friendship centres across the country, as well as the Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres and the National Association of Friendship Centres. This thesis will cover the period of 1954 to 1964, which was a significant period of change for Aboriginal people in Canada. The Aboriginal population in Canada increased in population post-war, and the population demographic changed to include more people who live in urban centres. Due to the inadequacies of census data on Aboriginal people at this time, exact statistics on population changes are difficult to locate. It is clear, however, that similar to the rest of Canada, Aboriginal people increasingly lived in urban centres, and had a high birth rate in the post-World War II era.²

The years 1954 to 1964 were characterised by significant public attention to the problems faced by Aboriginal people in urban areas, including federal, provincial, and local research initiatives. This thesis will seek to answer the following questions: What led to the opening of the IMFC? How was the IMFC organised, and to what extent were Aboriginal people involved in this process? What did the Friendship Centre do to address the needs of the Aboriginal people in Winnipeg from 1958 to 1963? This thesis will examine the four years leading up to the opening of the Centre, 1954-1958, the year

of set-up between 1958-1959, and approximately the first five years of the Centre's operation.

The first chapter of this thesis will explain the sources used, discuss terminology, and review the relevant literature. Chapter two will briefly examine the historical context which led to the opening of the IMFC and argue that there were significant needs in the Aboriginal population that were not sufficiently addressed by existing services. Chapter three will discuss the various interest groups that met at the Winnipeg Indian and Métis Conference from 1954 to 1958 and resolved in 1958 to open the IMFC. Chapter four will examine the set-up of the Centre and its administration. It will suggest that although Aboriginal influence at the Centre was initially limited primarily to the Indian Advisory Council, Aboriginal people at the Centre were actively involved in the direction of the Centre. Chapter four will also examine the programming at the Centre and demonstrate that although plagued by difficulties in securing sufficient long term funding, the intense dedication of the Centre's staff, Board of Directors, Indian Advisory Council, volunteers and clientele enabled the Centre to address the needs of the Aboriginal population in Winnipeg. Chapter five will offer conclusions.

The fourth annual Winnipeg Welfare Council Indian and Métis Conference, in 1958, resolved to open a referral agency to provide guidance on matters of employment, housing, education, health and other community services for Aboriginal people moving to Winnipeg.³ Initial funding for the Centre was provided in the form of three grants, the first from the Winnipeg Foundation for \$3,500, the second and third from the Province of Manitoba and the Federal Citizenship Branch for \$4,000 per year for a two year trial

period. After the successful two year trial period the IMFC continued to be funded by assorted limited term grants from the federal, provincial, and municipal governments and various community agencies. The three primary goals of the Centre were to help Aboriginal newcomers adjust to urban life, to inform the larger community about the problems of Aboriginal people in the city in order to help resolve the problems, and to work with community groups, churches and the government to provide improved access to health and welfare services.⁴ According to Mary Guilbault, an Indian Advisory Council member, “it was always known that the Friendship Centre would be used as a stepping stone into society for everything - that [the Centre] would be a learning place...we never intended to have the Friendship Centre be used as a place of assimilation.”⁵ An Indian Eskimo Association bulletin on the IMFC described it as “a place where the Indian can gain strength, confidence in himself, and encouragement to take his place with respect and dignity in the community.”⁶

One of the more difficult aspects of writing Aboriginal history is the profoundly political nature of terms used in the relevant literature. For this thesis I have taken into account that the vocabulary used when discussing Aboriginal people in Canada is extremely political and terms that are currently socially acceptable were often non-existent during the 1950s and 1960s. In this vein, words such as ‘Indian’ and ‘Half-Breed’ are rarely accepted in current literature without a very self-conscious examination of the attached colonial baggage. Currently, ‘Aboriginal’ is often used as a blanket term for people identifying with any form of ‘First Nations’ identity whether or not they have received ‘status’ from the federal government. For the purposes of this thesis,

'Aboriginal' will be used for the different First Nations and Métis populations within Manitoba, unless quoting directly from a source that uses a different term, or when referring to a proper noun. This is in keeping with current academic practice and the labels currently used by the IMFC, which uses 'Indian' and 'Métis' when referring to individuals, and uses 'Aboriginal' when referring to the members of the Friendship Centre as a whole.⁷

It is important to note that while the people at the Centre identify with different Aboriginal language and culture groups, the Centre was intended to be a meeting place for all Aboriginal people regardless of legal status or band membership. The Centre did not differentiate between First Nations, status, non-status, or Métis people when developing programming. Referral counsellors took into consideration 'status' for individuals if it could be used to gain access to needed programs or services outside the Centre. Within the Centre the issue of status/non-status/First Nations/Métis had little impact on the programs and on funding received from community groups such as the Winnipeg Foundation and the Community Chest. Funding, in the early years, was generally intended to be inclusive of all Aboriginal people because there were few precedents at that time for Aboriginal funding administration in urban centres. The IMFC did petition the federal government for additional funding based on the number of status peoples using the Centre although there was no distinction made between status and non-status in access to programs at the IMFC. Generally status peoples were registered for status on reserves and received health, welfare, and education from the federal government. When Aboriginal people moved to urban centres in the 1950s they

experienced similar problems of marginalisation and discrimination regardless of status.

The alignment of First Nations and Métis groups for the creation of the IMFC makes sense if Aboriginality is treated as a form of ethnicity “where ethnic identity is based on competition for resources, economic and political from outside the ethnic groups.”⁸

Although the Aboriginal population is culturally and linguistically diverse, most urban Aboriginal migrants shared similar economic and social disadvantages particularly in urban centres where the federal government attempted to avoid continuing to provide services for registered Indians. During the 1950s and 1960s the federal government was promoting ‘citizenship’ and the ‘integration’ of Aboriginal people into Canadian society. However, the government openly acknowledged that Aboriginal people preferred the term integration to assimilation.⁹ This complicates the understanding of documents produced during this time period where ‘integration’ is often used when speaking of programs that would now be considered assimilationist. Verna Kirkness, a former Board member at the IMFC, and other people interviewed for this study, defined integration as

“the process whereby the individual and/or the group is given the opportunity to participate fully in the social and economic progress of society...while retaining his identity and certain aspects of his culture. Assimilation, on the other hand, differs in that the individual or group adopts fully the culture of another group, giving up his own entirely.”¹⁰ For the purposes of this thesis the word ‘assimilation’ will mean an internalisation of typically Euro-Canadian middle class values resulting in a disappearance of Aboriginal identity. ‘Integration’ will encompass the dual challenge of maintaining an Aboriginal identity while living and functioning in a predominantly non-

Aboriginal environment.

The primary sources utilised for this thesis were both written and oral. When studying Aboriginal history oral sources are of particular value due to the typically oral nature of Aboriginal cultures in Canada. Thus I made an extra effort to seek interviews with founding members of the IMFC. The written sources used are located at the Archives of Manitoba (AM) where the written and photographic records of the Friendship Centre reside. The Archives of Manitoba hold the IMFC records from 1954 to 1982, including Board of Directors meeting minutes, pamphlets, letters and other publications and case files for referrals. The records are ‘restricted’ and it was necessary to receive written permission from the IMFC to use them. Access was granted to the majority of the records. However, documents that contain sensitive information, such as referral files, counselling records, and court worker records, remain restricted. For this thesis, the available Indian and Métis Conference minutes and notes, IMFC Board minutes, annual reports, and miscellaneous letters and publications relating to the years 1954-1964 were used. Other collections consulted at the Archives of Manitoba included the Social Planning Council (formerly the Welfare Planning Council) records and the Beatrice Brigden files. The sources from AM were supplemented by the Legislative Library scrapbooks of newspaper clippings for the pertinent years.

The IMFC records contained at AM are incomplete and are missing many Board of Directors meeting minutes. There were nearly no minutes from the Indian Advisory Council meetings, although there was the occasional letter or other document produced by the Council. The typically oral nature of Aboriginal cultures in Canada may have

played a role in the nearly complete lack of written records from the Aboriginal members of the Centre in the early years. The lack of funding, space and time for accurate record keeping during the early years of the Centre may have also played a role in the limited nature of the written record. The Beatrice Bridgen files provided many of the missing Board of Directors minutes, plus minutes from the planning phase of the Centre. Beatrice Bridgen was a non-Aboriginal Board of Directors member, and a member of other community organisations. She was involved in many community organisations including the Welfare Planning Council Indian and Métis Conferences; the Brigden records are kept at AM and are available to the public.¹¹ The remaining archival sources used for this thesis were from the Social Planning Council files, which also require a letter of permission to access. The Social Planning Council files provided more detailed committee minutes from the Indian and Métis Conference sub-committees as well as information on community development in Manitoba.

The oral history interviews conducted for this thesis are another important primary source. The people interviewed for this study were located through a variety of channels. The IMFC records provided potential names which were augmented with recommendations from professors and participants at the “Intersecting Worlds: Rural and Urban Aboriginal Issues” graduate student colloquium, University of Manitoba, March 6, 2004. Mary Guilbault, an Aboriginal elder at the Centre, was recommended by the current executive director of the IMFC as well as by other community members. Guilbault was a founding member of the Urban Indian Association as well as the IMFC. She was an active participant in the set-up of the Centre and appears many times in the

records. Verna McKay is a former United Church worker and volunteer at the Centre. She worked with Aboriginal people as a church worker and volunteer, and worked with Aboriginal women's organisations in later years. Percy Bird, also an elder at the Centre, was on the Board of Directors, and on the board of other Aboriginal organisations in Winnipeg during the 1960s and 1970s. Grant Froman was employed by the Children's Aid Society of Winnipeg as a child welfare worker. His office was located at the Friendship Centre although the position was not directly affiliated with the Centre, this was intended to make his clients feel comfortable coming to his office for guidance. In actual practice, however, Froman spent the majority of his time on site visits and not at the IMFC. Stan McKay Jr., Verna McKay's step-son and current Native Circle Conference co-ordinator, was a youth member of the Centre while attending the nearby University of Winnipeg after completing his tenure at residential school. Dorothy Betz, also an elder at the Centre, was a Indian Advisory Council and Board of Directors member and was asked to take a position as court worker in 1965. Flora Zaharia, an elder originally from the Blood Reserve in Alberta, was a member of the Board of Directors, and expressed keen interest in increasing the involvement of Aboriginal people at the IMFC. Rev. Mr/s Pilling, now retired, are non-Aboriginal citizens who were interested in Aboriginal concerns and attended the Indian and Métis Conferences. They also volunteered at the Centre during the early years. All those interviewed currently reside in Manitoba, except the Pillings who live in Calgary and were recommended to me by an archivist at the University of Calgary.

The debate about the uses of oral sources is of particular importance to this thesis.

It is now generally common practice to regard both written and oral sources as constructed texts and to be critical of all types of sources.¹² Julie Cruikshank suggests that combining oral and written accounts does not necessarily provide the “real story” and that sources cannot be removed from their cultural contexts. Instead oral and written sources have to be understood as different “windows on the way the past is constructed and discussed in different contexts, from the perspectives of actors enmeshed in culturally distinct networks of social relationships.”¹³ By combining oral and written sources I am not eliminating the limitations of either source. Instead, the combination of different mediums of narrative will provide a fuller context for the history of the IMFC. Both written and oral sources have strengths and limits in the context of the Friendship Centre. To exclude oral sources from this thesis would severely limit our ability to understand the history of the IMFC because the written record contains few Aboriginal perspectives. In the context of this paper the exclusion of the written sources would eliminate the perspective of the first executive director and many of the Board of Director’s members and Welfare Council members as they have since passed away.¹⁴ This thesis will use both written and oral accounts to create a more balanced description of how the Centre was created and administered during the early years. The interviews provided information not available in the official record of the Centre as well as clarification of documents in the written records, while the archival sources provided clarification and context to the interviews. Both types of sources must be kept in context and be used sensitively with an awareness of how they were constructed. Collectively the use of both oral and written sources provided me with a richer understanding of the early years of the IMFC.

It is important to consider the process through which the oral sources were generated for this thesis, and to situate myself in these interviews. Joan Sangster argues that we need to avoid “treating oral history only as a panacea designed to fill in the blanks in women’s or traditional history” because in doing so we disregard the process of oral history created by the interactions between interviewer and interviewee.¹⁵ I am an outsider to the Centre and to many of the experiences of the people at the Centre. My background is female, young, white, middle class, and educated. I often found it difficult to find people willing to volunteer to be interviewed. Those who did consent to be interviewed had the option to have their name remain confidential, yet none chose to do so. Interviewees also had the option to self-direct the interview. At the beginning of the session I explained that I am a history student planning to write about the history of the Friendship Centre and that I would like them to tell me about their experiences at the Centre. I suggested that they tell me all they could about their involvement at the Centre and after that I would ask any questions that had not been addressed and we could continue to discuss. When their initial narrative stopped I asked questions from a list of topics I had formed based on what interested me from the records, and what was brought up in their initial narrative. All had the option of refusing to answer questions for any reason and to stop the interview at any time although none did.¹⁶

All interviews were recorded, and copies were given to the participants. Each individual had the option of having the original tape destroyed or donated to the Friendship Centre. I transcribed as many interviews as possible, unfortunately due to time and financial constraints, I was unable to transcribe all the interviews. The ones not

transcribed were conducted during the second or third research trip. It should also be noted that during the interview I would stop recording whenever the participants asked. I felt that it was important to allow the individual volunteers control over what was recorded and what was not. All participants were also given a draft copy of this thesis to comment on. I received responses from all except for Flora Zaharia and Percy Bird. Those who responded were positive about the thesis and primarily offered typographic corrections. The distribution of a draft copy also opened unofficial discussions between myself and the participants about the potential for future research. Mary Guilbault, in particular, had many suggestions for expansion of this thesis which would make excellent topics for future research. Unfortunately, due to the constraints imposed by the time and space allotments for this project, I was unable to explore Guilbault's suggestions for further research.

My interpretation of the oral history interviews is not based exclusively on the written transcript but instead on a combination of factors. The unspoken signals such as posture, laughter, smiles, and pauses, are all things that are not totally reflected in the transcripts. To attempt to mediate this I took notes during and after interviews in order to record my observations about how people responded to the interview. These notes, and my general impressions during the interview, shaped my interpretation of people's narratives. Celia Haig-Brown, in her ethnography of the Native Education Centre in Vancouver, suggests that although context and expression is lost in the transcription of oral sources "there is some kind of truth inherent in at least getting the words right."¹⁷ I have tried, when transcribing quotes from interviews, to carefully situate them in the text

and remain faithful to the intent and context of the quote as well as to transcribe the words verbatim.

The literature directly relating to the IMFC is limited to only a few articles. The friendship centre movement in general is included in some monographs on urbanisation and programming for urban Aboriginal people. The literature relating specifically to the Winnipeg Friendship Centre during the early years is limited to two articles. The first article, a non-scholarly piece by E.J. Coulter in *The Beaver* in 1966, identified the need for friendship centres in light of the increased migration of Aboriginal people to urban centres after the war.¹⁸ The second article on the IMFC in particular is Harvey Bostrom's examination of the Winnipeg IMFC as well as other initiatives in Saskatchewan and Manitoba and the changing federal and provincial roles in the early 1960s.¹⁹ Other literature pertaining directly to the Winnipeg Centre was produced after the 1995 Royal Commission on Aboriginal People and published in *Windspeaker* and *Canadian Dimension*.²⁰ The articles found in these sources detail the continued struggles for funding for friendship centres.

Literature pertaining to the friendship centre movement in general is also found in discussions on programs for Aboriginal people. Evelyn Peters argues that Friendship Centres were the main way the Citizenship Branch of the federal government became involved in urban centres during the 1960s.²¹ Helen Buckley, in *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare*, discusses friendship centres in the context of the other program offered to Aboriginal people during this era, including a description of the failed federal community development program in the mid to late 1960s.²² James Frideres examines friendship

centres in the context of organisational responses to Aboriginal urbanisation and suggests that a lack of resources, lack of employment, and lack of power prevented friendship centres from helping Aboriginal people in any substantive manner over time.²³ In contrast, David Newhouse, in his article “The Invisible Infrastructure: Urban Aboriginal Institutions and Organisations,” suggests that “friendship centres have assumed important and significant roles in the development of urban Aboriginal communities.”²⁴ Newhouse argues that friendship centres are seen as “closer, more responsive to, and accountable to, Aboriginal communities.”²⁵

Other literature on the history of Aboriginal policy and programming in Canada addresses urban Aboriginal people. Reeves and Frideres examine urban Aboriginal organisations in Alberta. They identify four main categories of organisations: public, acculturation, accommodating, and member.²⁶ Peter McFarlane explores the federal policies in the context of George Manual’s Indian Movement.²⁷ Evelyn Peters examines the creation and changes in federal Aboriginal policy from 1945 to 1975.²⁸ Sally Weaver examines the creation of federal Aboriginal policy during the 1960s, particularly the creation and rejection of the 1969 *White Paper*.²⁹ Hugh Shewell’s book “Enough to Keep Them Alive”: *Indian Welfare in Canada, 1873-1965*, examines federal Aboriginal welfare policy.³⁰

Some literature on urban Aboriginal programming pays particular attention to the jurisdictional disputes between the federal and provincial government that characterised policy development during the 1960s. Journalists Pauline Comeau and Aldo Santin of the *Winnipeg Free Press* examine the situation of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal

relations in Canada. In the chapter dedicated to urban Aboriginal people they examine the on-going jurisdictional debates between reserves and urban centres. The authors suggest that Aboriginal organisations will continue to struggle for support because of a lack of common goals.³¹ *In Search of a Future: A Submission on the Migration of Native People*, by Stanley Fulham was prepared for, and submitted to, the provincial government of Manitoba and the federal government in 1971.³² The submission was initially supported by the Manitoba Métis Federation and the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, although the Manitoba Métis Federation later withdrew its support.³³ In this proposal to address the problems faced by Aboriginal people migrating to cities the suggestions included: housing, counselling, recreation, education, economic development, employment and cultural programming.

Literature published by government commissions is also significant to this thesis. The Lagasse Report, commissioned by the Provincial Government of Manitoba, and published in 1959, explored the needs of the Aboriginal population in Manitoba, particularly the Métis people. Jean Lagasse found problems of housing, employment, health and education were significant and proposed a series of solutions.³⁴ Lagasse's other work included several articles on Community Development published after his initial study.³⁵ The federally commissioned *Hawthorn Report*, published in 1966 and 1967, studied the needs of Aboriginal people and recommended a status of "citizen's plus." The report detailed the needs of Aboriginal people, particularly identifying problems in securing adequate health, education, housing and employment as well as the over representation of Aboriginal people in the court system.³⁶ The *White Paper*,

published two years later, in 1969, “proposed a global termination of all special treatment of Indians including the Indian Act.”³⁷ The *White Paper* was swiftly decried by Aboriginal people and the policies proposed in it never came to official fruition.³⁸ *The Hawthorn Report* was generally well received by the Aboriginal population in Canada and was used as a main reference in the opposition to the *White Paper*.³⁹ Harold Cardinal’s 1969 book *The Unjust Society* declared that the *White Paper* was a programme of extermination through assimilation.⁴⁰ William Wuttunee, however, presented the minority position that the *White Paper* was a “dramatic breakthrough” for Aboriginal people, in his book *Ruffled Feathers*.⁴¹

Literature on migration or urbanisation of Aboriginal people also provides context for this thesis. Although some authors use the terms interchangeably, the use of the word migration refers only to the action of people moving from one place to another, while urbanisation can suggest “a transition from one form of social and cultural organisation to another.”⁴² Most of the literature on migration actually addresses the urbanisation process for Aboriginal people. Hugh Brody’s *Indians on Skid Row* describes an urban ghetto and the lives of Aboriginal people living there in the late 1960s.⁴³ James Kerri’s PhD dissertation *Urban Native Canadians: the adjustment of Amerindians to the city of Winnipeg (Canada)* studied the factors involved in Aboriginal people adjusting to the city and found that although the level of educational opportunities available before moving to Winnipeg played a role in people’s adjustment to the urban environment, the major factor in adjustment is actually the ability to obtain steady employment at a reasonable salary.⁴⁴

Other literature on urbanisation focusses on the “Indian problem” created by

migration. Authors such as Mark Nagler and Edgar Dosman argue that the “traditional” culture of Aboriginal people is drastically different from the “modern” culture of the city and a process of cultural change is necessary in order for Aboriginal people to adjust to the urban environment.⁴⁵ Some authors challenged this interpretation but the overriding emphasis was on the incompatibility of “traditional” cultures and urban life.⁴⁶ Joan Ablon argues that Aboriginal values work in opposition to white middle values and make it difficult to adjust to the city.⁴⁷ In contrast, literature produced in the 1980s has very little mention of cultural incompatibility and instead frames the problems of urban Aboriginal people in terms of cycles of poverty and the residential school legacy.⁴⁸

The Winnipeg Indian and Métis Friendship Centre is an example of programming designed to address the needs of Aboriginal people who migrated to Winnipeg in the 1950s and 1960s. The creation of the IMFC is significant for the inclusion of Aboriginal input in the design and early years of the Centre, particularly considering the lack of Aboriginal input at the Indian and Métis Conference that passed the motion to open the Centre. The partnership between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people may not have been equal in terms of “real” or “official” power, but the design of the Centre and the programming at the Centre both indicate at least some level of Aboriginal involvement. The movement from non-Aboriginal staff and Board of Directors to an all Aboriginal staff, and a predominantly Aboriginal Board in 1964 is also significant.

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Chapter 2: What was the need for the IMFC?

This chapter will review the historical context of Aboriginal policy in Canada and how it related to the needs of Aboriginal people in Winnipeg in the 1950s and 1960s. It will assert that there were significant needs in the Aboriginal population that were not being met by the existing social services and Aboriginal policies at that time. The needs identified through the IMFC records, Welfare Council records, and oral history interviews were: difficulties in achieving adequate housing; access to social services; employment; and loneliness or a lack of social networks caused by marginalization and discrimination. I will also discuss some of the possible origins of these needs, including the legacy of residential schools and poverty.

In order to contextualise the shift to urbanisation and the resulting issues faced by Aboriginal people in Winnipeg, it is necessary to briefly review the history of Canada's administration of Aboriginal policy. John Tobias argues that "protection, civilisation, and assimilation have always been the goals of Canada's Indian policy."¹ These policies settled the majority of First Nations people onto reserves to "protect" them and provided educational and religious training to "civilize" them for the eventual "assimilation" into the rest of Canadian society.² The early years of federal Aboriginal policy, through the Royal Proclamation of 1763, adhered to a policy of relative non-interference in Aboriginal social and cultural practices. In 1815 the policy of 'civilization' of Aboriginal people began to be expanded through a combination of religious education and the establishment of reserve lands. The 1857 *Act for the Gradual Civilization of the Indian Tribes in the Canadas* created a paradox in Aboriginal policy that has continued to shape

policy to this day. Tobias describes the policy:

After stipulating in the preamble that the measure was designed to encourage civilization of the Indian, remove all legal distinctions between Indians and other Canadians, and integrate them fully into Canadian society, the legislation proceeded to define who was an Indian and then to state that such a person could not be accorded the rights and privileges accorded to European Canadians until the Indian could prove that he could read and write either the French or English language, was free of debt, and of good moral character...Thus, the legislation to remove all legal distinctions between Indians and Euro-Canadians actually established them.³

The civilization policy was intended to result in the assimilation of Aboriginal people into the Euro-Canadian society. In 1867 the British North America (BNA) Act stated that “Indians and Lands for Indians” fell exclusively under federal jurisdiction, in part because there were no provincial governments in the western territories at that time.⁴ During the following decade the federal government expanded its Aboriginal policy to include the treaty system in western Canada. By the time of the “Indian Act” in 1876 the policy of assimilation through ‘civilization’ was firmly established.⁵

Beginning in the 1880s, Aboriginal policy began to more actively interfere in the social and cultural life of Aboriginal people to speed up the ‘civilization’ process. In 1880 Aboriginal administration gained a separate department of Indian Affairs under the administration of the federal Department of the Interior. During the next two decades cultural activities such as the Potlatch and Pow Wow were prohibited.⁶ This was followed by the First World War and economic depression during which time little attention was paid to revising Aboriginal policy and the assimilationist stance remained

the same.⁷

The Second World War was followed by unprecedented public attention to Aboriginal policy and an emerging consciousness of the plight of Aboriginal people both on reserves and in urban centres. Some Aboriginal people went to war, and when they returned to Canada, they did so with a basis of comparison of the inequalities and oppressiveness of the reserve system. The non-Aboriginal population including the general public, service organisations, and the media, also began to take note of the imbalance between reserve life and the rest of Canada and this awareness began to develop into the desire to research and address the needs of Aboriginal people. Some veterans' organizations, churches, and other community groups mounted a campaign to investigate "Indian administration and the conditions on Indian reserves."⁸ The campaign resulted in the establishment of a Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Indian Act from 1946 to 1948.

The 1946-48 Special Joint Parliamentary Committee recommended revisions to the Indian Act with the intention of helping Aboriginal people with the transition from ward-ship to full citizenship. The Committee report suggested that federal and provincial governments co-operate in order to "bring about the economic assimilation of Indians 'into the body politic of Canada.'"⁹ This recommendation shaped the post-war policy of assimilation through the rhetoric of citizenship.¹⁰ In 1949 the relocation of the Indian Affairs Branch to a newly created Department of Citizenship and Immigration reflected the changes in federal policy. Prime Minister St. Laurent stated that "having Citizenship, Immigration, and Indian Affairs in the one department would indicate that the purpose of

the activities of that department was to make Canadian citizens of those who were born here of the original inhabitants of the territory” as well as immigrant families born in other countries.¹¹ The citizenship policies shifted Aboriginal policy back to the policy of less overt cultural intervention. For instance there were no more prohibitions on Pow Wows or Potlatches, there was an increased emphasis on gradual assimilation of Aboriginal people than in the policies of 1880-1900. The federal objective was primarily to “integrate” Aboriginal people into the “great and expanding economy with full rights and responsibilities of citizenship.”¹² Citizenship and its rhetoric of integration was simply another way of encouraging the assimilation of Aboriginal people into the larger Canadian society, which would negate the need for federal funding and provision of social services.

The citizenship legislation, the first of its kind in Canada, was enacted in 1947 and was “designed to create a sense of unity among Canadians.”¹³ Paul Martin Sr. hoped to create a feeling of “legitimate Canadianism” and a “consciousness of a common purpose and common interests as Canadians” with the new citizenship legislation.¹⁴ The Citizenship Branch regarded the place of Aboriginal culture in urban life as “highly circumscribed” because ‘traditional’ Aboriginal culture was antithetical to urban life. This denial of Aboriginal culture was profoundly political and denied Aboriginal people the right to retain a sense of cultural identity. Instead, it suggested that in order for Aboriginal people to become ‘successful’ citizens they had to abandon their cultural and historical heritage and acculturate to the dominant non-Aboriginal society. In her study on Aboriginal policy change between 1945 and 1975 Evelyn Peters argues that “culture change” took

precedence as an organising framework for policy at this time.¹⁵ By 1949 the federal government formalised its new approach to assimilation, extending “the full rights of citizenship gradually to Indian persons,” by moving the Department of Indian Affairs out of the Department of Mines and Resources to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.¹⁶

The 1951 revised Indian Act reduced the amount of government influence in Aboriginal cultural life. Prohibitions on Potlatches and Pow Wows were abolished and Aboriginal people were allowed to consume liquor in public establishments. Although the Act appeared more open to cultural pluralism, the principle of assimilation that had guided policy formation was maintained.¹⁷ The revised Act also included the abolition of special passes needed to leave the reserve which allowed Aboriginal people living on reserves more geographic freedom than they had been allowed in the past few decades. Meanwhile, employment opportunities were on the decline due to the increase in mechanisation which, in turn, reduced the casual employment opportunities that reserve residents had relied on since 1880.¹⁸ The freedom of movement, combined with a rise in population and a lack of employment on reserves, created a young mobile group of Aboriginal people, many of whom moved to the city seeking employment or education. The move to urban centres made the relative poverty and higher level of social and economic problems experienced by Aboriginal people more visible to the rest of Canada. This move also created a jurisdictional dispute between the federal and provincial governments over who was responsible for providing health care, education and social welfare to Aboriginal people in the city which necessitated a governmental re-evaluation

of policies relating to Aboriginal peoples.¹⁹

The move to urban centres by Aboriginal people created a new category for public policy. The BNA Act established federal jurisdiction over the provision of health and welfare services to Aboriginal people. The federal government chose to provide those services nearly exclusively on reserves. The provincial governments pressured the federal government to continue providing health, welfare, and education to Aboriginal people living off reserves. Once Aboriginal people began migrating to urban centres in increased numbers, a debate between federal and provincial powers began over who was responsible for providing services to urban Aboriginal people.

The migration to urban centres that characterised the post-war era created problems in jurisdiction for status Aboriginal peoples because the federal government wished to reduce their involvement in Aboriginal programming particularly in urban centres where they argued that Aboriginal people were under provincial authority. According to the Citizenship Branch the administration of Indian Affairs originally fell under the jurisdiction of the provinces and was only re-assigned to the federal government under the BNA Act because there were no provinces in the west when the Act was passed.²⁰ The federal government chose, for the most part, to provide the majority of services to Aboriginal people on the reserves until after World War II. After the war and the subsequent rural-to-urban shift in population the federal government expressed unwillingness to fund programs and welfare for status Aboriginal people in cities. Meanwhile, provincial governments maintained that they were financially unable to provide services for Aboriginal people who, they believed, were a federal

responsibility. Although the federal government had a constitutional responsibility for registered Indians began cost-sharing and other programs designed relocate responsibility from the federal government to the provincial governments. This reluctance on the part of the federal government to provide services to Aboriginal people off-reserve complicated the problems faced by Aboriginal people in urban centres and made securing consistent funding for the IMFC difficult.

The problems encountered by Aboriginal people who migrated to the city in the 1950s were identified in reports commissioned by the Province of Manitoba, the Welfare Planning Council of Winnipeg, and the Urban Indian Association. They were made evident by the interviews I conducted with the people involved in the Friendship Centre. Winnipeg newspaper articles from this era also discussed Aboriginal problems. The needs identified in these reports consistently fall into several categories including: loneliness and isolation, employment, housing, poverty, difficulty accessing social services, and problems relative to the justice system. Mary Guilbault of the Urban Indian Association argues that:

Social agencies of the period...did not deal specifically with the so-called 'Native Problem.' Native people living in and migrating to the City had no support organisations to which they could go for guidance and assistance, economically or socially. The only support urban Natives had was each other. People like myself and others assisted some Native families in dealing with the welfare system but there was nothing of a major or organised nature.²¹

The federally commissioned *Hawthorn Report* identified that many Aboriginal people were unemployed or underemployed, and much more likely than other Canadians to have

limited formal schooling.²² It found that accommodation for Aboriginal people in the city was often substandard, over-crowded, and lacking in amenities. The Aboriginal population had a higher mortality rate, frequently from diseases that had few fatalities in the rest of the population, which is an indicator of economic poverty. They were arrested more often, and for less serious offences, than non-Aboriginal people.²³ All of the problems Aboriginal people encountered in the city were augmented by a lack of social support and family in the city.

It would be difficult to over-estimate the extent of loneliness encountered by many Aboriginal people when they moved to Winnipeg. A lack of sufficient housing and employment combined with the alienation caused by discrimination limited many of the avenues for developing social networks. Mary Guilbault, of the Urban Indian Association, describes the Association's reaction to the level of loneliness:

It was so sad to see these young people come to our meetings in our homes and so forth – we used to play games, play cards, we used to do different things to socialize with them. But it was so sad because they were so so lonely and nobody was meeting their social needs so we would visit with them until about three or four o'clock in the morning and we would make sure that someone would drive them home instead of making them spend money on a cab.²⁴

The discrimination faced by many people when they attempted to socialise in public halls and other establishments further complicated the lack of meeting places. Dorothy Betz, a former Board Member and IMFC court worker, said that “we didn’t have a place of our own - all we had was Main Street but we weren’t too ecstatic about it.”²⁵ Main Street was located in the heart of the northern part of Winnipeg where many Aboriginal people lived.

Because of its close proximity to lower income housing it was often used as a gathering place for young Aboriginal people new to Winnipeg. A 1959 article titled “Manitoba’s Racial Barriers are Bared” in the *Winnipeg Tribune* described a report presented at the annual Winnipeg Indian and Métis Conference which detailed different experiences with discrimination in the city such as Aboriginal people being refused service at restaurants and being left off voters lists in case “they come to believe that they were residents of the town.”²⁶

A lack of sufficient housing was another significant obstacle for new residents in Winnipeg. The discriminatory practices of many landlords were augmented by a booming housing market which left landlords able to be selective about which tenants they rented to.²⁷ The Indian and Métis Conference argued that “the experiences of new Canadians seeking homes is not too different from those of Indians and Métis...the problem of housing is primarily an economic one.”²⁸ In contrast, Verna McKay, church worker and IMFC volunteer, identified racial discrimination in the housing market, saying that Aboriginal people were often turned away from prospective residences unless accompanied by a church worker or other non-Aboriginal Centre staff member who could speak on their behalf.²⁹ The Urban Indian Association also identified housing as a significant problem in the 1950s and conducted a housing study on its own. Mary Guilbault described the housing study and housing situation:

The housing study we did extended from Selkirk to William Avenue and all the way up to Notre Dame to the tracks over there and then back down again. This is where our people were primarily concentrated. It was sad, very sad, the housing situation was deplorable to say the

least...whenever we went to see people while we were doing our study there used to be these great big house rats - how our people survived through that was that they took turns sleeping so that the rats would not attack the kids. The old grandma would sit there with her blanket over her shoulders and a broom in her hand and shoo the rats away.³⁰

The inability to secure adequate housing often put Aboriginal people in the position of being charged with vagrancy.³¹

The poverty on reserves also made it difficult for people to find housing in the city as they rarely had financial resources to rely on during the time between moving and securing employment and housing. Young girls especially appeared to have trouble obtaining housing, partially because of a lack of employment. The lack of housing often led to vagrancy charges for young people who were arrested for staying in public places while they looked for work.³² Dorothy Betz, former court worker at the IMFC, identified that many of the court cases she became involved in were in relation to vagrancy and disruption of the peace charges caused by a lack of housing, and also a lack of meeting place to congregate for entertainment.³³ Betz, frustrated by the lack of access to housing caused by the cycle of poverty and by difficulties in finding employment, actually set up temporary housing for young people in her own house. She went to an army barracks that was re-furbishing the soldier's quarters and received half a dozen bunk beds which she then set up in her basement. Betz then approached the jail on Portage Avenue to request that the young women picked up on vagrancy charges be released into her custody. When the girls were released they were able to stay with her. Betz and McKay both described the difficulties in securing employment for Aboriginal people with no fixed address

because employers felt that without a permanent address the people would be unreliable.³⁴ The access to a place to stay could help break the cycle of poverty for many of the people originally charged with vagrancy when they entered the city, and make them more attractive to potential employers.

Inadequate employment was another consistent problem identified in the Centre records and in interviews. Language barriers combined with discrimination and a lack of education to limit job opportunities in Winnipeg for Aboriginal people. The Centre records indicate on-going efforts by referral officers to provide assistance in obtaining training for employment as well as training for interviews and advice on how to succeed in the urban workforce. Although government reports such as *The Hawthorn Report* and the Lagasse report both indicate that Aboriginal people encountered difficulties in securing employment in Winnipeg some presenters at the Indian and Métis Conference refuted this claim. One anonymous presenter at the Indian and Métis Conference suggested that according to their research there was not a “major problem” in securing employment for Aboriginal people. This, however, indicates a minority opinion and is contradicted by the employment sub-committee at the Welfare Council as well as by the records of the Friendship Centre. The employment sub-committee of the Welfare Council conducted research into the needs of Aboriginal people in Winnipeg and found that securing employment was a major problem.³⁵

One explanation for the origin of the problems Aboriginal people faced in the city is “coercive tutelage.”³⁶ Noel Dyck describes coercive tutelage as the restraint exercised by the government over Aboriginal people, premised on cultural and moral superiority.

In order for this sort of tutelage to be successful it must create dependence.³⁷ Reserves created Aboriginal dependence on the federal government. Similarly reserves are sometimes characterised as internal colonies. Colonialism is internal, rather than external, if the “colonized population is systematically deprived of the means to control their social and economic institutions, while at the same time they are said to have the same legal status as the dominant group.”³⁸ Most traditional models of internal colonialism fail to include urban Aboriginal people, treat Aboriginal cultures as overly homogeneous, and fail to address gender and class.³⁹ The marginalization, disenfranchisement, level of poverty, inadequate housing and other characteristics on reserves, however, were replicated in the urban setting. This makes the internal colony model useful when applied to Aboriginal people in the city.

A key feature to the internal colonial model is the asymmetrical relationship between dominant and subordinate culture. The subordinate culture becomes dependent on the dominant culture for their existence. Internal colonialism produced a culture of poverty characterised by poor health, substandard housing, low level of education and chronic unemployment. The relative poverty of Aboriginal people was more apparent in the city than on the reserve, which prompted initiatives such as the annual Indian and Métis Conferences and other research initiatives.

Difficulty in accessing social services compounded the difficulties faced by Aboriginal people in the city. The difficulties in obtaining employment, as well as low incomes for those who were employed left many Aboriginal people requiring extensive social services which reconfirmed their status as an internal colony. James Frideres

argues that the inability to access services stems from a “poor understanding of their rights as Canadians and their unwillingness to press for services that they might need.”⁴⁰ Due to the paternalistic nature of administration on reserves many people were not familiar with the avenues for accessing provincial health and welfare services. The isolated environment of the reserve also left many people unprepared for accessing employment and housing opportunities as well as securing a social network in an urban context. The lack of experience in accessing social services away from the reserve environment was compounded by the un-clear policies of jurisdiction between provincial and federal governments relating to Aboriginal people in the city at the time.

The legacy of residential schools was also significant in the internal colony of the city. Residential schools were a “primordial event...of such fundamental importance as to indelibly stamp its imprint on the unfolding of the peoples’ history thereafter.”⁴¹ Residential schools were “total institutions” with “a confining formal organisation usually intended to forcibly change people’s behaviour and self-concept by means of the rigid structuring of daily routines and assault upon personal dignity and autonomy.”⁴² Cultural devaluation is part of the legacy of residential schools that directly contributed to the problems people faced when they left the residential school and moved to the city. The loss of culture and family heritage caused by residential schools was eventually partially addressed by the cultural programming and social groups at the IMFC. Before the Centre opened, the Urban Indian Association held gatherings to help people from residential schools make appropriate social networks in the city.⁴³

Residential schools left many people unprepared to cope with everyday life in the

unfamiliar urban environment. Mary Guilbault described residential schools as a major cause of the problems faced by Aboriginal people in the city since the strict regime imposed in the schools left many students initially unprepared for the independence afforded by the city.⁴⁴ Similarly, Stan McKay Jr., a youth member of the Centre in the early 1960s, commented that the total institution of the residential school created difficulties for Aboriginal people in the individualistic environment of the city: “to come out of that type of institution where you are told when to get up, fed, told where to go and what to do and then sent to bed - where the whole thing is ordered for you - it’s very much like being incarcerated. To then come out of that program of incarceration into a city with few skills to survive in any community much less an urban one which is very individualistic.”⁴⁵

Percy Bird, former Board of Directors member and provincial welfare agent who attended residential schools himself, argued that the loss of identity caused by residential schools was also a significant factor in substance abuse.⁴⁶ Substance abuse and gambling were often referred to by participants as an attempt to escape from or deny their cultural identity. As a result of repeated acts of discrimination many people felt a diminished sense of pride and often replaced it with a sense of shame. Substance abuse, in particular, provided a means of obliterating the feelings of shame and low self-esteem created by residential schools while bars and taverns created social networks within the internal colony of the city.⁴⁷ Substance abuse left people unable to reliably attend work, and created problems in obtaining housing. The Friendship Centre attempted to address this by providing a meeting place for Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and counselling and

referral services.

Although all the people interviewed for this thesis, as well as the secondary literature consulted, indicate that residential schools created difficulties in the city for Aboriginal people there is scant mention of it in the archival record. Mentions of residential schools are limited to Welfare Planning Council meetings in the context of discussions on problems faced by Aboriginal people in the city.⁴⁸ The Board Minutes from the IMFC do not mention residential schools. There are many possible reasons for the limited mention of residential schools in the archival record, primarily that the non-Aboriginal population in Canada had not yet acknowledged the problems stemming from residential schools in any significant way. Also since Aboriginal people's voices rarely appear in the written record it is difficult to assess the degree to which they felt, at the time, that residential schools were an issue in creating problems in the city. Current secondary literature acknowledges the lasting legacy of problems from residential schools, as did every elder I interviewed for this thesis. It is possible that residential schools were a large portion of the oral histories collected since some of the people interviewed are currently involved in court cases relating to residential schools and the problems caused by the schools are likely on their minds. However, it would be doing a disservice to the people involved to brush off references to the problems caused by residential schools simply because it is not well represented in the archival record. I believe, based on what we now know about the treatment of children at many residential schools, and because of the tense emotion and difficulty many people experienced when describing how residential schools affected them, that the residential school experience

was profoundly significant for the people involved in the IMFC.

Some of the literature relating to the needs of Aboriginal people refers to the “urban Aboriginal problem.” The use of the phrase “urban Aboriginal Problem” is problematic because it locates Aboriginal people themselves as the problem. During the years leading up to the opening of the Friendship Centre, as well as during the first decade of its existence, many government agencies and other agents such as churches were involved in addressing the “urban Indian problem.” Reports often referred to the incompatibility of the ‘traditional’ Aboriginal culture with urban life as well as incompatible ‘value systems.’ A presentation at the Indian and Métis Conference in 1954 argued that the ‘problem’ stemmed from “cultural traits which strongly contrast with ours.” These traits were said to be an “obstacle to securing and holding a job, a room and social participation on par with the other residents of the city.”⁴⁹ Other accounts of cultural incompatibility included the assertion that “Indians do not strive for wealth” which was followed by the assertion that concerned parties needed to “figure out how to make [Aboriginal people] strive for wealth and have ‘wants’” which would solve “the two problems...[of] Indian character and personality, which is that of a conservative, tradition-bound people.”⁵⁰ Dr. R.W. Dunning of the University of Toronto asserted at an Indian and Métis Conference that “our failure has been a social one. With the best will in the world, the individual - white or Indian - often find that the gap between tribal culture and our rootless, mobile, individualistic life is too great. Canada’s ineffective - and even destructive - paternalism is gradually being superseded by more effective forms of action.”⁵¹

Reports written during the 1950s lump the *causes* of the problems faced by Aboriginal people in the city in with the *actual problems* themselves. Rhetoric such as this attempts to make Aboriginal individuals the problem that the rest of Canada must ‘solve.’ In this case the literature in the 1950s, such as papers presented at the Welfare Planning Council, argues that the ‘cause’ of the problem is a culture clash between the ‘traditional’ culture of First Nations people and the ‘modern’ culture of the city. Thus Aboriginal people need to change their culture in order to survive in the city as opposed to there being changes needed in the rest of society to accommodate Aboriginal people.

George Boyce from the American Bureau of Indian Affairs presented a paper at the Indian and Métis Conference in 1960 in which he stated: “it is obvious there are many Indian adults who did go to school, who are not illiterate, who speak English rather well but who are still an Indian problem.”⁵² The community members actually involved in the set up of the Centre, and in the day-to-day running of the Centre, maintained that Aboriginal cultures were not incompatible with urban life, although there were several factors that lead to the problems that many Aboriginal people encountered when they moved to the city.

Authors such as Noel Dyck in *What is the Indian Problem?* and Evelyn Peters in ‘Developing Federal Policy for First Nations People in Urban Areas: 1945-1975’ argue that Aboriginal people themselves are not a ‘problem’ but that their education and experiences on reserves and in residential schools, combined with institutionalised discrimination, caused many individuals to encounter problems in the city such as inadequate housing, unemployment, and inadequate access to social services. Dyck

suggests that discussions around the ‘Indian problem’ reveal a deep seated perception that the differences between Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people constitute a regrettable situation that needs to be remedied. Thus the question ““what is the Indian problem?” is not so much a question as an assertion that a ‘problem’ exists.”⁵³ The traditional conception of the so-called ‘problem’ is that Aboriginal culture is inherently incompatible with urban life, and requires that the individual change their personality and culture to fit into the political and social order. However, the studies done by the Welfare Council of Winnipeg and the IMFC reveal that the ‘Indian problem’ is really a series of economic, social, and political challenges that confronted Aboriginal communities and individuals. Therefore, the ‘problem’ was actually a series of problems that Aboriginal people faced when attempting to access adequate housing, employment and social services, compounded by systemic discrimination and the conflict in jurisdiction between federal and provincial governments, as well as inadequate financing and education created by the reserve and residential school system. This sentiment is echoed in the literature created by the Friendship Centre, and in interviews with people involved in the Centre. Aboriginal people are not essentially incompatible with urban living, nor were First Nations and Métis cultures or ‘values’ incompatible with the modern world. Although there are different discourses on the causes of the difficulties faced by Aboriginal people who migrated to the city in the 1950s, there was a shared agreement among those involved in the IMFC that a disproportionate number of Aboriginal people faced racism and a higher level of unemployment and inadequate housing than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. Furthermore, they agreed that Aboriginal people would be able

to maintain and embrace their cultural heritage while simultaneously becoming members of the urban community. Efforts by government and non-governmental organisations to identify these needs formed the basis of research conducted by government and non-governmental agencies in the 1950s and 1960s in an effort to revise Aboriginal policy. These needs also formed the basis for the programming design at the IMFC.

Chapter 2 Endnotes:

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13. Jennifer E. Rogalsky, “*Good Canadians in Every Sense*”: the *Citizenship Council of Manitoba, 1948-1975*, (University of Manitoba MA thesis, 2000): 1.
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32. Peters, “*Developing Federal Policy*,” 73.
33. Dorothy Betz. Interview #2 with Leslie Hall. Winnipeg, Manitoba. March 30, 2004.
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36. Noel Dyck, *What is the Indian 'Problem': Tutelage and Resistance in Canadian Indian Administration*, (St. John's, Nfld.: Memorial University of Newfoundland Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1991): 3.
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Chapter 3: The Resolution to Open the IMFC

The IMFC was created in an era characterised by re-evaluations of existing government policy, and by numerous efforts to establish new policies and organisations to meet the needs of Aboriginal people.¹ During this post-war period economic prosperity was met with a belief that “social problems could be remedied by more government intervention in society.”² Meanwhile, the needs of Aboriginal people in urban centres were being researched and discussed by federal and provincial governments, the Winnipeg Welfare Planning Council, and Aboriginal leaders. The era in which the Centre was established is usually characterised as one of Aboriginal exclusion from actual policy decisions. The IMFC, however, included significant Aboriginal input in program design even though the Board and staff were initially predominantly non-Aboriginal.

This chapter will explore how the federal government, the Manitoba provincial government, the Winnipeg Welfare Planning Council, the Indian and Métis Conferences, and the Urban Indian Association were working towards the same goal of addressing the problems faced by Aboriginal people in Winnipeg. The federal government began during the 1950s to attempt to re-locate authority over aboriginal people to the provincial governments. The provincial governments fought against having to provide services to Aboriginal people. The Winnipeg Welfare Planning Council created the Indian and Métis Conferences and the various sub-committees on leisure, employment, education and health in an effort to address the situation of Aboriginal people in Winnipeg. The Urban Indian Association was an all Aboriginal non-profit group founded to assist Aboriginal

people in adjusting to Winnipeg. These four groups proceeded along nearly parallel lines by conducting research on the nature of the needs of Aboriginal people in urban areas. They also all appreciated the need for new programs to address these needs and community development became a common theme. The four groups met at the 1958 Indian and Métis Conference where they found a common solution by proposing to open the Indian and Métis Friendship Centre.

The Province of Manitoba

During the 1950s and early 1960s the provincial government of Manitoba maintained the position that it could not provide social services for Aboriginal people in Winnipeg because it had “neither the constitutional authority nor the financial resources required.”³ Deborah Young’s University of Manitoba Master’s thesis examined the Special Joint Committee on Indian Affairs of the Senate and the House of Commons in 1959 to 1961. She describes the provincial definition of the “Indian problem” as “problems which the white population experiences because of the people of Indian descent, and...the problems which Indians have because they live amongst the white man.”⁴ The provincial position, expressed in the Joint Parliamentary Committee, echoed the federal belief in culture change and citizenship as a policy solution:

we must realise, however, that their culture will have to change before it allows them to integrate fully with other Canadians...we would be doing great harm to the Indians if we prevented their culture from changing to adjust to contemporary living. The end product of the changes that should take place will still be an Indian culture, but a 20th century Indian culture conceived for modern times and

practical for modern problems.⁵

This indicates that the provincial government believed it necessary for Aboriginal people to change culturally in order to adapt to the urban environment.

In 1959 Jean Lagasse was commissioned by the Manitoba provincial government to study community development for Aboriginal people in Manitoba. Lagasse was also a member of the Welfare Planning Council and was eventually appointed Director of Community Development for the Province of Manitoba.⁶ Lagasse's community development solution included involving people from the community to help "improve their own economic and social conditions, and thereby become effective working groups in programs of local and regional significance."⁷ The intention was to train community members to be able to take over and run the organisations themselves.

Community development became a popular movement in the 1960s in Europe and North America as a "way of fostering self-help programmes in ghettos, depressed rural areas, and urban centres."⁸ Community development as a movement is a "philosophy with a value system based upon the right of individuals and groups to choose their own goals and decide the method which should be utilised to reach them."⁹ Community development rarely involves developing an economic base, which is often cited as the reason for the failure of the federal program.

Community development as a philosophy, however, was effective in the creation of the IMFC because the individuals on the Board of Directors followed the principles of community development by involving Aboriginal people in the administration of the Centre. Aboriginal people in turn used the Board's willingness to consult with them to

influence the direction of the Centre. Successful community development comes from the willingness of community development agents to allow local people to shape the direction of the program. The chosen program is then carried out through the initiative and hard work of the local people with the technical advice of community development officers.¹⁰ The ability of Aboriginal members of the Centre to design and direct programming that was appropriate for their needs was one of the main reasons that the Centre was successful in the early years.

The Federal Government

The federal government made it clear, in public statements and in correspondence with the provincial government during the late 1950s, that they intended to reduce their responsibilities to Aboriginal people who lived off the reserves. This applied particularly in Winnipeg during the 1950s, where the federal government had virtually ignored any responsibility for ‘Status Indians’ arguing that they fell outside of the jurisdiction of Indian Affairs by virtue of living off reserves.¹¹ J.H. Gorden, director of welfare services and Indian Affairs argued at the 1954 Indian and Métis conference that:

the department has consistently maintained the position that Indians on leaving their reserves and having established residence in non-Indian communities should be eligible for the same range of benefits from the province or community as Canadian citizens of other ethnic origins. The suggestion is sometimes made that the same welfare and other special services provided by the Indian Affairs branch on reserves should be extended to Indians off their reserves. This, I think, would be a tragic mistake. Rather we must make sure that Indians have free and ready access to the welfare resources of the community to meet their needs which are basically the same as those of other persons.¹²

Under the umbrella of the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, the federal government carried out a variety of programs designed to improve services, and to collect information on current and future needs of Aboriginal people such as community development programs, the transfer of some programs to the provinces, grants to Bands for self administration, Aboriginal advisory boards, and research on the administration of justice to Indians. They also sent representatives to the annual Indian and Métis Conferences.

The federal government also commissioned research into the urban Aboriginal “problem” in the form of the *Hawthorn Report*. Although the *Report* was commissioned in 1963, after the Friendship Centre had already become established, it is the best example of government research on urban aboriginal people in that time period. It is significant that even though the federal government was years behind the provincial government, and the local Winnipeg Welfare Council, in conducting research the *Hawthorn Report* identified the same needs as are indicated in the IMFC records and in my interviews.¹³ In some ways the *Hawthorn Report*, which was published in 1966, appears to indicate that little positive change had been made for urban Aboriginal people. However, it is important to remember that the *Hawthorn Report* was a significant national study and not actually indicative of the Friendship Centre’s success. It is also important to note that the IMFC, both in 1963 and to this day, does not see its’ work as complete. Instead it is an ongoing process of change.

The federal government also entertained discussions on community development, similar to the province of Manitoba and the Welfare Planning Council. Again the federal

government community development initiatives came after the Friendship Centre had already opened. The federal program was established in areas that needed economic development and the chronic under-funding and lack of communication in the program ultimately lead to its failure.¹⁴ It should be noted, however, that the federal community development program is different from the community development movement in general.

The Welfare Planning Council

The Welfare Council of Greater Winnipeg was created to provide a means for assessing a balanced and co-operative approach to community needs and resources through its membership, which included local and national social welfare agencies, government departments and non-profit organisations, supported by both voluntary and tax funds.¹⁵ It was a “co-ordinating, fact-finding body, a planning centre for welfare needs, services and projects...the Council serves its members whenever they ask for help, information or advice...or whenever a welfare problem confronts the community.”¹⁶ The Welfare Council had an “Indian and Métis Committee,” the purpose of which was to investigate the needs of Aboriginal people. The Committee sponsored the annual Indian and Métis Conferences in Winnipeg. The Indian and Métis Committee of the Welfare Council had individual subcommittees to research topics such as: leisure recreation and employment, housing, education, and counselling.¹⁷ In 1954 W.L. Morton was the chairman of the Indian and Métis Committee which consisted of various welfare and health workers involved in the Welfare Planning Council including Beatrice Brigden and Lloyd Lenton. W. L. Morton indicated that one of the other primary concerns of the

Committee was to draw public attention to the “problems which face many of our Indians and Métis.”¹⁸

The people involved on the Indian and Métis Committee between 1954 and 1958 consisted of mostly non-Aboriginal people interested in community work. The people on the Indian and Métis Committee such as Jean Lagasse, Beatrice Brigden, Lloyd Lenton, and Rev. Edward Scott were all particularly interested in Aboriginal concerns. Jean Lagasse from the provincial government was a member. His involvement was primarily concerned with community development. Beatrice Brigden was a well known community volunteer and advocate for women’s rights and for Aboriginal people. Lloyd Lenton was involved in various volunteer efforts in Winnipeg and was well respected by the people at the Friendship Centre.¹⁹ Rev. Edward (Ted) Scott was an Anglican minister in Winnipeg who was deeply concerned about Aboriginal issues. He went on to serve as the youngest primate of the Anglican Church of Canada during the 1970s and 1980s. Archbishop Scott was named to the Order of Canada in 1978 and awarded the Pearson Peace Medal in 1998.²⁰ W.L Morton was a historian and professor at the University of Manitoba. The personalities and experience of the individuals on the planning committee significantly helped shaped the character and administrative focus of the Friendship Centre during the early years. The members of the committee were generally liberal in terms of social policy and were sincerely concerned with making the urban environment better for Aboriginal people. Many of the committee members were appointed to the provisional Board of Directors in 1958-1959 after the Indian and Métis Conference resolved to open the Centre.

The Indian and Métis Conference had subcommittee meetings between Conferences on counselling, employment, housing and education.²¹ The leisure and recreation committee investigated problems of finding appropriate recreation and cultural activities for Aboriginal people in Winnipeg.²² The recreation committee studied why Aboriginal people were having trouble assimilating, why they did not use existing facilities, and why the larger community did not accept the Aboriginal people in their organisations. In regards to “cultural development” it was indicated that Aboriginal “standards and values” were at “variance with society” and that they have “lagged being partly due to limitation in government service.” In 1957 the Leisure Sub-Committee of the Indian and Métis Committee of the Welfare Planning Council decided to recommend the next Indian and Métis Conference set up a central agency where Aboriginal people could be “led to help himself.”²³

The Indian and Métis Conferences

The Conferences were, between 1954-1958, similar to academic conferences with research paper presentations on the “Indian problem.” Although Conference organisers invited some Aboriginal leaders to attend, they were not generally included in the Conference programs in any official way until 1960, after the IMFC had already been successfully established. The purposes of the Conference were: first, to direct public attention to “the special problems of Indians;” second, to “discover and discuss ways and means by which Indians and Métis in distress or under handicap might be helped to help themselves;” third, to “explore whether special efforts and procedures were necessary in dealing with Indians and Métis requiring the aid of welfare...and lines of future study

opened.”²⁴ The Welfare Council’s Indian and Métis Committee implemented recommendations made at the Indian and Métis Conferences, and studied the problems encountered by Aboriginal people.

The Indian and Métis Conference, in 1954, resolved to begin including the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood in some of their meetings, and in the Indian and Métis Conferences. Letters from Chief George Barker, President of the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, to the committee indicate his interest in including some of the members of the Indian Brotherhood in future meetings with the Committee.²⁵ In 1954 Chief George Barker, the President of the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, was invited to speak at the conference.²⁶ However, the majority of reports available on the Conferences from the archival records, newspapers, and interviews, indicated that Aboriginal people were rarely allowed to speak during the early years of the Conference.

Rev. John Pilling and Bernice Pilling, former non-Aboriginal IMFC members and volunteers, indicated in an interview excitement at being included in the Indian and Métis Conferences, but also distress at the lack of Aboriginal voices heard in the early years 1956 to 1961. In particular they described the early years of the Conferences as a forum for sharing and inspiring research albeit with alarmingly limited Aboriginal input.²⁷ Joyce Meyer of the *Winnipeg Tribune* reported that Aboriginal representatives at the Indian and Métis Conference were disappointed that they were unable to participate in the discussions even though Indian and Métis Conferences centred around Aboriginal issues. She quoted an Aboriginal representative as saying “we thought this was an Indian conference and now we find it’s a white man’s conference.”²⁸ She also quoted an “Indian

representative” at the Indian and Métis Conference as saying “I think the Welfare Council is doing its best - and in good faith. They are always ready to listen. Conferences are a good thing - but maybe next year they should leave a few gaps in the agenda in case Indians have something to say. This year there were no gaps at all.”²⁹ By 1960 approximately half of the people attending the Conference were Aboriginal, however, only one morning was devoted to Aboriginal speakers, when fifteen of the two hundred and fifty Aboriginal delegates were allowed to articulate their concerns.³⁰

Between 1954 and 1958 the main focus of the Indian and Métis Conference, similar to the federal and provincial governments, was to collect research which would define and document “the Indian problem.”³¹ The research included writing to similar organisations in other provinces to find out how studies on the problems faced by Aboriginal People had been approached. In 1956 the Indian and Métis Committee of the Welfare Council commissioned researchers at the University of Manitoba to study the “Indian problem.” Part of this research involved soliciting for papers to be presented at the Indian and Métis Conference. One such paper was presented by Rev. Gradus Alberts entitled “Community Responsibility to Indians in the city,” where he argued that “when discrimination does exist it is often of their own making. Many lack a work pattern and fail to reckon with the elements of punctuality.”³² Rev. Father Renaud OMI presented a paper called “cultural implications of the ‘Indian in town’ situation” and said that “they have cultural traits which contrast strongly with ours. Some of these traits are a definite obstacle to securing and holding a job, a room and social participation on par with the other residents of the city.”³³ The construction of Aboriginal people as a problem

resulting from inherent cultural traits contributed to the popular idea that cultural change was necessary for success in urban life. The federal and provincial representatives at Indian and Métis Conferences responded favourably to the research initiatives.³⁴

One research report that resulted from the Indian and Métis Conference's initiative to collect research was entitled "Pilot Project in Community Development." It reported that "municipalities, government departments, social agencies, law enforcement agencies, churches and schools have all found that both Indian and Métis groups present problems when they come in contact with the social institutions of the cultural majority."³⁵ The report further indicated that although "it is generally agreed that a problem of serious proportions exists, it appears that no one knows the exact nature of the problem, or the causes."³⁶ The report proposed that further research be done to learn about the "attitudes and values of Indians and Métis and to determine, in light of both native and white attitudes, why their society is not an integrated one."³⁷

The Urban Indian Association

During this period of government and community activity relating to the migration of Aboriginal people to urban centres a group of Aboriginal people in Winnipeg began to meet to discuss the needs of Aboriginal people in the city and possible solutions. The group became incorporated as "the Urban Indian Association" and included Mary and Ernie Guilbault, Marion Meadmore, Jimmy Elk, among others who began researching how to address the needs of the Aboriginal population in Winnipeg. All were Aboriginal residents of Winnipeg who were concerned with the problems faced by young Aboriginal people as they moved into the city.³⁸

Members of this committee were known for their community work, and their experience with non-profit organisations. Marion Meadmore is from the Peepeekisis Reserve in Saskatchewan, the daughter of an Ojibway father and Cree Mother. She was a founding member of the Urban Indian Association with Mary Guilbault, and she went on to become the first female Aboriginal lawyer in Canada.³⁹ Mary and Ernie Guilbault had also been members of the Urban Indian Association. During the early years of the Friendship Centre, and while raising five children with her husband, Mary completed a Masters of Social Work at the University of Manitoba. Mary and Marion spearheaded various independent research efforts to assess what the needs were of urban Aboriginal people, as well as to assess what people in other cities were doing to address these needs.

Prior to 1958 the Association met regularly in the homes of the members to research and design plans to address the needs of the Aboriginal population. Their primary concerns were: assisting people in obtaining housing, employment, health care, and providing a social gathering place. The group was also very concerned with the number of youth who migrated to the city after graduating from residential school and were unable to obtain work and had nowhere to meet socially. The Association was also concerned with the number of tuberculosis patients who moved to the city after leaving the sanatorium and were unable to find work and housing.⁴⁰

The Urban Indian Association launched research campaigns to investigate what Aboriginal leaders in other cities were doing to assist the population. They travelled to Regina, Banff, and Edmonton and other places attending Indian and Métis Conferences and corresponding with government agents in other provinces to assess the options. The

Association discovered that although there was much research activity across the prairies at this time into the problems faced by urban Aboriginal people there was not yet a Canadian precedent for a centre like they wished to open in Winnipeg. Guilbault describes the activities of the Association as follows:

anything we did at that particular time we did on a voluntary basis and luckily enough any study that was done by the Urban Indian Association was done on a voluntary basis and they - the lawyers that we got advice from, never charged us for anything. So it was - we had a very unusual kind of people who were very willing to - and compatible to our cause. There never appeared to be a threat to anyone; there was always that common understanding and respect at all times.⁴¹

The Association began to raise money to fund a referral centre which would enable them to expand the informal programs they were already offering out of their homes. Money was raised through dances held in local halls because they were unaware at that time of the community and government funding available.⁴² In 1958 the Urban Indian Association attended the Indian and Métis Conference where it was resolved to open a referral centre for Aboriginal people in Winnipeg. As an already existing group of Aboriginal leaders they became some of the first members of the Indian Advisory Council at the IMFC which designed programming and presented it to the Board of Directors.⁴³

The Friendship Centre was established after four years of research by the Indian and Métis Committee of the Welfare Council of Winnipeg, and funded by both the federal and provincial governments in an attempt to address the needs of the new urban

Aboriginal population. The jurisdictional problems created by the federal unwillingness to provide services to Aboriginal people in urban centres fuelled some of the research activity during the time. The provincial government was primarily concerned with the sudden development of a new poverty-stricken group of people to whom the federal government wished them to provide services. Aboriginal leaders in Winnipeg at the time were concerned with addressing the immediate needs of their people, as well as creating a long term cultural and social gathering place. The service groups at the Indian and Métis Conference fell somewhere between the governments and the Aboriginal people in that they, like the government, tended to ignore Aboriginal voices in policy discussion. However, once the Conference resolved to open a centre, the committee that set up and the initial Board of Directors firmly believed in the principles of community development and actively sought Aboriginal opinions. The involvement of Aboriginal leaders in the set up and programming at the Centre allowed for it to address a broad spectrum of needs for the Aboriginal population.

Chapter 3 Endnotes:

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Chapter 4: Establishment of the IMFC

The Indian and Métis Conference resolved to open a “referral service for Indian and part-Indian newcomers to Winnipeg...to guide and counsel on matters of employment, housing, education and other community services.”¹ The conference established a provisional Board of Directors composed of members of the Welfare Planning Council and other interested conference members. Mary Guilbault indicated that the Urban Indian Association was concerned that Welfare Council officials would take control of the IMFC and shape it in their own image without Aboriginal influence after the Indian and Métis Conference.² Her concerns likely stemmed from both a historic unwillingness on the part of government bodies to listen to Aboriginal people when designing policy, and also from the lack of Aboriginal influence during the Conference’s early years. Even though Aboriginal organisations such as the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood and other representatives from the outlying Aboriginal communities were invited to the Conferences, they were rarely included in the program before the mid 1960s. The Board of Directors of the IMFC, however, and Executive Director Joan Adams actively sought Aboriginal participation in the planning stages of the Centre, and encouraged Aboriginal involvement in the direction of the IMFC, particularly through needs based program planning. Their policy of including Aboriginal leaders through the Advisory Council and the shift to hiring Aboriginal staff and increased Aboriginal representation on the Board of Directors during the first five years reflected the principles of community development.³

The Centre opened in rented space in an office building on Donald Street in 1959.

It was funded on a two year trial basis, after which it would be evaluated by the Welfare Council and a decision would be made its future.⁴ It was open during the weekdays, Sunday afternoons, and three evenings a week for recreation. According to the IMFC's constitution the aims of the Centre were:

- a) To assist Indian newcomers in their adjustment to urban life.
- b) To provide a medium for the development of Indian leadership in the community.
- c) To inform the community about the problems of Indians in metropolitan areas and to take action in resolving those problems wherever possible
- d) To plan with governmental agencies, and with health, welfare, church and other agencies and groups to improve the number and quality of services to and facilities for Indians in the community.⁵

These aims were successfully implemented by the Board of Directors, the Indian Advisory Council, the staff, and volunteers at the Centre through a variety of programs including counselling, referral, and social programs.

A planning committee for the Centre was established by the Welfare Council, in 1958, to set up the Friendship Centre. This committee included Lloyd Lenton, Canon E.W. Scott, Ian Harvey, Rev. Ruest, Mary and Ernie Guilbault, Marion Meadmore, and Dorothy Betz. The planning committee determined that the Centre would be run by two equal, but different, governing bodies at the Centre: the Board of Directors, and the Indian Advisory Council. A third, subsidiary, group of thirty people who represented various "community organisations which have an interest in the welfare of Indian and Métis in the city,"⁶ formed a group called the Advisory Committee which initially provided additional advice to the Board. The combination of administration between the

Board and the Indian Advisory Council managed to incorporate Aboriginal people without giving them final authority over the input. The Board and the Executive Director do appear to have both listened to the suggestions of the Advisory Council and also encouraged Aboriginal people to assume positions of authority on the Board of Directors and on the staff. Aboriginal members of the Centre clearly used the opportunity to influence the Centre's direction through programming. They also assumed leadership roles on the Board and on the staff to the extent that by 1963 the staff was entirely Aboriginal and the Board was two thirds Aboriginal.

The first Executive Director of the Centre was Joan Adams, who had previously been the Executive Director of Inter-Tribal Friendship House, a community centre for Aboriginal people located in California. There is little information available on Adam's previous work, but she was described by all those interviewed as dedicated to the Friendship Centre and sympathetic to its members. Adams was willing to listen to the Advisory Council and other Aboriginal members of the Centre and attempted to help them address their needs because she believed that "if the Centre is to grow in a dynamic way, it must be in the hands of its users" (emphasis in original).⁷ Mary Guilbault, Indian Advisory Council, described Adams' role as bridging "the gap of understanding with the Board of Directors and society at large...[she] fitted right into the community...she was accepted by whoever she dealt with - even the young people had a lot of respect for her."⁸ Adams directed the IMFC from 1958-1963. When she left she wrote a memo recommending that the Board replace her with an Aboriginal person. Jean Cuthand, a Cree woman from Saskatchewan, was subsequently hired.

The official role of the Board of Directors was to administer public funds, determine policy, hire staff, appoint committees, and generally supervise the affairs of the Centre. Unofficially, most of these tasks were greatly influenced by suggestions from the Indian Advisory Council. The Welfare Council felt that ideally Board members would “represent a cross section of the community (business, labour, professional service groups, church Indian and Métis people).”⁹ The Board of Director minutes and proceedings indicate discussion on how to include Aboriginal people in the IMFC. One memo stated: “It is our belief that people of Indian origin should come to compose a large portion of board membership and the time may well come in the foreseeable future when either the majority or all of the board members might well be from this group.”¹⁰ At a meeting on March 9, 1959 when planning for the Centre, the question was posed “how can Indian people be drawn into the planning? Should there be a council of Indians? What part would they play?”¹¹ It was resolved to find Aboriginal people to participate in the planning process, and in the administration of the IMFC, which resulted in the creation of the Indian Advisory Council.

The Board of Directors initially consisted of eighteen community members chosen for their previous board experience and fundraising abilities. Only two of these Board members were Aboriginal people from the Indian Advisory Council. However, the Board made an effort to have Aboriginal people assume positions on the Board each year when positions became available.¹² By 1962 seven of the eighteen board members were Aboriginal representatives from the Indian Advisory Council, by 1968 the Board of Directors was entirely Aboriginal.¹³ Although the records indicate that the Board of

Directors wished to be replaced by Aboriginal people, this message was not clear to all Aboriginal participants at the Centre.

When Flora Zaharia joined the Friendship Centre in 1962, she was asked to join the Indian Advisory Council. Zaharia expressed frustration in an interview in 2004 that Aboriginal people had a group that met separately from the Board of Directors and said that she had been and was still upset by this. Zaharia voiced her concerns to the Council after observing several Advisory Council meetings. She advocated increased Aboriginal participation in the official aspects of the Centre and encouraged other Council members to take action in securing positions on the Board.¹⁴ What is unclear here is the extent to which the Board of Directors' intentions to allow Aboriginal people to take over the Board, evidenced in Board minutes and correspondence, were made clear to Aboriginal members of the Centre. Mary Guilbault, in contrast, indicated during an interview that the Advisory Council was a necessary part of the Centre during the first few years, because it allowed Aboriginal people to control the programming and day-to-day aspects of the Centre that were important for meeting the needs of the population, while the Board of Directors negotiated funding and other necessary administrative things.¹⁵ The Board of Directors acted as an advisory board on how to secure funding and other administrative matters while the Advisory Council was concerned with the day-to-day needs of the Centre.

The Indian Advisory Council consisted of twelve elected members of the Centre, and met twice monthly to organise programming for the Centre. The constitution stated that the council was intended:

1. To involve people of Indian origin in helping to plan activities and program relating to the centre, such program to include activities of a social, recreational, educational and welfare nature.
2. To act in an advisory capacity to both the staff and board of the centre.
3. To provide one means of leadership development among people of Indian origin
4. To draw up and enforce regulations concerning behaviours at the centre.
5. To raise funds, as deemed advisable, to be used at the discretion of the council.
6. To provide speakers to speak on the work of the centre and matters relating to people of Indian origin for church and community groups.
7. To seek to pass on to the community at large a true picture of people of Indian origin.¹⁶

Four members of the Indian Advisory Council sat at the Board of Directors meetings to present policies and participate in discussions. The Advisory Council was intended to encourage the development of leadership skills for Aboriginal people. It also raised funds, provided speakers, advised the staff and Board, created and enforced behaviour regulations at the Centre, and acted as public relations people. Joan Adams expressed concern that the Council's relationship to the Board of Directors, and its role as an administrative overseer for the Centre, be carefully defined so that people would not regard it as a club but as an administrative council.¹⁷

The staff at the IMFC reported to the Executive Director and was responsible for running the Centre on a daily basis, keeping abreast of local and national developments relating to Aboriginal people, providing a reasonable program of activities and public relations. Dorothy McKay was the assistant director and became the link between the Aboriginal people at the Centre and the non-Aboriginal Executive Director. McKay,

worked in particular with women and children at the Centre, making it a place to visit especially for lunch, she was very appreciated and well respected. She unexpectedly passed away several years after the Centre opened. A welfare worker was hired to do home and hospital visits. The staff also supervised clothing and food supplies and reception duties. A counsellor made referrals to other agencies who could provide services and helped people seek aid from various organisations. The program worker helped to develop and supervise programs and organised volunteers. A court worker helped Aboriginal people navigate the court system and attended juvenile and adult court sessions and established good working relations with the police and courts. The typist/bookkeeper was hired to do reception, filing, bookkeeping and correspondence. A handicraft worker placed orders for handicrafts, supplies and payments, established sales outlets for handicrafts, and promoted the handicraft program.¹⁸ There were also many volunteers who were instrumental in the day-to-day operations of the Centre.

The Friendship Centre struggled to secure sufficient funding from the beginning of its operation. The Board of Directors and the Advisory Council frequently wrote letters to provincial and municipal governments requesting grants. James Frideres identifies a lack of long term funding as a major obstacle for Friendship Centres. Many government departments funded only short commitments, which required yearly renewals, and prevented long term planning. The funding provided was insufficient to run even many short term programs.¹⁹ The government was concerned that additional funding could create a precedent which could be used by the Friendship Centre to continue to demand federal funds. Therefore, most of the money was given on a short

term limited grant basis. The provincial and federal governments entered into a fifty/fifty cost sharing program for administration of funds in 1963. After that agreement the province administered grants for the Friendship Centre on behalf both the federal and provincial government.²⁰ Although the records and interviews indicated the constant frustration of Centre members and staff in obtaining enough funding the Centre successfully managed what funds it did obtain. The lack of funds was often eased by the strong presence of volunteers at the Centre.²¹

The creation and administration of programming at the IMFC was one of the main ways Aboriginal people acquired agency at the Centre during the early years. The Board of Directors and the Executive Director relied on the Indian Advisory Council to identify needs and suggest appropriate programs. It believed that the “success of the Centre is due in part at least, to the fact that many Indian people feel a responsibility for planning and carrying out projects and programme at the centre and we suggest that only when the Indian people themselves are involved in a responsible way, can a service for Indians be effective.”²²

The first year of the Friendship Centre focussed on educational and recreational programming. According to the first anniversary pamphlet these programs helped “Indians and Métis to a full realization of their many capabilities and their ambitions in a city environment” and “encouraged young people to broaden their outlook and interests in the community by joining other youth groups, and cultural activities in the City of Winnipeg.”²³ Mary Guilbault described the early years at the Friendship Centre as “a place of awakening” due to the programming opportunities and the opportunities for

advancement for the Aboriginal members of the IMFC.²⁴

Over the next five years the staff, the Board of Directors, and the Advisory Council secured increased funding through the successful reputation of the Centre and were able to expand programming to include youth specific programs, housing assistance, employment assistance and a court worker program. The dedication of the Centre's staff, Board of Directors, Indian Advisory Council, and clientele enabled the Centre to address the needs of the Aboriginal population in Winnipeg despite the difficulties in securing long term funding.

Verna McKay, church worker and volunteer, described the programming as an attempt "to respond to needs that arose in the community."²⁵ Once a need was recognised there was a push to find funding to support programs to address it. Programming at the IMFC fell into several main categories: referral and counselling, cultural and social, and court work. The referral aspect of the Friendship Centre was initially very important. It meant referring Aboriginal people to the appropriate offices of the Department of Indian Affairs, Community Development Services, Manitoba Rehabilitation Centre, Society for Crippled Children and Adults, National Employment Service, Council for Native Employment, Special Schools Division, Neighbourhood Services, Manitoba Institute of Technology and various social service agencies.

The social and recreational programming at the IMFC provided a safe place off the streets for young people to gather and make friends. Verna McKay described the IMFC's social programs as "such a good place for so many people in those early years, and that's what a Friendship Centre is, it's a place where people can find themselves

support for who they mean to be. And they could do that with friends who care and who they could trust.”²⁶ The cultural and social programming was also the main vehicle for developing leadership among members of the IMFC. Leadership would be developed through the many social and cultural programs offered at the Centre. The IMFC was a meeting place, both casually where people met to play cards and socialise, and also was a place for groups to meet such as Alcoholics Anonymous, a sewing club, the youth group “Club 376,” and other programs. The IMFC also produced a community paper called *The Prairie Call* which served as a mode of communication between Aboriginal people and a way to establish a community within the city. In contrast to the federal government who believed that culture change was necessary for success in urban centres, the IMFC records indicate that the people involved in the Centre believed that embracing Aboriginal culture was not in opposition to urban life. Although many different First Nation and Métis cultural groups used the Centre, the people interviewed all agreed that in the city there was a shared Aboriginal identity in opposition to the dominant culture of the city. Programs such as the Pow-Wow Club and other cultural events created a social and cultural space at the Centre while simultaneously assisting people to obtain the educational and other skills needed to navigate the non-Aboriginal majority in the city.

The Centre staff and volunteers also designed outreach programming to raise awareness about the Centre and about the needs of urban Aboriginal people. This initiative included public presentations at community groups, and media releases to the local newspapers among other programs. Mary Guilbault describes her role in the outreach programs: “during that time we...became the stars of the *Free Press* and what

was the *Tribune* – we laugh about it when we think about it now. I guess they had never heard vocal Aboriginal women at that particular time.”²⁷ Both the *Winnipeg Tribune* and the *Winnipeg Free Press* reported on the activities of the Friendship Centre during its early years. One such article, “Indian groups ask help for people,” details a campaign launched by the Urban Indian Association and the Indian Advisory Council at the IMFC to petition the government to re-examine residency requirements for access to welfare.²⁸

From the first year of operation the Indian Advisory Council and Board of Directors were conscious of the over-representation of Aboriginal people in the court system and felt that a court-worker program to help people navigate the justice system, provided support, advice and translation was needed.²⁹ According to the Board of Directors Aboriginal people often had “little understanding of the legal procedures in which they were involved and the results of such short term sentences were seldom creative but very often, in fact, damaging both to the persons concerned and also to the general attitude of Indian people to law enforcement agencies.”³⁰ In 1962 the Centre appointed the first court worker using a grant from the provincial government and the Winnipeg Foundation.³¹ Aboriginal people were disproportionately represented among people arrested, tried, and convicted in Canada and were less likely than other people in the court system to plea bargain, and/or have a negotiated plea. Many people would plead guilty under the assumption that they would be found guilty no matter how they pleaded. In this view, a guilty plea with a fine was less trouble than staying in jail until a court date where they would eventually be found guilty and still have to pay a fine.³² The humiliation of not understanding the proceedings further alienated Aboriginal people in

the court system.³³

The court workers assisted Aboriginal people involved in the court system. The court workers provided guidance and translation as necessary and were the liaisons between the Aboriginal clients, attorneys, police and judges. Their role also included advising the defendant of the courses of action available to them, and sometimes acting as legal representation on simple court matters where the clients intended to plead guilty. When necessary they assisted in locating legal aid, locating clients for their court dates, and acting as liaisons between the client and families. They worked with people who had been referred to them by City Welfare, Indian Affairs, Children's Aid, hospitals and through word of mouth.

Dorothy Betz became involved in the Friendship Centre movement in 1954 when she and her husband attended the first Indian and Métis Conference. She identified with the discussions on discrimination and the frustration it caused. Initially she served on the Board of Directors, and was subsequently hired on a grant by Earl Duncan, the first court worker, to act as the second court worker.³⁴ In order to take the position Betz insisted on spending months researching and observing in the court system in order to understand the proceedings. She said that once her position as court worker became known Aboriginal people would seek her out on their own behalf, and other people within the community would make recommendations and draw cases to her attention.³⁵ Betz would also act as legal counsel for some Aboriginal people on simple charges. In other cases she would suggest to the judge that she be allowed to supervise community service for defendants instead of them going to jail.³⁶

The programs at the IMFC were designed to address immediate needs in the Aboriginal population in Winnipeg as identified by the Indian Advisory Council and Centre members. The cultural programming established a friendly meeting place and a forum for cultural revival. The main limit to cultural programming was the small amount of government funding, which the Centre overcame during this time period by diversifying their requests for charitable donations and increasing the Centre's public profile. The court worker program, funded primarily by the municipality, was particularly popular.³⁷ Overall, the programming at the Centre reflected Aboriginal input and was fairly flexible and diverse in nature and covered both the practical (housing, employment, education) and the social and cultural needs of the Aboriginal people who used the Centre.

Chapter 4 Endnotes:

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20. Breton, "Government Policies and Programs Relating to People of Indian Ancestry in Manitoba," 172.
21. John and Bernice Pilling. Interview with Leslie Hall. Winnipeg, Manitoba. May 15, 2004. Dorothy Betz. Interview #1 with Leslie Hall. Winnipeg, Manitoba. March 30, 2004. Mary Guilbault. Interview #3 with Leslie Hall. Winnipeg: Manitoba, April 2, 2004. Also: Stan McKay Jr. Interview with Leslie Hall. Winnipeg, Manitoba. March 29, 2004. And: McKay, Verna. Interview with Leslie Hall. Winnipeg, Manitoba. March 30, 2004.
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34. It should be noted that Dorothy Betz was involved in the Centre during the time period covered in this paper although her position as court worker started in 1964-5 and continued beyond the years covered in this paper. However, her experiences are still relevant to this paper as her interview provided information on how a person with no training became a court worker.
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37. Edward W. Scott, (Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Indian Métis Friendship Centre), "Letter to The Mayor and Council of the City of Winnipeg," (Winnipeg, Manitoba. September 7, 1962). AM: Indian and Métis Friendship Centre, P735, Folder 2. And also: Indian and Métis Friendship Centre, "Board of Directors, Meeting Minutes," (Winnipeg, Manitoba. September 11, 1962). AM: Indian and Métis Friendship Centre, P735, Folder 2.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

The creation of the Winnipeg Indian and Métis Friendship Centre was the result of a shared recognition among federal, provincial, and municipal governments, the Winnipeg Welfare Planning Council, and the Urban Indian Association that Winnipeg needed an agency to address the needs of Aboriginal people in the city. In 1960, two years after the resolution to open a referral Centre for Aboriginal people was passed at the Indian and Métis Conference, a review of the IMFC was conducted. The review found that during the first two years of operation the Centre had been used extensively for information and referral purposes as well as for social and recreational reasons. The report also noted that the recreational program helped develop leadership and responsibility and group pride. The recreational programs provided a therapeutic function, which was particularly beneficial to young people who came to know and trust the staff and bring out into the open other needs which could then be addressed. The review recommended that the funding for the Centre continue and that it remain open, and further recommended “that every effort be made to get community financial assistance in addition to continued government support.”¹ In 1960 the Indian and Métis Conference recognised the success of the Centre with a resolution, “that the Indian and Métis Friendship Centre and the agencies which participated in its creation be commended for the excellent work they are doing in regard to recreation and leisure-time activities.”² The Conference attributed the success to “the fact that many Indian people feel a responsibility for planning and carrying out projects and programmes at the centre and we suggest that only when Indian people themselves are involved in a responsible way can a service for Indians be effective.”³

Leadership is an important component of an organisation's public identity, and the composition of these positions of authority is a statement about the character of the group. In the case of the IMFC the leadership was both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. In its early years, the Centre was run by non-Aboriginal people because the Board of Directors from 1958 to 1963 was primarily composed of people who were not Aboriginal. However, the Board minutes, as well as my interviews, indicate that the Board members were chosen specifically for their administrative and funding raising experience as well as their willingness to accept Aboriginal involvement at the Centre. The Indian Advisory Council, the main source of Aboriginal influence at the IMFC, met as often as the Board, had fund raising responsibilities, and designed and implemented programming at the Centre. Thus, although the Centre was officially run by a group of predominantly non-Aboriginal people on the Board from 1958 to 1963, it was in practice also run by Aboriginal leaders who served as advisors and day-to-day administrators.

The IMFC was a series of strategic alliances and negotiated partnerships. Programming designed to address the needs of the Aboriginal Centre members was designed by the Indian Advisory Council. The Board of Directors dealt most often with the federal and provincial funding agencies, although the Advisory Council also submitted letters requesting funding. Over the first few years the Centre became increasingly Aboriginal operated, as a product of both the initiative and desire of the Aboriginal Centre members and assisted by the leadership training and encouragement by the Board of Directors. By 1962 nearly half of the Board of Directors included people from the Indian Council. In 1963 the staff was completely Aboriginal and over the next several years the number of staff continued to increase. When Joan Adams left her

position as executive director in 1963 she recommended that leadership initiatives be continued in order that the entire Board could soon be all Aboriginal. By 1968 the Board of Directors was composed entirely of Aboriginal people.

The 1950s brought many changes to the social and political fabric of Canadian society which contributed to the need for, and the creation of, the IMFC. An increase in the post-war population, coupled with new freedoms provided by the revised Indian Act in 1951, allowed Aboriginal people to more easily leave reserve life to seek opportunities in urban centres. The development of citizenship initiatives for immigrants and Aboriginal people in this time period, combined with the creation of human rights acts, social assistance programs and the development of voluntary welfare agencies, contributed to the change in attitudes in the general public and set the scene for the creation of the Indian and Métis Conferences and the creation of the Friendship Centre. The Friendship Centre was one of the new Aboriginal organisations created in the 1950s as a successful community development venture whereby Aboriginal people were allowed the agency to be involved in the creation of programming for their population.

In the first few years of the Friendship Centre the size of programming increased significantly. Between 1962 and 1965 home visits and referrals increased from 150 to 486, hospital visits increased from 300 to 734, social activities increased from 150 to 275, and a hugely successful court worker program (from 200 cases in 1962 to 823 in 1965) were established.⁴ The people interviewed for this thesis, both non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal, expressed significant excitement and enthusiasm over the early years of the Centre's existence. Phrases such as "those were good years," and "it was a place of awakening" were repeated often, although transcriptions fail to convey the visible

excitement still displayed even fifty years after the Centre first opened. The level of community support, and the commitment of volunteers from the Church Workers through the Board members indicated a significant recognition of a need in the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg and a willingness to help address it. The partnerships between Aboriginal people in Winnipeg and the Board of Directors of the Friendship Centre as well as the members of the Winnipeg Welfare Council are significant for the level of actual Aboriginal influence in the direction of the IMFC.

The IMFC was a unique trailblazer for Urban Aboriginal organisations. Its particular strength lay in the cooperation between the many concerned groups and the committed individuals, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. The Centre went beyond the pragmatic concerns of housing and employment and helped create social networks which contributed to individual self worth. The combination of an Indian Advisory Council and a Board of Directors during the early formative years of the Centre was a unique way to use the strengths of both the non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal members of the Centre.

Chapter 6 Endnotes:

1. “Report of the Indian and Métis Friendship Centre for the Period of January 1st, 1959 to December 31st, 1959” (Winnipeg, Manitoba: 1959). AM: MG14, C19.
2. Welfare Council of Greater Winnipeg, “Indian and Métis 4th Annual Conference Proceedings” (Winnipeg, Manitoba. January 23-25, 1958). AM: Indian and Métis Friendship Centre, P734, Folder 1.
3. Mrs. Elmer Betz,(Dorothy) and Mrs. Ernest (Mary) Guilbault, “Letter to The Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs,” (Winnipeg, Manitoba, January 19, 1960). AM: Beatrice Brigden Papers, MG14 C19.
4. “Educate Indian Early: Director,” *Winnipeg Tribune*, February 9, 1966.

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Guilbault, Mary. Interview #1 with Leslie Hall. Winnipeg, Manitoba. March 12, 2004.

Guilbault, Mary. Interview #2 with Leslie Hall. Winnipeg, Manitoba. March 31, 2004.

Guilbault, Mary. Interview #3 with Leslie Hall. Winnipeg, Manitoba. April 2, 2004.

Guilbault, Mary. Interview #4 with Leslie Hall. Winnipeg, Manitoba. May 10, 2004.

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McKay, Verna. Interview with Leslie Hall. Winnipeg, Manitoba. March 30, 2004.

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Appendix A

HES Fax No. 261-0325

Protocol # _____
(Assigned by HES Admin.)

**Human Subject Research
Ethics Protocol Submission Form (Ft. Garry Campus)**

Psychology/Sociology REB **Education/Nursing REB** **Joint-Faculty REB**

Check the appropriate REB for the Faculty or Department of the Principal Researcher. This form, attached research protocol, and all supporting documents, must be submitted **in quadruplicate** (original plus 3 copies), to the Office of Research Services, Human Ethics Secretariat, 244 Engineering Building, 474-7122.

If the research involves biomedical intervention, check the box below to facilitate referral to the BREB:
Requires Referral to Biomedical REB

Project Information:

Principal Researcher(s): Leslie Hall

Status of Principal Researcher(s): please check

Faculty Post-Doc Student: Graduate Undergraduate Other

Campus address: _____ Phone: _____ Fax: n/a

Email address: _____ Quickest Means of contact: e-mail

Project Title: The History of the Indian and Métis Friendship Centre

Start date: September 1, 2003 Planned period of research: September 2003 to May 2004

Type of research (Please check):

Faculty Research:

Self-funded Sponsored

(Agency) _____

Administrative Research:

Central

Unit-based

Student Research:

Thesis Class Project

Course Number: _____

Signature of Principal Researcher: _____

This project is approved by department/thesis committee. The advisor has reviewed and approved the protocol.

Name of Thesis Advisor Dr. Adele Perry **Signature** _____
(Required if thesis research)

Persons signing assure responsibility that all procedures performed under the protocol will be conducted by individuals responsibly entitled to do so, and that any deviation from the protocol will be submitted to the REB for its approval prior to implementation. Signature of the thesis advisor/course instructor indicates that student researchers have been instructed on the principles of ethics policy, on the importance of adherence to the ethical conduct of the research according to the submitted protocol (and of the necessity to report any deviations from the protocol to their advisor/instructor).

Ethics Protocol Submission Form (Basic Questions about the Project)

The questions on this form are of a general nature, designed to collect pertinent information about potential problems of an ethical nature that could arise with the proposed research project. In addition to answering the questions below, the researcher is expected to append pages (and any other necessary documents) to a submission detailing the required information about the research protocol (see page 4).

1. Will the subjects in your study be UNAWARE that they are subjects? _____ Yes No
2. Will information about the subjects be obtained from sources other than the subjects themselves? Yes _____ No
3. Are you and/or members of your research team in a position of power vis-a-vis the subjects? If yes, clarify the position of power and how it will be addressed. _____ Yes No
4. Is any inducement or coercion used to obtain the subject's participation? _____ Yes No
5. Do subjects identify themselves by name directly, or by other means that allows you or anyone else to identify data with specific subjects? If yes, indicate how confidentiality will be maintained. What precautions are to be undertaken in storing data and in its eventual destruction/disposition. _____ Yes No
6. If subjects are identifiable by name, do you intend to recruit them for future studies? If yes, indicate why this is necessary and how you plan to recruit these subjects for future studies. _____ Yes No
7. Could dissemination of findings compromise confidentiality? _____ Yes No
8. Does the study involve physical or emotional stress, or the subject's expectation thereof, such as might result from conditions in the study design? _____ Yes No

9. Is there any threat to the personal safety of subjects? _____ Yes No
10. Does the study involve subjects who are not legally or practically able to give their valid consent to participate (e.g., children, or persons with mental health problems and/or cognitive impairment)? If yes, indicate how informed consent will be obtained from subjects and those authorized to speak for subjects. _____ Yes No
11. Is deception involved (i.e., will subjects be intentionally misled about the purpose of the study, their own performance, or other features of the study)? _____ Yes No
12. Is there a possibility that abuse of children or persons in care might be discovered in the course of the study? If yes, current laws require that certain offenses against children and persons in care be reported to legal authorities. Indicate the provisions that have been made for complying with the law. _____ Yes No
13. Does the study include the use of personal health information? The Manitoba Personal Health Information Act (PHIA) outlines responsibilities of researchers to ensure safeguards that will protect personal health information. If yes, indicate provisions that will be made to comply with this Act (see document for guidance - <http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/phia/index.html>). _____ Yes No

Provide additional details pertaining to any of the questions above for which you responded "yes."
Attach additional pages, if necessary.

In my judgment this project involves:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	minimal risk
<input type="checkbox"/>	more than minimal risk

(Policy #1406 defines "minimal risk" as follows: "... that the risks of harm anticipated in the proposed research are not greater nor more likely, considering probability and magnitude, than those ordinarily encountered in life, including those encountered during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.")

_____/_____/_____
dd mm yr

Signature of Principal Researcher

Ethics Protocol Submission Form
Required Information about the Research Protocol

Each application for ethics approval should include the following information and be presented in the following order, using these headings:

1. **Summary of Project:** Attach a detailed but concise (one typed page) outline of the **purpose** and **methodology** of The study describing **precisely** the procedures in which subjects will be asked to participate.

The purpose of the project is to collect personal stories pertaining to the history of the Indian and Metis Friendship Centre. The interviews will be used in conjunction with other research from the provincial archives, and the library to write a 100 page masters thesis. The subjects will be asked to recount their memories of the Friendship Centre. This study focuses primarily on the early years of the Centre, including the period of planning and creation of the Centre. However participants will be encouraged to recount any and all experiences, and will not be limited to discussing any particular time period.

Participants will be asked to participate in a minimum 20 minute, taped interview. Interviews will be taped only with the consent of the participant and participants may remain completely anonymous if they wish. Participants will be asked a series of open ended questions and be encouraged to tell stories, and discuss their memories in a conversational style. Follow up questions may be asked in addition to the ones attached for clarification and expansion purposes. All participants will be aware that they are able to refrain from answering any questions they are uncomfortable with.

2. **Research Instruments:** Attach copies of **all** materials (e.g., questionnaires, tests, interview schedules, etc.) to be given to subjects and/or third parties.

Participants will be asked to answer the following questions, participants may choose to not answer any of the questions, or to stop the interview at any time:

1. Describe your memories of the Friendship Centre.
2. Describer your role/involvement/type of participation at the Friendship Centre.
3. Describe what you remember about the creation of the Friendship Centre.
4. Describe how they think that the Friendship Centre has impacted their life, or the lives of others.
5. Describe any problems or obstacles that the Friendship Centre has faced over the years.

6. Describe any other stories or experiences from their time at the Friendship Centre.
 7. Is there anything else you would like to add?
 8. Do you have any questions for me?
3. **Study Subjects:** Describe the number of subjects, and how they will be recruited for this study. Are there any special characteristics of the subjects that make them especially vulnerable or require extra measures?

The subjects for this study are any volunteers from the Indian and Metis Friendship Centre who have memories of the early years of the Centre and wish to participate. Each participant will also be asked if they have any suggestions for future interview subjects. There are no characteristics that make the participants vulnerable or that require extra measures.

4. **Informed Consent:** Will consent **in writing** be obtained? If so, attach a copy of the consent form. (see guidelines on informed consent). If written consent is not to be obtained, indicate why not and the manner by which subjects' consent (verbally) or assent to participate in the study will be obtained. How will the nature of the study and subjects' participation in the study be explained to them **before** they agree to participate. How will consent be obtained from guardians of subjects from vulnerable populations? If confidential records will be consulted, indicate the nature of the records, and how subjects' consent is to be obtained. If it is essential to the research, indicate why subjects are not to be made aware of their records being consulted.

Informed consent will be obtained either orally on the interview recording or in writing depending on what the subject is comfortable with. Please see following consent form.

Consent to Interview Form

Research Project Title: *The History of the Indian and Metis Friendship Centre*

Researcher(s): *Leslie Hall*

Thesis Advisor: *Dr. Adele Perry (St. John's College)*

This consent form has been approved by the Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board. A copy of this form will be left with you for your records and reference and is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Who am I?

My name is Leslie Hall - I am a graduate student in the Joint Master's Program at the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg.

What am I doing?

I am working on my Canadian History Master's thesis, which is about the Indian and Metis Friendship Centre here in Winnipeg. Part of my thesis may be published in an upcoming book on Winnipeg History sponsored by the Winnipeg Foundation. The current Executive Director of the Centre has allowed me to access the written files at the Provincial Archives, however I also hope to be able to speak to people who were involved in the creation of the Centre, and who have been involved with it over the years.

I am looking to record people's stories about the creation, and early years of, the Friendship Centre. Although I am particularly interested in the early years of the Centre I would welcome stories about the Centre from any time.

This project is not for profit, and will be used for academic purposes only, including my written thesis, thesis defense, possible conference presentations, and publications. All participants may remain anonymous if they wish.

What am I asking for?

I would appreciate you allowing me to record an interview with you. The interview will take from 20 minutes to as long as you wish. If you start the interview and do not wish to continue, please tell me. If I ask questions you do not want to answer this is perfectly OK with me. You can also contact me later if you decide you do not want me to use the information you give me. You may also remain anonymous if you wish.

DO YOU AGREE TO LET ME TAPE RECORD AN INTERVIEW WITH YOU?

YES

NO

DO YOU WISH YOUR NAME TO REMAIN CONFIDENTIAL?

YES

NO

If so I will not use your name in my notes or in my thesis or published articles.

WOULD YOU PREFER TO CHOOSE OR BE ASSIGNED A PSEUDONYM (IE JOHN SMITH) OR CHOOSE OR BE ASSIGNED A NUMBER (IE INTERVIEW #2)?

DO YOU WANT ME TO GIVE YOUR ORIGINAL TAPE/TRANSCRIPT TO THE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE AFTER MY RESEARCH IS COMPLETE?

YES

NO

IF NO: Your tape/transcript will be destroyed.

You have given me a lot, what will I be giving back?

I would be happy to make you a free copy of the tape of your interview. I will also present my thesis orally for the people of the Friendship Centre before I hand it in at school. I would also be happy to notify you if I publish any part of my thesis.

I will also be giving all my research notes, written thesis, any conference papers, or other publications based on the research to the Friendship Centre.

WOULD YOU LIKE A COPY OF THE TAPE?

YES

NO

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE NOTIFIED WHEN I PRESENT MY PAPER FOR THE FRIENDSHIP CENTRE?

YES

NO

How can you get in contact with me?

If you have any questions you can contact me at:

My phone number is: ..

My e-mail address is:

Or you may contact the Human Ethics Secretariat at (204) 474-7122

Or contact my thesis advisor Adele Perry at:

E-Mail: perrya@ms.umanitoba.ca

228 St. John's College, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, MB R3T 2M5

Your contact information:

Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

E-mail:

Signature:

5. **Deception:** Deception refers to the deliberate withholding of essential information or the provision of deliberately misleading information about the research or its purposes. If the research involves deception, the researcher must provide detailed information on the extent and nature of deception and why the research could not be conducted without it. This description must be sufficient to justify a waiver of informed consent.

There is no deception in this project. All participants will be made fully aware of what their data will be used for. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants included in the study.

6. **Feedback/Debriefing:** Describe the feedback that will be given to subjects about the research after they have completed their participation. How will the feedback be provided and by whom? If feedback will not be given, please explain why feedback is not planned. If deception is employed, debriefing is mandatory. Describe in detail the nature of the post-deception feedback, and when and how it will be given.

Participants will be given a copy of the audio tape of their interview. I will also be presenting my thesis to the Friendship Centre before I defend it at the University of Manitoba. If the participants wish I will notify them if a portion of my thesis is published. All research notes, tapes/transcripts will be given to the Friendship Centre as soon as my research is done. All participants have the option of having their tape/transcript destroyed and NOT included with what is given to the Friendship Centre.

7. **Risks and Benefits:** Is there any risk to the subjects, or to a third party? If yes, provide a description of the risks and the counterbalancing benefits of the proposed study. Indicate the precautions taken by the researcher under these circumstances.

There are no risks to third parties.

8. **Anonymity and Confidentiality:** Describe the procedures for preserving anonymity and confidentiality. If confidentiality is not an issue in this research, please explain why. Will confidential records be consulted? If yes, indicate what precautions will be taken to ensure subjects' confidentiality. How will the data be stored to ensure confidentiality? When will the data be destroyed?

Participants who wish to remain anonymous will be referred to with a pseudonym in all research notes and publications, their real name will not appear anywhere on the interview tape, the interview notes, research notes, the written thesis, or any publications or presentations. The tapes/transcripts/research notes will be donated to the Friendship Centre, all participants have the option of having their tape destroyed and not included with what is given to the Centre.

9. **Compensation:** Will subjects be compensated for their participation? Compensation may reasonably provide subjects with assistance to defray the costs associated with study participation.

There will be no monetary compensation. Participants will be given a free copy of the audio tape of their interview if they wish.