BUILDING AND BREAKING NATIONS: THE MÉTIS, CAPITALISM, AND STATES IN THE NORTH AMERICAN WEST, 1870-1935

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Abstract

This dissertation examines how settler colonization and state formation impacted an Indigenous nation and their identities in the North American West over the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Rather than commonalities, I explore how Métis communities experienced Canada and the United States differently. In the mid-to-late nineteenth century, the Métis witnessed the bison, an essential source of food and trade goods, be nearly eliminated from the northern Great Plains. Canada and the United States had begun to expand national economies westward, leading to mass settlement, commercial agriculture, and continent-wide industrial capitalist and market systems. Although bison hunting had been socially and economically important, I emphasize Métis communities' adaptations to these circumstances. I use census records, estate files, tribal court documents, and other archival material to understand household structures, livelihoods, land tenure, and geographic divisions after the end of the fur trade and during Canadian and American nation-building. In doing so, I highlight Métis socioeconomic cohesion and division over time but show how distinct political and legal contexts shaped family strategies, economic opportunities, and political consciousness. I reveal that Métis communities gradually reworked the concepts of collective identity, governance, and rights depending on their position north or south of the border. I show that this process led to the formation of a distinct Métis national identity in Canada, which did not come together in the United States. By centring the view from below and human agency where possible, this dissertation brings historical processes to the forefront and emphasizes the historical construction of collective identities.

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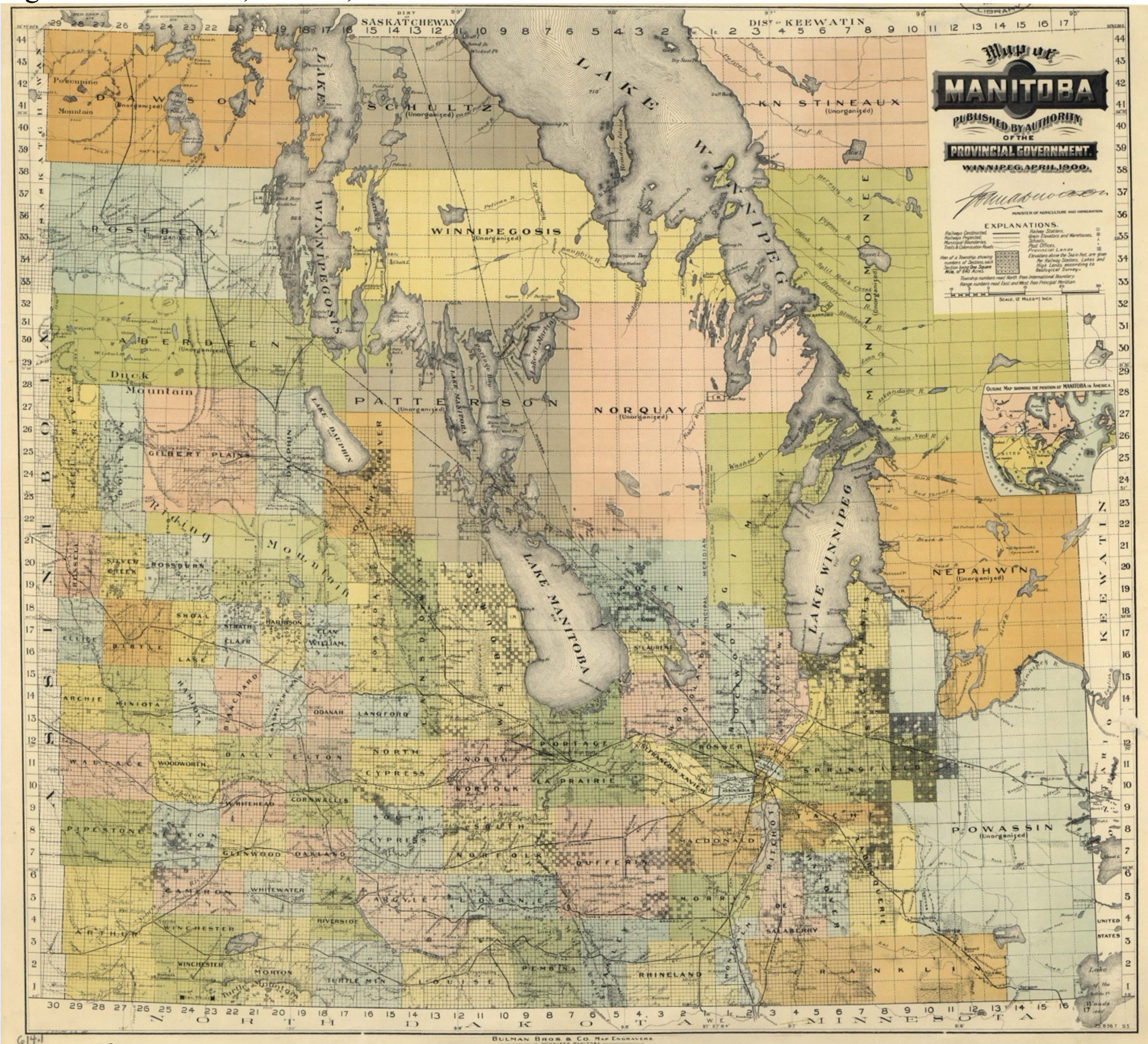

Source: Bulman Bros. & Co. *Map of Manitoba Published by the Authority of the Provincial Government*. Winnipeg, April 1900. 1:760,320. Winnipeg, Manitoba Department of Agriculture and Immigration. Found at https://www.flickr.com/photos/manitobamaps/2086270771/in/photostream/.

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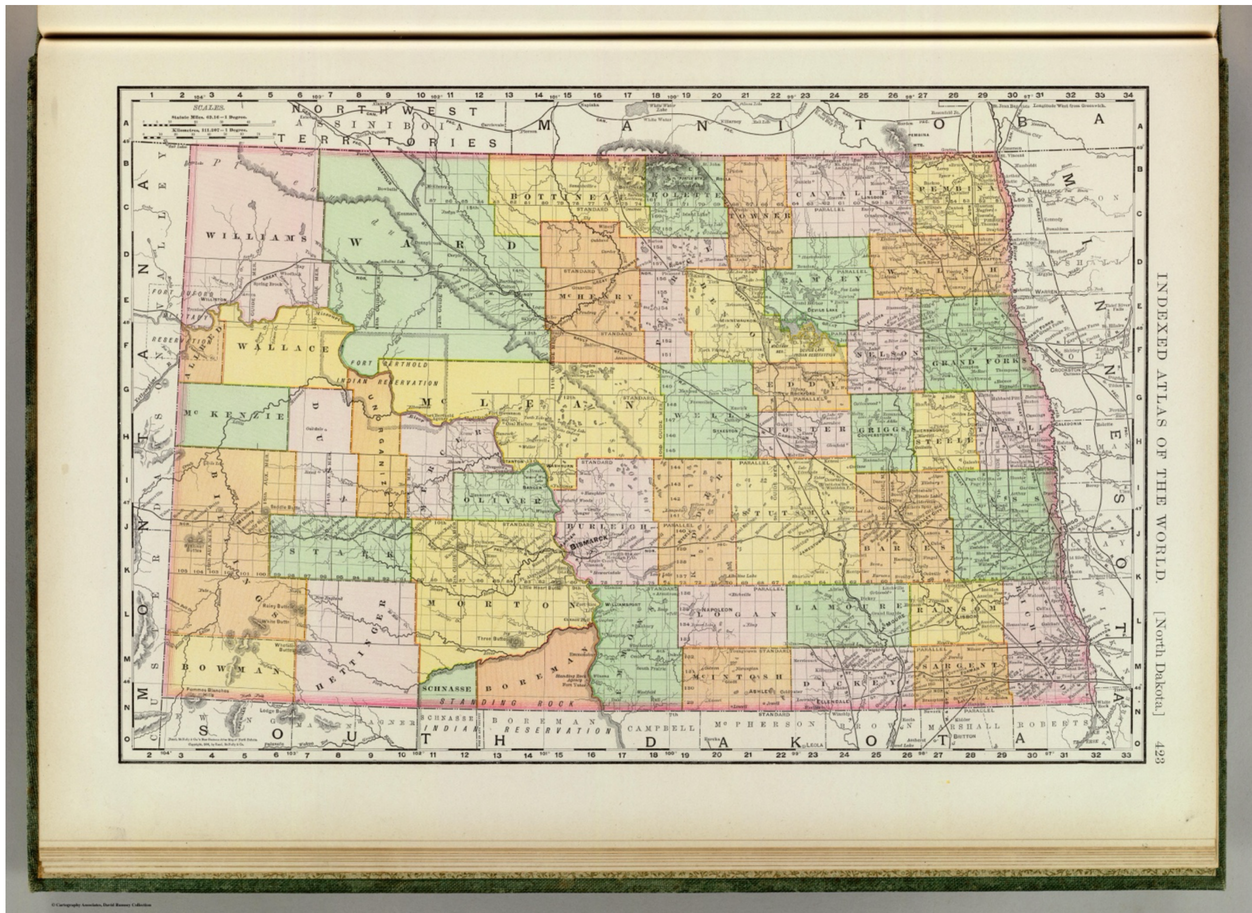

Source: Rand McNally & Co. *New Business Atlas Map of North Dakota*. Chicago and New York: Rand McNally Co., 1897. 1:300,000. Found at https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~20812~560093:Rand,-McNally-&-Co--s-new-business-#.

Introduction

My dissertation examines nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century settler colonialization and identity formation. Recent historical research has established relatively similar structures and processes for the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Over the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, settlers centralized authority over delimited territories. Elected legislatures, accountable executives, and judiciary helped resource extraction and a more comprehensive industrial capitalist transformation. The franchise grew more expansive, and taxation became more systematic. Decision-making and administrative bureaucracies gained significant social independence so long as representatives and civil servants sought the 'public' welfare. Citizenship then reflected liberal ideas of rights-bearing and equal individuals.[1] But scholars contend the cultural parameters of nation-states determined the historical subordination of Indigenous people. Settlers embraced a binary between their new national identity and various Indigenous peoples. This binary imagined the latter as distinct races and inferior social entities, unable to handle industrial life without 'protection' and could not participate in the modern state unless 'properly' trained. Indigenous peoples' supposedly antiquated economies and political customs sanctioned mass land seizure, physical confinement, and assimilatory programs.[2] In other words, liberal democratic states systematically denied Indigenous peoples the rights and freedoms enjoyed by citizenries. Of course, scholars show Indigenous peoples resisted domination and maintained cultural identities, even as demographics

[1] For theory of the modern state, see Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power: The Rise of Classes and Nation-States, 1760-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). James C. Scott has a more top-down perspective in *Seeing like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

[2] Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London: England: Cassell, 1999) and *The Settler Complex: Recuperating Binarism in Colonial Studies* (Los Angeles: UCLA American Indian Studies Center, 2016).

limited the effectiveness of economic conflict. Over the twentieth century, Indigenous sociopolitical movements reflected and reinforced the liberal idea of rights-bearing Indigenous collectives, eventually ensuring greater self-governance in the nation-state.[3]

This dissertation draws attention to an Indigenous nation—the Métis in North America—to uncover new insights into the histories of settler colonization and the politics of identity formation. In particular, I address the historical contours of Métis collective consciousness, showing how Métis communities and identities influenced (and were influenced by) the expansion of Canadian and American nation-states into the North American West during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.[4] Although recent research has shed significant light on the historical dynamics of power and identity, the studies of settler colonialism cannot wholly explain the historical experiences of Métis communities. In the mid-nineteenth century, the Métis were hunters, traders, and farmers across the parklands and river valleys of the northern Great Plains. Over the late nineteenth century, Métis communities found themselves on differing sides of a newly administered territorial border between Canada and the United States. I focus on how Canada and the United States treated these Métis communities differently and how Métis communities on different sides of the border made claims to differing sets of rights. With that in mind, I observe that the nation-state-specific political and legal conflicts over rights and freedoms reshaped Métis collective consciousness, enabling Métis national identities to flourish

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[3] Francesca Merlan, "Indigeneity: Global and Local," in *Current Anthropology* 50, no. 3 (2009): 303–33. For late-twentieth century Indigenous politics, see Ravindra Noel John De Costa, *A Higher Authority: Indigenous Transnationalism and Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2006); Maximilian C. Forte, *Who Is an Indian?: Race, Place, and the Politics of Indigeneity in the Americas* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013); Michelle Harris, Martin Nakata, and Bronwyn Carlson, eds., *The Politics of Identity: Emerging Indigeneity* (Sydney: UTS ePRESS, 2013).

[4] For the problem with "turning names into things," see Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2010) 6-7.

in twentieth-century Canada in a way they could not in the United States. I contend that the adoption or marginalization of Métis national identities can be unravelled more fully if we examine the social histories of Métis communities.[5] I examine how Métis individuals and families remade livelihoods and relationships once industrial capitalist and market economies replaced the North American fur trade in the late nineteenth century. I show how family strategies and community expectations gradually made the social conditions for Métis national identities possible in the Canadian, rather than American, political-legal context. As a result, I conclude that collective identities, like the making and positioning of social and personal identities, were historically contingent and constructed.[6] In other words, people are what they make themselves under specific historical conditions.

In doing so, I explore Métis experiences and identity reformation to broaden our view of the fraught transition from North American borderlands to bordered land. Historians do not see Indigenous peoples as passive objects when the European invasion of the Americas commenced and accelerated, whether scholars look at, for example, Algonquian-speaking beaver trappers in the central Great Lakes and subarctic, Iroquoian-speaking farmers and traders in the eastern Great Lakes, and Muskogean-speaking farmers and deer hunters in the southeast woodlands.[7]

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[5] For historiographical shifts and the 'cultural turn,' see Geoff Eley, *A Crooked Line: From Cultural History to the History of Society* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2005); Judith Surkis, "When Was the Linguistic Turn? A Genealogy," in *The American Historical Review* 117, no. 3 (2012): 700–722; and Gary Wilder, "From Optic to Topic: The Foreclosure Effect of Historiographic Turns," *The American Historical Review* 117, no. 3 (2012): 723–45.

[6] "Though they seem to invoke an origin in an historical past with which they continue to correspond," Hall writes, "…identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language, and culture in the process of becoming rather than being." Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs "Identity?" in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, eds. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (New York: SAGE Publications, 1996) 4.

[7] Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (Williamsburg: Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1975). Arthur Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade: Their Roles as Trappers, Hunters, and Middlemen in the Lands Southwest of Hudson Bay, 1660-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017) 72-91. For the initial period fur trade, see Arthur Ray and Donald B. Freeman, *"Give Us Good Measure": An Economic Analysis of Relations Between the Indians and the Hudson's Bay Company*

The implication is that the British, French, and Spanish Empires were never monolithic, leading some historians to see North America as many borderlands. Scholars like Pekka Hämäläinen, Alan Taylor, and Anne Hyde show Indigenous nations supported these fluid regional spaces, which became evolving zones of diplomacy, socioeconomic relations, and cross-cultural exchanges with Europeans and Euro-Americans.[8] Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron contend the rise of American, Canadian, and Mexican nation-states eroded borderlands since these governments required clear and fixed territorial borders and liberal constitutions determined rights and freedoms of inhabitants within their boundaries.[9]

Before 1763 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978); Charles A. Bishop, *The Northern Ojibwa and the Fur Trade: An Historical and Ecological Study* (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, 1974); Bruce G. Trigger, *Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1660* (Montréal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 1976); Calvin Martin, *Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); Shepard Krech III, *Indians, Animals, and the Fur Trade: A Critique of Keepers of the Game* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981); William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011); Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change Among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988); Bruce G. Trigger, "Early Native North American Responses to European Contact: Romantic versus Rationalistic Interpretations," *The Journal of American History* 77, no. 4 (1991): 1195–1215; Daniel K. Richter, *The Ordeal of the Longhouse: The Peoples of the Iroquois League in the Era of European Colonization* (UNC Press Books, 1992); Gregory Evans Dowd, *A Spirited Resistance: The North American Indian Struggle for Unity, 1745-1815* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992); Jean M. O'Brien, *Dispossession by Degrees: Indian Land and Identity in Natick, Massachusetts, 1650-1790* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997); Claudio Saunt, *A New Order of Things: Property, Power, and the Transformation of the Creek Indians, 1733-1816* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); William C. Wicken, *Mi'kmaq Treaties on Trial: History, Land, and Donald Marshall Junior* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); Michael Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations: How the Native New World Shaped Early North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011). For another perspective, see Michael McDonnell, *Masters of Empire: Great Lakes Indians and the Making of America* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2016).

[8] Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2007); and Anne Hyde, *Empires, Nations, and Families: A History of the North American West, 1800-1860* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011). For macro-views, Pekka Hämäläinen, *Indigenous Continent: The Epic Contest for North America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2022) and Ned Blackhawk, *The Rediscovery of America: Native Peoples and the Unmaking of U.S. History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023). For a continental scale in theory and practice, including the development of new meta-narratives, see Michael Witgen, "Rethinking Colonial History as Continental History," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (2012): 527-530.

[9] Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North American History," in *The American Historical Review* 104 no. 4 (1999): 814-841. For a study of the western Great Lakes, see Bethel Saler, *The Settlers' Empire: Colonialism and State Formation in America's Old Northwest* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015). For a continental perspective, see

I join works on the messy decline of the northwestern borderlands, where Métis communities were caught between Canadian and American border-making and nation-state building. Scholars like Benjamin Hoy observe that Britain and the United States barely administered the 49th parallel in Red River Valley and northern Great Plains well into the nineteenth century, even if their diplomats established the boundary line in 1818.[10] In this regional space, historians generally recognize that Métis communities, who descended from the marriages between First Nations women and French-Canadian men, developed a social organization and shared culture over the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century.[11] Importantly, historians note the Métis seized fur trade opportunities, drawing on their kinship ties to maintain alliances with Plains Cree and Plains Ojibwe communities and using their autonomy to navigate the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and North-West Company (NWC) until the two firms merged in 1821. Scholars see Métis assertiveness, particularly against the HBC and its

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Paul Frymer, *Building an American Empire: The Era of Territorial and Political Expansion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019). For a global look at similar political and legal processes, Lauren Benton discusses the "lumpiness" of imperial sovereignty and its difference from state sovereignty in *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[10] Benjamin Hoy, *A Line of Blood and Dirt: Creating the Canada-United States Border across Indigenous Lands* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021). For an overview of the region, see Sterling Evans (ed.), *The Borderlands of the American and Canadian Wests: Essays on Regional History of the Forty-ninth Parallel* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006).

[11] For marriage and the fur trade, see Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983) and Jennifer S. H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996). For For a broad look at voyageur culture, see Carolyn Podruchny, *Making the Voyageur World: Travelers and Traders in the North American Fur Trade* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006) and Jean Barman, *French Canadians, Furs, and Indigenous Women in the Making of the Pacific Northwest* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015). For the mid-18th century conditions for Métis identity, see John Foster, "Wintering, the Outsider Adult Male, and the Ethnogenesis of the Western Plains Métis," in *Prairie Forum,* vol. 19, no. 1 (1994) 1-14. For the role of mobility in Métis society, see Nicole St-Onge and Carolyn Podruchny, "Scuttling along a Spider's Web: Mobility and Kinship in Metis Ethnogenesis," *Contours of a People: Metis Family, Mobility, and History,* eds. Nicole St-Onge, Carolyn Podruchny, Brenda Macdougall (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012) 49-92. For terminology, see Peter Bakker. *A Language of Our Own: The Genesis of Michif, the Mixed Cree-French Language of the Canadian Metis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 53-55 and 64-65. For a continental framework, which uncovers hybrid identities in other regions, see Anne F. Hyde, *Born of Lakes and Plains: Mixed-Descent Peoples and the Making of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2022).

attempts to govern the Red River Settlement, as historically significant.[12] These works show the extent to which Métis communities expressed a distinct sociopolitical consciousness before the United States and Canada expanded northwestward during the 1860s. I untangle the gradual social consequences of the 1869-1870 Red River Resistance and the Canadian ratification of the *Manitoba Act* for these Métis communities.[13] Max Hamon argues that Métis leaders resorted to armed confrontation and formed a provisional government to compel Canada to create a new province and recognize Métis peoples' democratic, linguistic, educational, and property rights. These leaders, as Hamon concludes, thought Métis interests could be achieved by state-building.[14] I trace Métis communities' claims to the *Manitoba Act*, which enabled Métis communities to fall outside Canada's assimilationist and paternalistic program in the 1876 *Indian Act*.[15] However, I also direct attention immediately south of the border where Métis communities did not acquire similar rights and privileges as those north of the border. Michel Hogue contends Métis communities became a difficulty for the United States since American laws and practices

[12] Susan Dianne Brophy, *A Legacy of Exploitation: Early Capitalism in the Red River Colony, 1763-1821* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2022) and Jean Teillet, *The North-West is Our Mother: The Story of Louis Riel's People, the Métis Nation* (Toronto: HarperCollins Canada, 2019). For the events, see Dale Gibson, *Law, Life, and Government at Red River: Settlement and Governance, 1812-1872*, vol. I (Montréal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015).

[13] J.E. Read and Jeff Scott, "Manitoba Act," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, last modified on February 7, 2021, found at https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/manitoba-act, accessed on 13 February 2024.

[14] Max Hamon, *The Audacity of His Enterprise: Louis Riel and the Métis Nation That Canada Never Was, 1840-1875* (Montréal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020), specifically 160-175 and 270-271.

[15] For Canadian treaty-making in the Red River Valley and northern Great Plains, see J.R. Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aboriginal Treaty-Making in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009) 150-186. For agricultural policies, see Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montréal-Kingston: McGil-Queen's University Press, 1993) and James Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Indigenous Life* (Regina: University of Regina, 2013). For health, see Mary Ellen Kelm, *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-50* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998) and Maureen Lux, *Medicine that Walks: Disease, Medicine, and Canadian Plains Native People* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001). For bureaucracy and surveillance, see Keith D. Smith, *Liberalism, Surveillance, and Resistance: Indigenous Communities in Western Canada, 1877-1927* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009.

only conferred rights to citizens and 'Indian tribes.'[16] In addition to the Manitoba Métis, I focus on the Métis people who joined the Plains Ojibwe and sought land at Turtle Mountain in North Dakota.

Métis identity reformation can be understood more fully by considering the historical dynamics between capitalist political economies and family strategies.[17] Arthur Ray has pointed out the socioeconomic complexity of Métis communities, represented by their seasonally organized bison hunts, freighting, and farming activities.[18] Gerhard Ens and George Colpitts have shown that Métis hunting, freighting, and trading gained greater importance over the mid-nineteenth century because Métis communities not only relied on bison for a food source but also cornered the highly profitable bison robe trade.[19] I redirect our attention to the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century to show how Métis communities adapted to the end of bison hunting and the onset of agricultural settlement, railways, and urbanization, which historians

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[16] Michel Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line: Creating a Border and Dividing a People* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2015). For federal judges' ideas of Indian tribes and sovereignty in the early-to-mid-nineteenth century, see James H. Lengel, "The Role of International Law in the Development of Constitutional Jurisprudence in the Supreme Court: The Marshall Court and American Indians," in *American Journal of Legal History,* 43, no. 2 (1999): 117-132; and Stephen G. Bragaw, "Thomas Jefferson and the American Indian Nations: Native American Sovereignty and the Marshall Court," in *Journal of Supreme Court History* 31, no. 2 (2006): 155-180. For the removals, see Claudio Saunt, *Unworthy Republic: The Dispossesion of Native Americans and the Road to Indian Territory* (New York: W. W. Norton Company, 2020).

[17] Historians have returned to studies of political economy, albeit often from a cultural lens. For historiography overview of 'the new history of capitalism,' see Seth Rockman, "What Makes the History of Capitalism Newsworthy?," in *Journal of the Early Republic* 34, no. 3 (2014): 439–661; and Eric Hilt, "Economic History, Historical Analysis, and the 'New History of Capitalism,'" in *The Journal of Economic History* 77, no. 2 (2017): 511–36. For case studies, see Sven Beckert and Christine Desan (eds.), *American Capitalism: New Histories* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2018).

[18] Arthur Ray, *Telling It to the Judge: Taking Native History to Court* (Montréal-Kingston: McGill-Queen University Press, 2011), specifically 105-120.

[19] Gerhard Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 93-122; and George Colpitts, *Pemmican Empire: Food, Trade, and the Last Bison Hunts in the North American Plains, 1780–1882* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

usually consider forces of marginalization.[20] Importantly, global historians like James Belich, John Weaver, and Scott Reynolds demonstrate that the northern Great Plains was folded unevenly into worldwide processes and structures of mass immigration, land privatization, and commodity exchange.[21] Social historians have identified the uneasy co-existence and interplay of capitalistic farmers, small-scale mixed agriculturalists, land speculators, and highly mobile labourers in light of the cyclical booms and busts.[22] Rather than a linear and monolithic transition to industrial capitalism, we have a portrait of settler societies' internally differentiated rural communities unevenly integrated into market systems and values.[23]

Indeed, I join a literature wherein scholars trace the short- and long-term strategies families used to navigate economic life in rural areas. In various geographic and cultural contexts, social historians have long pointed to the social priorities of family members,

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[20] For the different perspectives on Métis marginalization, see Ens, *Homeland to* Hinterland and D. N. Sprague, *Canada and the Métis, 1869-1885* (Kitchener: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2009). For the decline of bison populations in North America, see Andrew C. Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison: An Environmental History, 1750-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) and M. Scott Taylor, "Buffalo Hunt: International Trade and the Virtual Extinction of the North American Bison," in *American Economic Review* 101, no. 7 (December 2011): 3162–95. On the railways and expansion, see Richard White, *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011).

[21] James Belich, *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Angloworld* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Scott Reynolds Nelson, *Oceans of Grain: How American Wheat Remade the World* (New York: Basic Books, 2022); and John Weaver, *The Great Land Rush and the Making of the Modern World, 1650-1900* (Montréal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003). For the global economy, see Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2011) and Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System II: Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy, 1600–1750, With a New Prologue* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2011). See also, Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century, Vol. I: The Structure of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century, Vol. II: The Wheels of Commerce* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1992); and Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century, Vol. III: The Perspective of the World* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1992).

[22] Paul Voisey, *Vulcan: The Making of a Prairie Community* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988); Jeffery M. Taylor, *Fashioning Farmers: Ideology, Agricultural Knowledge and the Manitoba Farm Movement, 1890-1925* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1994)

[23] For a broad look at the United States before 1920, see Christopher Clark, "The Agrarian Context of American Capitalist Development," in *Capitalism Takes Command: The Social Transformation of Nineteenth-Century America*, eds. Michael Zakim and Gary J. Kornblith, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012) 13-39.

highlighted the organized actions to reach these objectives, and addressed the relationship of strategies to the broader historical processes.[24] Rather than self-interested and individualistic behaviour, studies of family strategies illustrate that intergenerational relationships and community exchanges often shaped the division of household labour, acquisition of skills and technology, and land ownership patterns.[25] Historians thus demonstrate how immediate family units and broader networks engaged markets selectively to address, for example, their living standards and ensure life-cycle transitions. As such, I focus primarily on the family strategies Métis people used to build new livelihoods and remake communities amidst uneven economic development. I show that family objectives—like old age security, stable living conditions, and children's life chances—were often similar north and south of the border. However, Canadian and American legal and political statuses distinguished Métis families' opportunities and choices over time.

To that end, I answer calls to unpack settler colonization in North America.[26] My study starts in the Red River Valley of northern North America in the 1870s and ends in the early 1930s. The Red River Valley was a geographic zone of parklands and grasslands between the

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[24] For the broad contours of the family history, see Tamara K. Hareven, *Families, Families, History, and Social Change: Life Course and Cross-Cultural Perspectives* (Oxford: Taylor and Francis, 2018). For a series of case studies, see Andrejs Plakans and Tamara K. Hareven, *Family History at the Crossroads*: *A Journal of Family History Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017).

[25] For Manitoba, see Royden Loewen, *Family, Church, and Market: A Mennonite Community in the Old and the New Worlds, 1850-1930* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois, 1993) and Kenneth Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism: Family, Culture, and Markets in Montcalm, Manitoba, 1870-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001). For a regional perspective, with a focus on migration, see Randy William Widdis, *With Scarcely a Ripple: Anglo-Canadian Migration into the United States and Western Canada, 1880-1920* For Ontario, see Chad Gaffield, *Language, Schooling, and Cultural Conflict: the Origins of the French-Language Controversy in Ontario* (Montréal-Queen's University Press, 1987). For a continental framework, see Gérard Bouchard, "Family Reproduction in New Rural Areas: Outline of a North American Model," in *The Canadian Historical Review* 75 (1994) 475-510.

[26] For a recent discussion, see Jeffrey Ostler and Nancy Shoemaker, "Settler Colonialism in Early American History: Introduction," in *William and Mary Quarterly* 76 (2019): 361-368. In the same issue, see Allan Greer, "Settler Colonialism and Empire in Early America," William and Mary Quarterly 76 (2019): 383–90.

woodlands of the western Great Lakes and the prairie of the northern Great Plains. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Métis communities hunted and farmed seasonally, travelling great distances to keep contact until the decline of bison populations and the end of the fur trade. In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, a generation of Métis people could not merely reproduce seasonality and mobility. Mass settler colonization established new economies, and nation-states introduced border control measures, constraining the possibility of a cross-border social life. The Manitoba Métis communities made farms and emphasized the schooling of youth. Based on their location, Métis communities encountered Canadian or American governing institutions, reshaping cultural and political identities in different ways north and south of the border. The Manitoba Métis communities elected lawmakers and claimed educational and linguistic rights, which reflected the provincial legislatures' attempt to erode these rights over the early twentieth century. The Manitoba Métis, however, developed a cultural association to communicate a national consciousness embedded in the province and linked to the creation of the *Manitoba Act*. In North Dakota, Métis families marginalized Métis national identity to claim land with the Plains Ojibwe, which American lawmakers, administrative bureaucracies, and courts required and reinforced over time. As livelihoods and governance evolved, so did Métis communities' collective experiences, claims, and consciousness.

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Archives, Records, and Chapter Outline

This study uses various primary sources. Some, like newspapers and official reports, are qualitative records. Others, like censuses, are quantitative ones. I consider both types of records critically.[27] All the written documents were created in the late nineteenth and early twentieth

[27] Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

century as Canada and the United States sought to realize continental ambitions. The fact that the records persist in some physical or digital form is historically important because paper records were less plentiful and could have been easily damaged or destroyed. As such, historical records are neither natural nor inevitable. Canada and the United States produced and preserved written documents in the processes of state formation. Each established national archives. Archives of an 'official' character are physically compartmentalized and socially hierarchical architectural spaces where specialized workers receive, classify, store, and destroy records produced through the government's bureaucratic-legal and military power.[28] "The archive," Nicholas Dirks thus points out, "is a discursive formation in the totalizing sense that it reflects the categories and operations of the state itself."[29] Historians cannot then merely re-assemble archival records in a coherent manner. Dirks contends, "[the] state literally produces, adjudicates, organizes, and maintains the discourses that become available as the primary texts of history."[30]

Some have called the critical approach to written records and repositories an 'archival turn,' but the theoretical and methodological process has coincided with a 'digital turn.' Official archives, like those of national governments, Canadian provinces, and American states, increasingly make records and collections available in a digital format online, either through their own website or that of an institutional partner. Access has, theoretically, been raised because personal computers are readily available to peruse online digital records. However, historians have seen conventional methods, like archival visits and knowledge accumulation, change because, as Laura Putnam points out, digital records alter the temporal-spatial dynamic of

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[28] For the materiality of archives, see Achille Mbeme, "The Power of the Archive and its Limits," in *Refiguring the Archive,* eds. Carolyn Hamilton et al. (Berlin: Springer, Science, and Business, 2002) 19-26.

[29] Nicholas Dirks, "Annals of the Archive: Ethnographic Notes on the Sources of History," in *From the Margins: Historical Anthropology*, eds. Brian Axel (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2002) 58.

[30] Ibid.

our methods. Research into faraway places could now be undertaken if archival traces were found online. Their availability (or not) and retrieval then pose new conceptual questions. In some circumstances, historians can now use text search to find digitized historical sources and 'glance' at other online repositories to link them together. As Putnam suggests, the 'glance' can be a connective act. Digitized historical sources and text searches might draw similar people across distinct places historically separated by national archives and methodological nationalisms into a common analytical framework.[31] But, even if we do, historians should not let digital reproduction distract from the initial production of historical records. The fact that the written texts were created and some were omitted is significant. To think otherwise is to evade the historical processes and purposes separating the records and how that disconnection privileges specific interpretations.

I examine records preserved by Canadian and American archives to analyze quantitative and qualitative sources. In doing so, I contribute to efforts, like those of Chris Andersen and Michel Hogue, to think critically about and expand our view of the archival traces left by Métis individuals and communities.[32] In the Canadian context, I draw primarily on the Provincial Archives of Manitoba (PAM), Library and Archives Canada (LAC), and La Société Historique de Saint-Boniface (SHSB) for census records, court files, administrative documents, and voluntary association papers in Manitoba. I mostly use the National Archives and Records Administration in the United States for census records, bureaucrat files, and tribal court ledgers

[31] Lara Putnam, "The Transnational and the Text-Searchable: Digitized Sources and the Shadows They Cast," in *The American Historical Review* 121, no. 2 (April 1, 2016): 377–402.

[32] Chris Andersen, *"Métis": race, recognition, and the struggle for indigenous peoplehood* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015) and Michel Hogue, "Still Hiding in Plain Sight?: Historiography and Métis Archival Memory," in *History Compass* vol. 18, no. 7 (2020): 1-15. See also, Jennifer Adese, ""R" is for Métis: Contradictions in Scrip and Census in the Construction of a Colonial Métis Identity," in *Topia* 25 (2011) 203-212.

in North Dakota. Although I also examine legislation, regulations, reports, and newspapers, I focus on these records because some of these documents provide essential data to explore how socioeconomic, legal, and political changes impacted the Métis over the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For example, the 1901 Canadian and 1900 American censuses include information on age, marital status, household membership, occupations, education, and land ownership, allowing us to gauge changing life choices, family strategies, and social structures. Another example is the distinct court records, which include information on property ownership in the Canadian context and legal disputes in the American context. Analyzing court records helps us understand the impact of divergent political and legal statuses on these socioeconomic processes. My use of national and provincial archives and state and federal agency records highlights both the transnational scope of Metis life, but my analysis shows how distinct nation-states shaped life courses and political and cultural consciousness.

My exploration of Métis communities, identities, and histories is divided into four chapters. I focus on late nineteenth-century Manitoba in Chapter One, using census records to situate the evolution of Métis nationalism in local farming communities, schooling, language shifts, and the politics of Canadian federalism. In Chapter Two, I focus on late nineteenth-century Métis families at Turtle Mountain reservation in North Dakota, who became politically closer to a Plains Ojibwa community. Like Chapter One, I analyze census records to understand demographics and socioeconomic structures, but I explore how American federal policy reform and settlement influenced Métis people's reconstruction of collective identities. In Chapter Three, I draw estate files and cultural production in early twentieth-century Manitoba to show socioeconomic differentiation and Métis national identity reformation. Finally, I examine the pursuit of self-governance at the Turtle Mountain reservation, showing the impact of the

American court system and the ways the Turtle Mountain community developed new political objectives and legal claims. Together, the chapters show how Métis communities made and remade collective identities in specific historical contexts and their relationship to the concepts available to them.

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My study of the nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century settler colonization and identity formation orients our view to differences in these historical processes. I draw close attention to Métis communities in northwest North America. My social history explores family strategies and how Canadian expansion was lived differently than American expansion. I show Canadian and American politics and laws impinged upon new livelihoods. To that end, different historical experiences of distinct central authorities reshaped Métis communities' collective identity north of the border differently than south of the border. Each claimed nation-state-specific rights, leading Métis national identity to evolve and persist in twentieth-century Canada as it did not in the United States.

Chapter One: Making Métis National Identity and Late Nineteenth-Century Federalism in Manitoba, Canada

In the mid-nineteenth century, the British Empire felt numerous challenges to colonial rule.[1] From Jamaica to India to Ireland, ranging across formerly enslaved populations, indentured servants, and peasants, the experiences of different modes of labour control and commodity production influenced their confrontation with the structure of imperial governance and subaltern position in global capitalism. Over the subsequent decades, the British Empire and colonial rule in the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia evolved in reaction to these unsuccessful uprisings. Colonized populations were necessary to extract raw materials for metropolitan industries and develop infrastructure to export them. To that end, these colonial authorities sought new methods, like education and health systems, to socially discipline and culturally reshape subaltern people. These British colonies managed and reformed labouring populations, differentiating their political systems from the self-governing Dominions.

This chapter focuses on the late nineteenth-century Dominion of Canada, a self-governing settler colony in the British Empire and industrial capitalist economy amid transcontinental territorial expansion. The political and military events of 1869 and 1870 in Manitoba and 1885 in the North-West Territory are well-worn subjects in the historical writing of the country, spurring commentary almost immediately after their end and often casting the Métis as 'rebels' who jeopardized the Dominion's position in the northern Great Plains in the face of an expansionist American Republic. Although subsequent scholarship has reframed these events, marginalizing the idea of 'rebellion,' socioeconomic and political analysis has left unquestioned the linear temporal framework and unidirectional spatial orientation drawing the

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[1] Richard Brown, *Resistance and Rebellion in the British Empire, 1600-1980* (Clio Publishing, 2013).

events together in a single sphere of historical examination. Because migration over a decade and a half from one place to another further west became subject matter and premise, the Métis are uncritically rendered marginal in Manitoba, if not absent.[2] Their marginality and absence allow the late nineteenth century to serve as an endpoint for Métis national identities and a starting point for both liberal and critical historiographical discussions: the socioeconomic confrontation of labour and capital, the turning of immigrants into ethnic groups, the cultural formation of territory into a region; and so on. Even recent studies of power relations and racism follow suit. This chapter thus redirects our attention to the socioeconomic reconstitution of the Métis in Manitoba up to the turn of the century. In doing so, I add to scholarship, like those of Evelyn Peters, Matthew Stock, and Adrian Werner, David Parent, and Frank Tough, on local Métis communities within and regional communities just north of the province.[3] But I broaden the view

[2] For early-to-mid-nineteeth century studies, see A.H. Trémaudan, *Riel et La Naissance du Manitoba* (Winnipeg: L'union nationale metissé Saint-Joseph du Manitoba, 1921); Marcel Giraud, *The Métis in the Canadian West* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1986); Irene M. Spry, "The Métis and Mixed- Bloods of Rupert's Land before 1870," in *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America*, edited by Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S. H. Brown (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1985): 95–118; Heather Devine, *The People Who Own Themselves: Aboriginal Ethnogenesis in a Canadian Family, 1660-1900* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004); George Colpitts, *Pemmican Empire: Food, Trade, and the Last Bison Hunts in the North American Plains, 1780–1882* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Gerhard Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Metis in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Ens, "Conclusion," in *Homeland to Hinterland.* For the development of a real estate market and Métis participation, see Thomas Flanagan and Gerhard Ens, "Metis Land Grants in Manitoba: A Statistical Study," in *Histoire Sociale/Social History* vol. 27 no. 53 (1994) 65-87. For a localized study in a slightly different time period near southeast shores of Lake Manitoba, see Nicole St-Onge, *Saint-Laurent, Manitoba: Evolving Métis Identities, 1850-1914* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2004). For the specific components of property ownership and Dominion lands, see John Langton Tyman, *By Section, Township and Range: Studies in Prairie Settlement* (Brandon: Brandon University, 1995). For broad conceptualization of property regimes after 1870 in line with Polanyi, Irene Spry, "Tragedy of the Loss of the Commons in Western Canada," in *As Long as the Sun Shines and the Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies*, edited by Ian Getty (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1983) 203-229. For a discussion of dispersal defined by the boundaries of the Red River Colony, see P. R., Mailhot and D. N. Sprague; "Persistent Settlers: The Dispersal and Resettlement of the Red River Metis, 1870–1885" in *Canadian Journal of Ethnic Studies* 17 (1985): 1–30. For an overview of the historiographical debates that emerged in the late-twentieth century, see Brad Milne, "The Historiography of Métis Land Dispersal, 1870–1890," in *Manitoba History* 30 (1995): 30–41.

[3] Evelyn Peters, Matthew Stock, and Adrian Werner, *Rooster Town: the History of an Urban Métis Community, 1901-1961* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2018) and David Parent, *Governing Metis Indigeneity: The Settler-Colonial Dispossession and Regulation of Métis in Mid-Twentieth Century Manitoba* (PhD

from the study of local contexts to focus on the formation of families and household economies for those who stayed in Manitoba. It draws on a careful examination of written records, specifically organizational ledgers in the late 1880s and the oral interviews of the federal census in 1901. I thus bring the dynamic between the building of a national institution and the forces of social reproduction into closer historical view. My analysis of Manitoba Métis communities includes age and generation, farm and market redevelopment, and cultural and linguistic change. I situate this analysis in the politics of schooling in the 1890s in Manitoba. Although historians usually centre the binational question of 'French Canada' and 'English Canada,' I reveal these conflicts helped reshape Métis collective identity and politicized Métis national consciousness.

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Making Métis Families and a National Association in Manitoba

In the late 1880s, the Métis expressed their consciousness of a distinctive collective identity in Manitoba. Individuals formed the Union nationale métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba in 1887. Before their formation, the settler revolution extended into northwest North America after the Dominion incorporated Manitoba. In the mid-1870s, Dominion governance developed a national policy: mass settlement, agricultural production, and a railway network in western Canada would constitute the material base of a continental free trade zone and consumer market for the tariff-protected manufacturers of Ontario and Québec. Manitoba burst to a population of roughly 62,000 in 1881 from around 25,000 a decade earlier.[4] Dominion officials instituted local interventions of administrative bureaucracy and central authority, which federal policymakers

Dissertation: University of Alberta, 2021); and Frank Tough, *"As Their Natural Resources Fail": Native Peoples and the Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1870–1930* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996).

[4] Table A2-14, "Historical Statistics of Canada: Section A: Population and Migration," *Statistics Canada*, found at https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-516-x/sectiona/4147436-eng.htm, accessed 15 January 2023.

framed in the highly racialized terms of the *Indian Act* (1876) and which was then extended across the country. This law was an attempt at standardization and systematization. The legislation, wherein federal lawmakers defined the legal status of 'Indians' in Canada and relating to reserve lands, applied to the signatories of the Numbered Treaties. The law excluded the grantees of property rights under the *Manitoba Act* (1870), including the Métis.[5]

In 1885, the Métis formed a provisional government in the North-West Territories (NWT) and attempted to garner similar interests enumerated in the *Manitoba Act*. This community had grown after some Métis families relocated from a booming Manitoba. Their livelihoods, however, suffered from the decline of bison populations and the federal government's failure to consider their land tenure. Unlike a decade and a half earlier, federal policymakers did not negotiate with the Provisional Government of Saskatchewan. The Dominion forcibly repressed the Métis challenge posed to central authority and, under Canadian laws, executed the leader, Louis Riel, and imprisoned some participants after criminal trials.[6]

Mass settlement's volatility and the national state's power shaped the material base of the Métis' collective consciousness in Manitoba. Although Manitoba's elected lawmakers enlarged the province's western boundary and Canada finished a trans-continental railway in the early 1880s, Manitoba and the NWT's settlement continued slowly, and another boom in mass migration across the region waited until the first decade of the twentieth century. Neither area could match the settlement patterns elsewhere in North America. Because of the unstable returns

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[5] For a look at the Numbered Treaties, see Jean Friesen, "Magnificent Gifts: The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of the Northwest, 1869–1976," In *The Spirit of the Alberta Indian Treaties*, eds. Richard T. Price (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1999) 203–13.

[6] For a broad look at the procedures and process after the 1885 NWT Resistance, see Bob Beal and Barry Wright, "Summary and Incompetent Justice: Legal Responses to the 1885 Crisis" in *Canadian State Trails Volume III: Political Trials and Security Measures, 1840-1914*, eds. Barry Wright and Susan Binnie (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009) 353-410.

of specialized agricultural production for the international market and capital and knowledge scarcity for the environmental conditions of the northern Great Plains, Manitoba and NWT became peripheral sites for potential settlers. This condition contrasts with the southern Great Plains, built from an expansive transportation network linking the American Midwest to eastern coastal cities.[7] Manitoba's population jumped to roughly 150,000 by 1891, and the NWT population grew to 100,000 in the same year from around 56,000 a decade earlier.[8] In 1901, the population of Manitoba was around 250,000, and the City of Winnipeg had grown to a little over 42,000 from slightly under 8,000 nearly two decades earlier. The English-speaking population experienced a decades-long economic depression. Some channelled their material anxieties into the cultural development of Protestant churches. Others joined the Grand Orange Lodge of British North America, which celebrated the Métis' defeat in 1885 after the perceived martyrdom of an Orangeman in the events of 1870. The socioeconomic circumstances, particularly a divide between West and East, made the concept of region and its different relationship to English-Canadian national identity possible.[9] In a broader movement, anglophone writers and speakers anchored nationalism to an ideology of political and cultural unity in the British Empire.[10]

[7] Since the mid-1930s, given the explosive population growth in western Canada and the corresponding wheat boom between 1897 and 1911, the timing of settler colonialism has been a major point of debate among historians. For the different focuses on taxation, railways, and agricultural technology, see Tony Ward, "The Origins of the Canadian Wheat Boom, 1880-1910," in *The Canadian Journal of Economics / Revue Canadienne d'Economique* 27, no. 4 (1994): 865–83.

[8] Table A2-14, "Historical Statistics of Canada: Section A: Population and Migration," *Statistics Canada*, https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-516-x/sectiona/4147436-eng.htm, accessed 15 January 2023.

[9] Doug Owram, *The Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982) 190-191, 202-203.

[10] Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970).

The Métis National Union (MNU) emerged in this context. The MNU sought to institutionalize and communicate a Métis national identity. Their internal documents, however, are sparse. For example, after 1887, the MNU kept a bound ledger. Rather than the careful transcription of internal dialogue and debate, the writers mostly noted the motions of an annual assembly and plans made for summer gatherings. However, the ledger does contain two crucial pieces of information. First, it includes a list of members from the late 1880s to the 1890s. One hundred names are recorded, and so too are their place of residence. Most lived in Catholic parishes near Winnipeg. These parishes, dated from the mid-nineteenth century, include Baie St. Paul, St. Anne, St. Boniface, St. François-Xavier, St. Norbert, St. Pierre-Jolys, and St. Vital. Others, such as St. Rose du Lac and St. Laurent, had been formed in the late nineteenth century.[11] The former was in the parkland near Lake Dauphin, and the latter was in the southwest lowlands near Lake Manitoba.[12]

The ledger also includes the MNU's constitution. It conceptualized national identity. Since French was the MNU's principal operational language, members implicitly depended on shared knowledge of who was and was not Metis. But the constitution did differentiate between "métis français" and "canadien français." The latter could be members if their families had inhabited the area historically. The constitution used 1 July 1870 as a cut-off. The date was immediately after the provisional government had accepted the *Manitoba Act.* Dominion enforcement came into effect two weeks later, and settlement sped up. Nonetheless, the

[11] Page 13-14 in Procès-verbaux, 1887-1909, Dossier, item 0285/1332/015, fonds 0285, Union nationale métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba, Centre du patrimoinie, Société historique de Saint-Boniface, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, found at https://archivesshsb.mb.ca/media/0285/0285-1332-015-A.pdf, accessed 15 June 2020.

[12] Ibid 13-14.

association had a clear goal. Members aimed to communicate the idea of the "nation métisse," particularly among "les enfants de la nation metisse habitant le Manitoba."[13]

The federal census of 1901 provides a viewpoint into the broader community the MNU sought to reach. Enumerators were supplied with a questionnaire, which became the basis of the information they recorded. For example, respondents were asked about their "racial or tribal origin." Ottawa-based officials determined acceptable answers. One 'acceptable' response was "halfbreed."[14] This had been used in the late nineteenth-century government-produced Commissions of Inquiry in Manitoba and the NWT, but how respondents understood their "racial or tribal origin" and the 'acceptable' category cannot be known for sure.[15] Respondents might have followed a widespread practice. Contemporary writers and speakers used the concepts of 'race' and 'nation' interchangeably; their criteria reflected the identification and differentiation of shared collective characteristics, like ancestry, heritage, language, residence and so on. Nevertheless, in the census, the respondents categorized and differentiated themselves in the moment with the enumerator, which, when considering the 'acceptable' answers articulated in French or potentially translated into English, likely included the term Métis. The regional census commissioner, Thomas Côté, seems to have treated the terms and short forms of "halfbreed" and "métis" interchangeably when he counted the manuscript schedules. In a table submitted to the

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[13] Ibid 19-21

[14] Canada Census Office, *Introductions to Chief Officers, Commissioners, and Enumerators* (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1901) 13-14, found at https://archive.org/details/1901981901I1901eng/mode/2up, accessed 20 September 2017.

[15] Federal officials traced similar categories to those of 1901 in the individual census of 1870 in Manitoba, surveying the different parishes of the former Red River colony for the purposes of the sections under the Manitoba Act. Later that decade and into the first half of the next, federal commissions collected affidavits, where adults drew on similar categories to describe their background. For context and content, see Frank Tough and Véronique Boisvert, ""I am a half-breed head of a family…": A Database Approach to Affidavits Completed by the Métis of Manitoba, ca. 1875-1877," in *Histoires et identités métisses: homage à Gabriel Dumont / Métis Histoires and Identities: A Tribute to Gabriel Dumont,* eds. Denis Combet and Lise Gaboury-Diallo (Winnipeg: Presses universities de Saint-Boniface, 2009) 147-157.

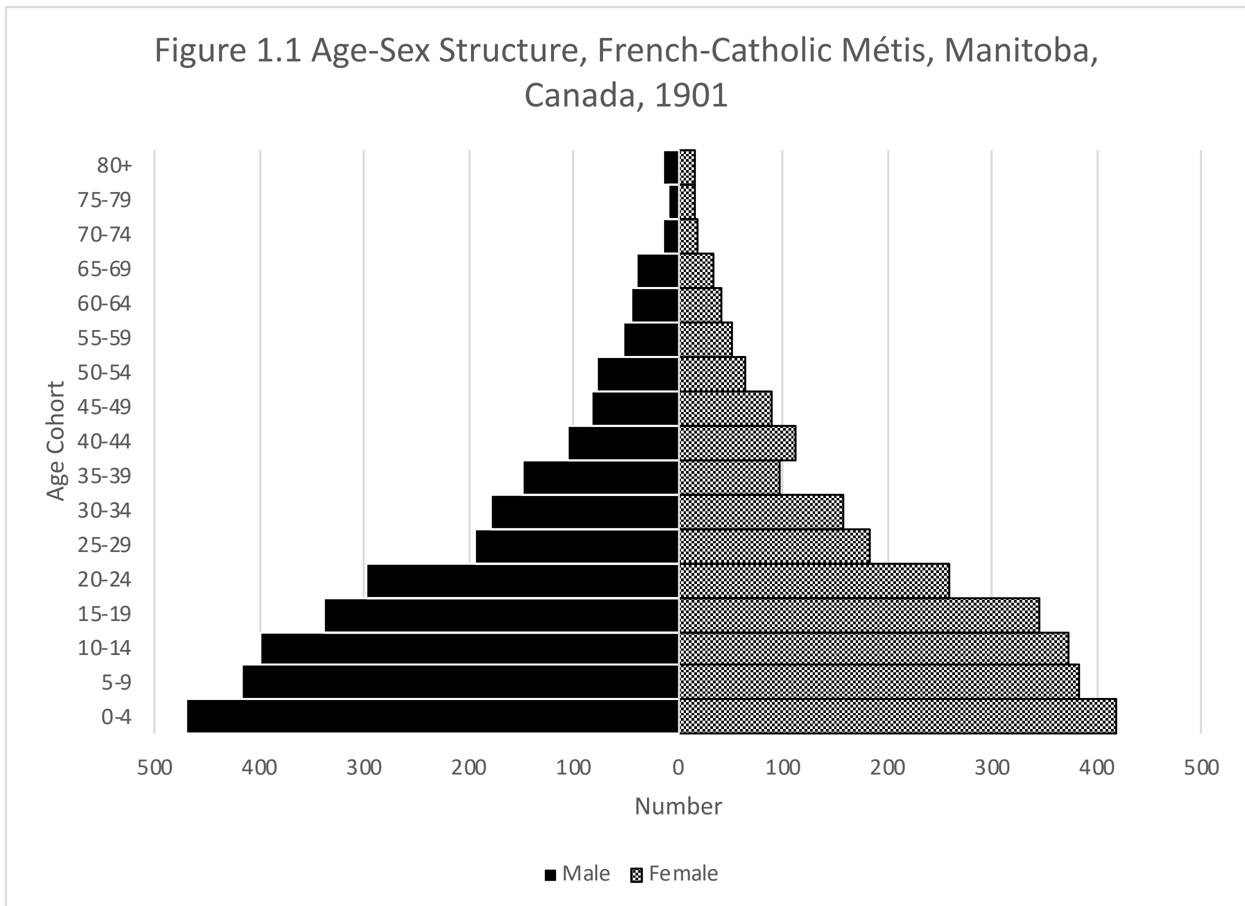
French-language newspaper *Echo du Manitoba* in 1902*,* Côté summarized Manitoba's the French-speaking population by specific categories. His report listed 5,332 "Métis Canadiens-français" out of a total French-speaking population of 16,030.[16]

The schedules clearly show a residential pattern for the Métis in Manitoba. We can see a pattern because enumerators were required to record an individual's location. Rather than *de facto*, the enumerators followed *de jure* census procedures. The procedure required enumerators to assign all individuals to their legal residence, not the households where they encountered individuals on the census day. As a result, the record shows Métis individuals in their legal residences across census districts and sub-districts. The Dominion divided Manitoba into six districts: Provencher, Selkirk, Lisgar, Marquette, Macdonald, and the City of Winnipeg. These districts were partitioned into sub-districts, each with smaller divisions. Métis households tended to be concentrated in the rural sub-districts near Winnipeg, with three rural sub-districts to the west, south, and southeast of the city containing more than one-third of the total: 129 in St. François-Xavier; 108 in Richot; and 95 in La Broquerie. Nearby, four rural and one urban sub-districts—Assiniboia, Macdonald, De Salaberry, Taché, St. Boniface, and the Town of St. Boniface—combined to have 162 households, with around 25 dwellings each. However, some Métis households were further away from Winnipeg. These were rural sub-districts near Lake Manitoba and the southeast of Lake Dauphin. One sub-district—St. Laurent—contained 96 houses, while three other districts—Ochre River, Posen, and Portage la Prairie—included 106 dwellings. Enumerators outside of these areas encountered some Métis households. A small

[16] French-speaking Québeckers and New Englanders of European-descent, as well as their Manitoba-born children, comprised most of the Province's francophone population. "Population française au Manitoba" in *L'Echo de Manitoba*, 6 Febuary 1902, found at https://digitalcollections.lib.umanitoba.ca/islandora/object/uofm%3A2649316/manitoba_download/https://digitalcollections.lib.umanitoba.ca/islandora/object/uofm%3A2649316/datastream/PDF/download, accessed 8 December 2021.

number of households in 26 sub-districts of the southeast, south-central, and northwest of Manitoba amounted to 169 dwellings. The point, however, is the Métis respondents and households were concentrated in multiple places.

The schedules provide more information on Métis individuals, allowing us to disaggregate the total population by sex and age. Rather than an aging population, men and women in their early- and middle adulthood predominated over older adults, although infants, children, and adolescents in their youth were more numerous. Figure 1.1 provides the sex and age profile of the Métis. The analysis of the manuscript schedules shows a masculinity ratio of 108.9, which means that the documentation reported 108.9 Métis males for every 100 Métis females. This slight disparity reflected differences in specific five-year age cohorts. The sex



Source: Ancestry.ca. The original sources: Library and Archives Canada, *Census of Canada, 1901*, Series RG31-C-1, Statistics Canada Fonds, Microfilm reels: T-6428 to T-6556. I provide the relevant enumeration districts in the text.

imbalance was most comprehensive for 20-24-year-olds, 30-34-year-olds, and 35-39-year-olds.[17] The sex and age profiles reveal the extent to which young females and males—adolescents and children under the age of 15 years old—predominated, more so than elderly females and males. Internal and external comparisons highlight this characteristic. In 1901, enumerators listed 2477 girls and boys under 15 years old, constituting 44 percent of those recorded. This contrasts with the 165 females and males aged 65 years and older, who made up almost 3 percent of those reported. This quantitative difference between youth and elderly can be expressed through the aging index, which shows the number of elderly people for every 100 youth. A higher number indicates an aging population. In 1901, the French-Catholic Métis in Manitoba had an aging index of 6.7. This figure differed from the rest of the province in two ways. First, the youth and elderly constituted more enormous proportions of the Métis community than those age groups did for the entire province, where individuals under 15 years old made up 38 percent and those 65 years and older represented 2.3 percent. Second, the different numbers of adults lowered the province's aging index to 6.3.[18] The point is twofold. The Métis population, not unlike the broader Canadian population, was very young and had few people 65 years and older as a percentage of the total population.

The Métis were not disconnected individuals, given the role of marriage for the men and women who transitioned to adulthood in the late nineteenth century. This is not necessarily unique. Focusing on the census report of marital status at the sub-district and regional levels, Stacie Burke's observation of the low rates of singletons among adults across Canada illuminates

[17] For the role of childbirth in anglophone women's mortality in early-twentieth century Saskatchewan and Alberta, see Nanci Langford, "Childbirth on the Canadian Prairies 1880-1930," in *Journal of Historical Sociology* 8, no. 3 (September 1995): 298.

[18] Canada. Census office, *Fourth Census of Canada, 1901* (Ottawa, Printed by S. E. Dawson, 1902), http://archive.org/details/fourthcensusofca02canauoft. 2-7.

how marriage was a near-universal life-cycle event and hegemonic social norm during the late-nineteenth century.[19] Figure 1.2 shows the importance of these unions for males and females of different five-year age cohorts between 15-64 years old, highlighting differences between males and females and various age groups. Males and females who reached their 20s and 30s during the 1870s and 1880s were mainly married, while men and women who reached this life stage in the 1890s tended towards marriage. However, marriages occurred at specific moments in the life course of these Métis men and women. The crude measure of the singulate mean age at marriage allows us to gauge the average age at which men and women in their early and middle adulthood married. This measure is drawn from the proportion of the unmarried in 5-year age-cohorts from 15 to 49 years to discern the average number of years lived before marriage.[20] The measure applies to the women and men born between 1852 and 1886. It reinforces the earlier observation of how women and men married at different times but specifies that the former married at earlier ages than the latter. There was a difference of around five years between them: on average, women married at 22.6 and men at 27.3. The rates for the elderly, that is, the men and women 65 years old and up, did not result from their abstention from marriage. Instead, elderly men and women had experienced the death of their spouses and transitioned to widowhood. Because of the residence pattern of Métis at the turn of the century, men and women who aged into their

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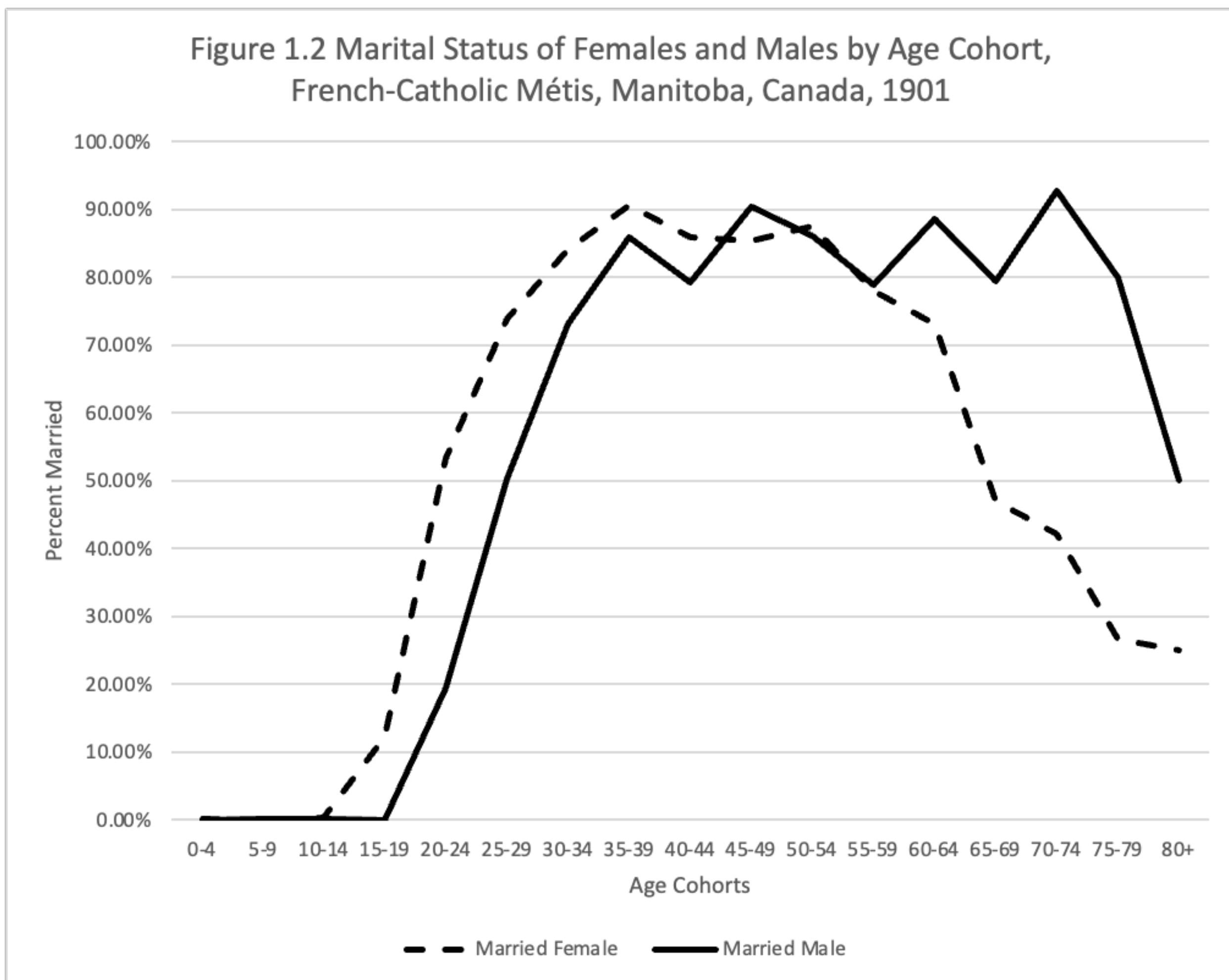
[19] Stacie D. A. Burke, "Marriage in 1901 Canada: An Ecological Perspective," in *Journal of Family History* 26, no. 2 (April 2001) 192. For the increase of women's nuptially over the twentieth century, Ellen M. Thomas Gee, "Female Marriage Patterns in Canada: Changes and Differentials," in *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 11, no. 4 (Fall 1980): 460-462. For a broad overview of anglophones in Canada, see Peter Ward, *Courtship, Love, and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century English Canada* (Montréal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 1990) 51-52.

[20] John Hajnal, "Age at Marriage and Proportions Marrying," in *Population Studies* 7, no. 2 (November 1953) 129-130. Caution is required in the use of this measure, as it has drawbacks to go with benefits. The benefit of an indirect measure of manuscript schedules is analytical: the kinds of questions asked by enumerators and the pattern of residence can be referenced alongside age and marital status to gauge how different social, economic, and spatial forces informed the timing of marriage for women and men. But, the method is indirect and the outcome is an average. This smooths variation, masks idiosyncrasies of the record, and imagines ideal individual circumstances.

early- and middle adulthood over the late nineteenth century probably experienced pressure to marry from older generations and moralizing Catholic clergy in the parishes.[21]

Their selection of marital partners reflected collective differentiation from the settler population and a sense of commonality. Métis individuals resided in areas numerically dominated by English-speaking Protestant settlers, but we know the latter continued to discipline marital practices socially. Peter Ward observes that rather than a time of personal autonomy for selecting a marital partner, families and communities influenced marriages for English-speaking



Source: See Figure 1.1.

[21] Gerhard Ens' study of marriages recorded in the sacramental register at the Catholic parish of St. François-Xavier is assumed to be representative of the Métis aligned to other parishes in the nineteenth century.

Protestants in nineteenth-century Canada.[22] Regulation worked informally to limit young adults' social contact, notably through the division of household labour and the segregation of religious institutions. In more coercive terms, parents might have also discriminated against their child's partner selection and threatened to withhold future socioeconomic and emotional support. Based on the manuscript schedules, the Métis do not appear to have married English-speaking Protestant settlers. This can be seen in Figure 1.3, which outlines Métis marriage partners before 1901. Exogamous marriages included individuals identified as "English," "French," "Scottish," and "Irish."[23] But most people partnered with other Métis. This dynamic existed for each age group. But, for clarity, this tendency in partner choice does not necessarily point to Métis men and women's complete social insulation. Unlike similarly aged men, the women in the age-cohorts of 25-29 and 30-34 years old, who married in the ten years before 1901, were more exogamous than the preceding generation. Their partners, however, shared a language and a religion since many of these women had married recent French-speaking Catholic settlers. As they aged into adulthood,-Métis men and women must have felt the internal pressure of family relatives and sensed the external marital discipline of many English-speaking Protestant settlers. Their choices came from a feeling of collective identity, which marital partnerships helped cement.

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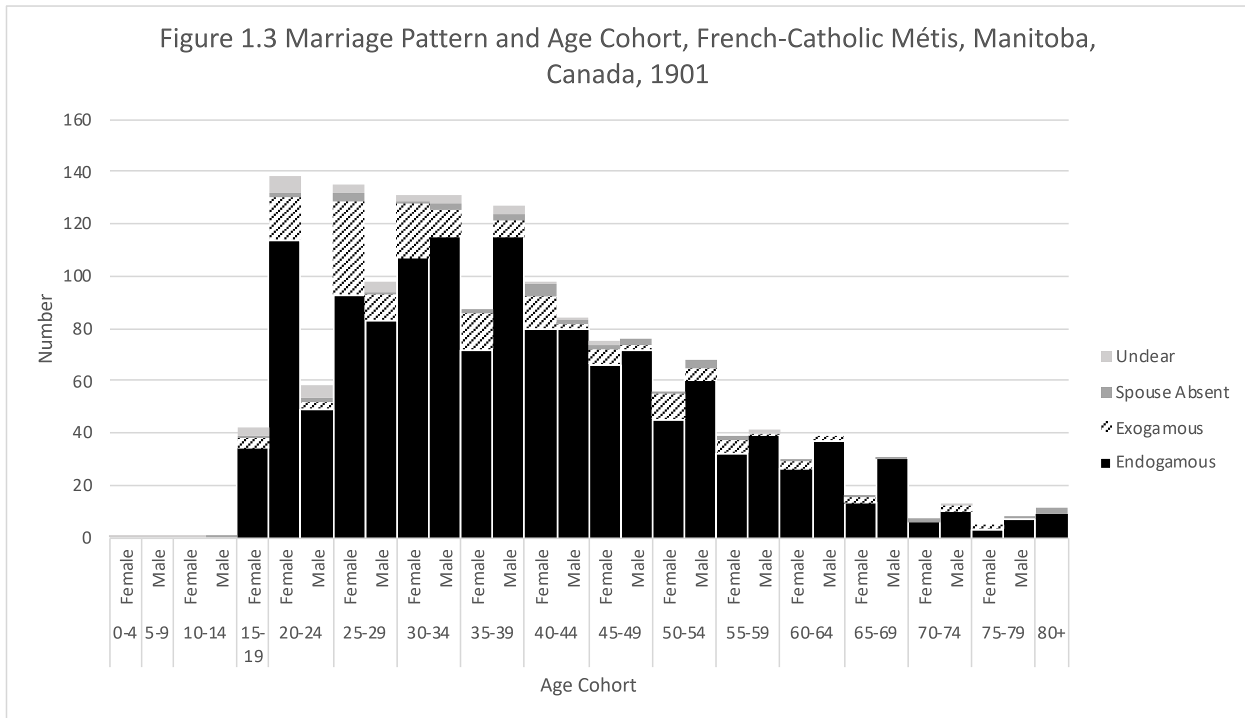
[22] Peter Ward, *Courtship, Love, and Marriage in Nineteenth-Century English Canada* (Montréal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 1990) 4.

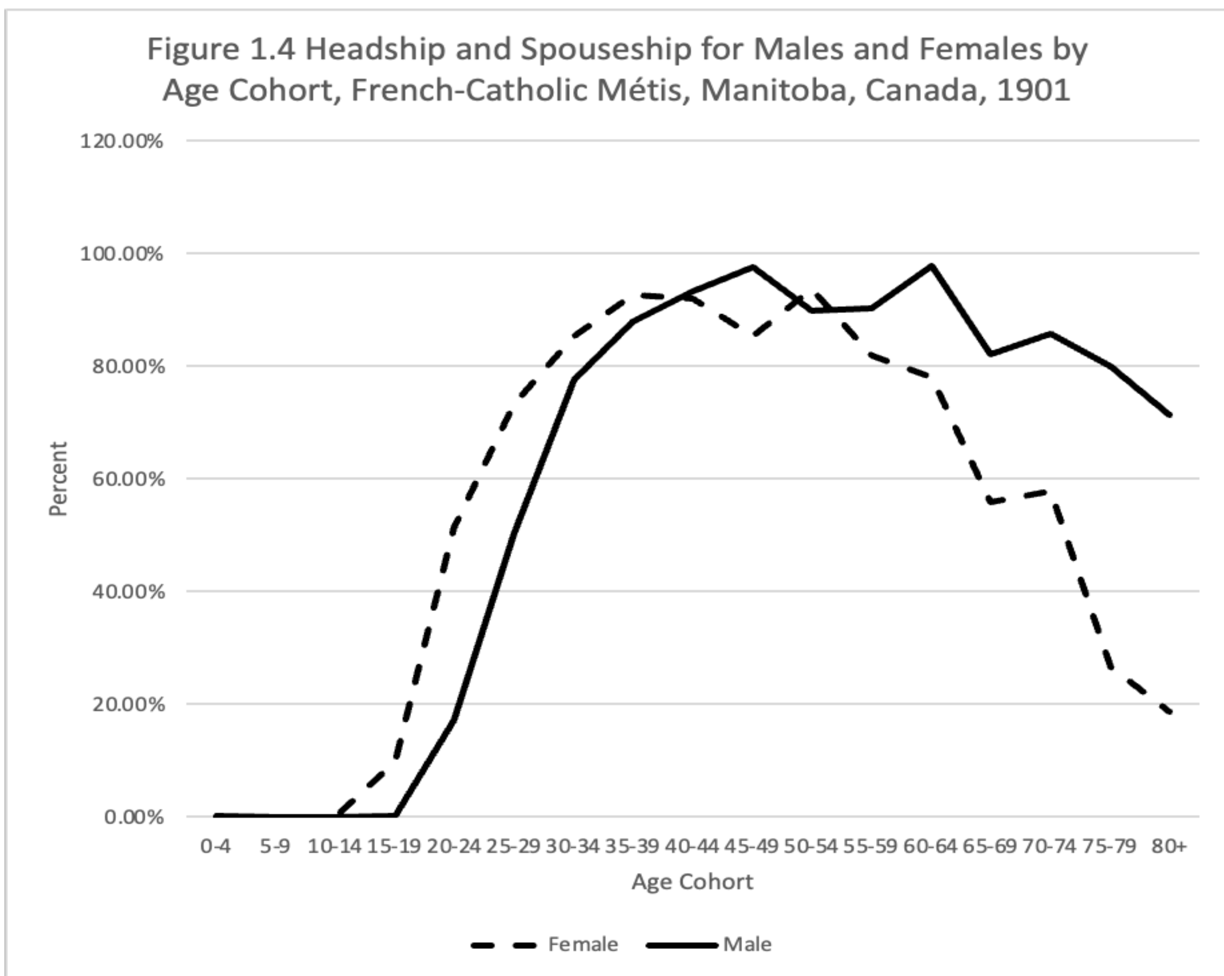
[23] For context, this chart includes several married women and men who could not be reasonable linked to a partner. These married people are included under the heading of "no data." Connection was generally precluded in situations of extended households or those dwellings which expanded to include non-kin, where the household position of the married people declared a relationship to the household head rather than the union of two people.



Source: See Figure 1.1

In 1901, married Métis couples typically constituted nuclear and independent households. They also resided near kin relations. The census enumeration touched on the relationships and roles between individuals in the dwelling. Based on contemporary ideas regarding family roles and social identities, enumerators recorded multiple terms to describe household members. This included wife, daughter, son, niece, nephew, father, mother, servant, domestic, and so on. This terminology precludes an explanation of what the categories represented to the respondents. Still, the categories provide an indirect view of the family roles and social identities that structured households. First, the categories of household status—headship and spouseship—suggest the formation of independent households after marriage. Many men and women in their early- and middle adulthood who showed high marriage rates were categorized this way. The establishment of independent households was a common characteristic. Table 1.1 illustrates their composition at the household level using the terms used to discern a classification. The scheme employs the method developed and used to study household structures in Canada and the United States. The

three major categories—lone-headed, married couple, and extended households—are divided to grasp the presence and absence of children and household members without a reported family relationship. This categorization, however, analyzes the *proportion of individual people* in particular kinds of households in the province rather than the *proportion of specific household structures* in the province. This distinction helps illustrate people's circumstances rather than assume that the kinds of households reflect the broader experience.[24] The magnitude of primary



Source: See Figure 1.1.

[24] This method of simplification comes with a couple of important caveats. First, the reliance on the description of household relations in the manuscript schedules means that members of extended households might be categorized as residing in household with non-kin. Second, the category of married couples with children includes members of households with step- and adopted children. Where possible, the description draws on some of these less prevalent complexities and explores them alongside analysis of broad patterns.

individuals (0.40 percent) indicates that few lived alone. Being without family members or non-kin was not a common household practice for Métis at the time.

An important takeaway is how many people lived with other family members. The proportions can be simplified: around three in five people lived in households of married couples and children, and around one in five lived alongside extended relatives. The variations of these structures—lone parents and married couples without resident children—were slight (5.21 percent and 2.22 percent). The analysis also reveals the modest degree to which people resided alongside non-kin. When taken as a whole, the quantity was a little under fifteen percent. This occurred in the following ways: 7.88 percent of people lived alongside married couples and non-kin, 3.44 percent in extended households with non-kin, and 1.80 percent with lone parents and non-kin. Some Métis individuals resided alongside non-kin boarders and employees. Other Métis individuals had become non-kin boarders and employees. Their circumstances, while certainly a minority, show a degree of complexity.

Table 1.1 Household Structure of Females and Males, French-Catholic Métis, Manitoba, Canada, 1901

Household Structure	**Female**	**Male**	**Total**
Lone Head	*173*	*236*	*409*
Primary Individuals	5	17	22
Lone Head with Children	121	170	291
Lone Head with non-kin	47	49	96
Married Couples	*1836*	*2024*	*3860*
Couples without Resident Children	62	61	123
Couple with Children	1570	1735	3305
Married Couples with non-kin	204	228	432
Extended	*589*	*594*	*1183*
Extended	492	500	992
Extended with non-kin	97	94	191
Grand Total	2598	2854	5452

Source: See Figure 1.1

These family-based households were interconnected through kinship. The residence pattern shows household density in municipalities and Catholic parishes in the countryside outside of Winnipeg, as well as Catholic parishes in the parklands and lowlands near Lake Manitoba. Researchers have drawn on available documents, usually the HBC trade posts and Roman Catholic missions, to discern the family structures and kin relations of the Métis before the late nineteenth century. There is a general emphasis on the importance of kin proximity to social life, even if the geographic characteristics of household formation remain unclear. In 1901, enumerators contacted their informants at their homes, recorded the answers to questions, and then walked to the nearby dwelling to repeat the process. The implication is that the manuscript schedules reflected a spatial orientation. In this process, enumerators recorded the surnames of individuals in the dwelling. In turn, household heads' recorded surnames can be compared within distinct levels of administrative geography, like five, ten, 25, and 50 houses within the census

sub-division. This comparison provides an indirect measure of paternal kin propinquity. The premise is that similar surnames indicate potential patrilineality. To be sure, the examination of this measure reinforces the masculine character of the source and underplays the proximity to potential maternal kin. Still, Figure 1.6 suggests that household heads typically resided near potential kin: around thirteen of every 20 household heads resided in the same census sub-division as a different Métis household head. Kin proximity was high in three census sub-divisions—La Broquerie, Richot, and St. François-Xavier—with the most Métis households.

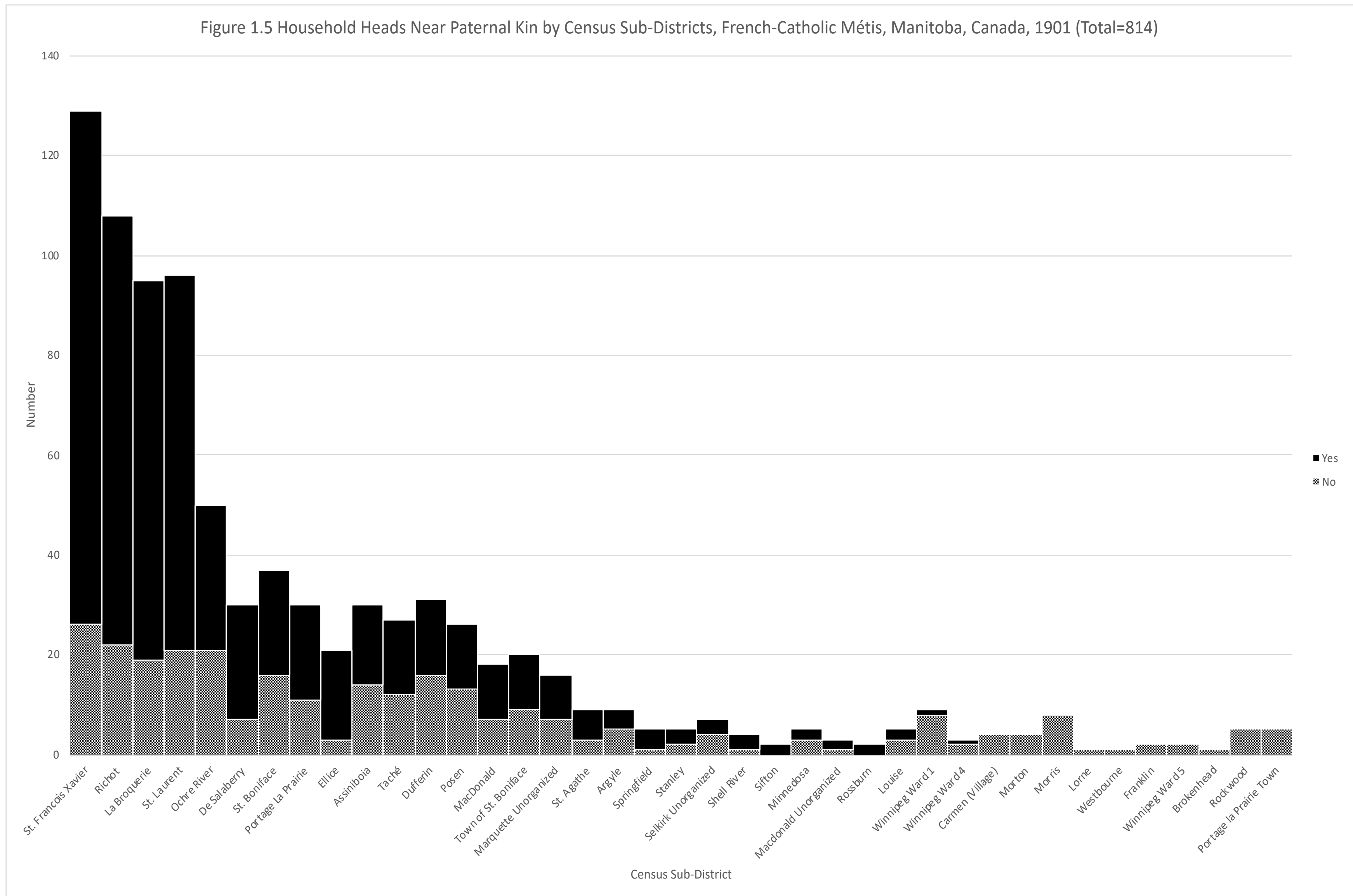


Figure 1.5 Household Heads Near Paternal Kin by Census Sub-Districts, French-Catholic Métis, Manitoba, Canada, 1901 (Total=814)

Source: See Figure 1.1

In these three census sub-divisions, kin dwelled quite close to each other: nearly a majority in each area resided within ten households of a potential patrilineal relative. While a lower proportion, most household heads in 17 of the other 33 census sub-divisions—each with around 20 Métis households—lived in the same census sub-district as potential patrilineal kin. This suggests that the family structures of the households derived from marriages, childbearing, and relations to aging parents, typically operated within proximity to paternal kin.

The point is that these life-cycle processes and family-based household formations were not necessarily separate from developing a national institution. In a period of upheaval, the Manitoba Métis reformed socially. While often overlooked, many Métis remained in Manitoba even as numerous individuals and families relocated to the South Saskatchewan River, Qu'Appelle River Valley, and Turtle Mountain. Their historical experiences were multi-dimensional, particularly for the men and women who grew into adulthood. First, they witnessed the family and household relocation of friends and relatives who left the Red River Valley for similar environments elsewhere in the parklands and grasslands. Second, they navigated the settlement boom in the late 1870s and early 1880s, the subsequent socioeconomic bust, and the cultural-ideological reformation of English-speaking Protestant settlers. In their residential areas, spoken language and religious worship socially distanced the Métis from English-speaking Protestant settlers, and verbal communication could prompt sets of individual and collective distinctions when social encounters occurred. Third, after the central state forcibly repressed the Métis-led independent democratic state in the NWT, the bureaucratic administration of Indian reserves became increasingly managerial, wherein physical segregation and economic control increased the growing social distance between the Plains Ojibwe and Métis in Manitoba. Though the 1901 census did not touch on the exact dimensions and dynamics of each element, the record

suggests some of the outcomes: the density of dwellings in historically occupied territory, the high rate of marriage for men and women in early- and middle-adulthood; the late average age at first marriage for men and the assortative marital practices; the pattern of independent dwellings headed by these birth-cohorts and age-groups; the prevalence of nuclear families and extended families; and the high rates of paternal kin propinquity in the census sub-districts.

However, this generation expressed their self-consciousness through the development of the MNU, leading to a mass ritual event. In the residential areas, the family-based households became the most consistent site of social experience, where conversations about the on-doings of daily life took place and went unrecorded in written documents. MNU picnics combined food, games, and speeches for a wider audience. The event brought different age groups together and oriented toward the collective consciousness of youth, similar to the Orange Order and St. Jean Baptiste Society. Though the ledger of the MNU does not indicate precise attendance at picnics, newspaper reports provide an impressionistic outline. In July 1895, a writer from Winnipeg, working for the English newspaper the *Manitoba Free Press*, attended a picnic outside of the Town of St. Boniface. The writer reported that 2000 individuals attended.[25] Martin Jérôme, who briefly led MNU in the early 1890s, implied the size of the gatherings when he questioned whether the 1901 census commissioner's total count—5,332—was large enough to capture his "compatriotes métis" and the "la population métisse".[26] Jérôme drew upon his experiences and observations to claim that "Métis Canadiens-français" had doubled over the previous thirty years. Even if these observations were estimates, picnics invited more people who identified as

[25] "St. Joseph's Association," in *Manitoba Morning Free Press,* 11 July 1895, found at https://newspaperarchive.com/winnipeg-free-press-jul-11-1895-p-6/, accessed on 8 December 2021.

[26] "Communications" in *L'Echo de Manitoba,* 27 February, 1902, found at https://digitalcollections.lib.umanitoba.ca/islandora/object/uofm%3A2649350/manitoba_download/https://digitalcollections.lib.umanitoba.ca/islandora/object/uofm%3A2649350/datastream/PDF/download, accessed 8 December 2021.

part of the Métis community than MNU's recorded membership shows. Because the national institution did not print and distribute a newspaper, the physical gathering enabled individuals and families to see each other if they could not on a day-to-day basis. Indeed, we might say that the picnic was a social mechanism for attendees to imagine the Métis nation as a community in Manitoba.

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The Ties that Bind: Farms, Rural Communities, and Household Economies

To fully understand Métis social reformation, we must broaden out and explore changes to their economy. The Métis had developed an economic production and consumption system before the 1870s. Rather than discrete structural positions and roles, Arthur Ray points to many actions—hunting, trapping, farming, trading, frightening, and wage-earning—that constituted their material and economic life across a vast territory and, in turn, social experiences.[27] The result was self-conscious routine and seasonal alterations. There were physical dwellings and small farms, and they worked in the spring and parts of the summer throughout a valley encompassing parts of the Pembina River and Assiniboine River along the Red River. Because British corporations and independent merchants had minimal demand for agricultural commodities, the work and output of families became seasonal and diverse. Their household economies necessitated technology and items that families could not make themselves. This included, but was not limited to, textiles and needles for the crafting, mending, and embroidering of cloth shirts, pants, and dresses; metal knives for butchering animals; metal axes and saws for the construction and maintenance of wooden carts for the transportation of cargo; and long rifles and ammunition for the horse-mounted hunt of bison. The mobile hunts for bison from the 1820s

[27] Arthur Ray, *Telling It to the Judge: Taking Native History to Court* (Montréal-Kingston: McGill-Queen University Press, 2011) 106-111.

to the 1880s, usually in the summer and fall, were mass collective mobilizations for the harvest of animals and the freight of saleable items to merchants in the Red River Valley and northern upper Mississippi River Valley.[28] Households undertook social summer and fall aggregations in bison brigades. The social aggregations moved over grasslands and parklands, including across the Red River Valley, toward the Turtle Mountains, and river valleys further west and northwest.[29] The temporary mass convergence of Métis men, women, and children was, according to Émilie Pigeon and Carolyn Podruchny, a 'mobile village.'[30] The 'mobile village' shared food and equipment, drawing on farm community practices to cooperate and support one another.[31] Members of bison brigades socially directed family labour to produce non-perishable foodstuffs, called pemmican, and robes from the bison that could be traded.[32] As Max Hamon implies, since the bison hunt was a social activity involving camps and routine conversation, the 'mobile village' could act as a communicative space and a 'public sphere' where ideas were shared and negotiated.[33]

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[28] For the corridors of freight, see Rhoda R. Gilman et al., *The Red River Trails: Oxcart Routes Between St. Paul and the Selkirk Settlement, 1820-1870* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1979).

[29] For the recollection of an outsider's experience in the mid-nineteenth century bison hunt, see Alexander Ross, *The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress, and Present State: With Some Account of the Native Races and Its General History, to the Present Day* (London: Smith, Elder and Company, 1856). Arthur Ray points to elements of this economic geography for the formation of a Métis regional community. See, Arthur Ray, *Telling It to the Judge: Taking Native History to Court* (Montréal-Kingston: McGill-Queen University Press, 2011).

[30] Émilie Pigeon and Carolyn Podruchny, "The Mobile Village: Metis Women, Bison Brigades, and Social Order on the Nineteenth-Century Plains," in *Violence, Order, and Unrest: A History of British North America, 1749–1876*, eds. Elizabeth Mancke et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019) 236-263.

[31] Ibid 243-244.

[32] Ibid.

[33] M. Max Hamon, ""Recognize Us as a People and Not as Buffaloes": Louis Riel and the Gendering of the Red River Public Sphere" in *Violence, Order, and Unrest: A History of British North America, 1749–1876*, edited by Elizabeth Mancke et al. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019) 270.

Martin Jérôme, an MNU founder, seized on occupational opportunities not necessarily available to his parent's generation.[34] Born in November 1849 and baptized at a Catholic parish near the Pembina River of the Red River Valley, he matured in a society where seasonal labour to produce bison robes shaped much of his parents' and neighbours' household economies. His father had been a hunter, but Jérôme's life was very different as he attended the Collège de Saint-Boniface, a French-language and Catholic educational institution located near the parish of St. Boniface at the intersection of the Red and Assiniboine rivers. He married Leocadie Carrie, a Métis woman, and soon went to work for the federal government, initially as a homestead inspector for the Department of the Interior. This Department had been created in the 1870s primarily to implement the *Dominion Lands Act* (1872).

For late nineteenth-century settler colonization and afterward, the homestead was a legal category and the dominant unit in producing agricultural commodities. Federal policymakers designed the legislation in a similar form and substance to the American Congress' recent *Homestead Act* (1862). It established criteria and mechanisms for how a claimant could acquire ownership of a surveyed section of land. Because of the importance of private property rights and the rationalization of space in western Canada, the late nineteenth-century legislative framework, bureaucratic administration, and knowledge production of the homestead system reflected and reinforced what Ian McKay labels the apex of the liberal project of rule.[35] As a homestead inspector in the early 1890s, Jérôme assisted in shaping the rise of this liberal order, visiting homesteads to investigate whether the claimant had established a dwelling and cultivated

[34] For a brief biography, see Gordon Goldsborough, "Martin Jerome (1849-1936)," in *Memorable Manitobans*, last modified 8 December 2018, found at https://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/jerome_m.shtml, accessed 5 April 2024.

[35] Ian McKay, "The Liberal Order Framework: A Prospectus for a Reconnaissance of Canadian History," in *The Canadian Historical Review* vol. 81 no. 4 (2000) 616-645.

the requisite acreage to receive letters patent. For a time, as he worked for the federal administrative bureaucracy and viewed local circumstances by central standards, Jérôme surveilled the agricultural production of family-based households and mediated the private ownership of property rights. Few Métis, however, replicated Jérôme's entrance into the federal civil service, even if they had a shared history.

The Métis could not merely reproduce their economy. Their routine and seasonal mass collective mobilization had changed over time. From the early 1860s to late 1870s, some Métis' relocated their winter dwellings west and northwest of the Red River Valley to harvest declining bison populations. Their mobile summer and fall hunts ended when bison populations eventually collapsed in the early 1880s, accentuating the social distance between Métis who remained in Manitoba and those who settled further west. They must have noticed the influx of settlers and the growth of agricultural land. In Manitoba, the average number of homestead claims at Dominion land offices in the 1870s was almost 1500, and it spiked in the early 1880s to around 3700 and returned to the previous averages in the following decade as cancellations bit into the totals.[36] Even as the settlement boom in the 1870s and early 1880s oscillated over the late 1880s and the 1890s, the social and economic process that went into the homestead developed agricultural land and thus transformed the environmental landscape, where grain and vegetable cultivation became more widespread. Farm holdings in Manitoba more than doubled from about 9,000 in 1881 to around 22,000 in 1891 and to over 32,000 by 1901.[37] In a few decades, the Métis lost their economic basis. They could no longer hunt bison. Those activities provided food

[36] Table L34-41, "Historical Statistics of Canada: Section L: Lands and Forests," *Statistics Canada,* found at https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-516-x/sectionl/4147441-eng.htm, accessed 15 January 2023.

[37] Table M12_22, "Historical Statistics of Canada: Section L: Lands and Forests," *Statistics Canada,* found at https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-516-x/sectionm/4057754-eng.htm, accessed 15 January 2023.

and income, not to mention social bonds. As a result, the Métis had to adapt their household economies. To that end, their farming increasingly underwrote their livelihoods.

The term ‘farmer,’ Jeffery Taylor writes, was an abstraction and simplification for the complex construction of relationships, work, and identities in western Canada. The production of agricultural commodities, particularly wheat, resulted from the widespread construction and operation of family-based farm households. Their output by the 1890s depended on industrially produced machinery and the markets of financial and merchant capital for credit, storage, and shipping. However, these family-based farms typically owned the legal rights to the land they worked on and how they organized the work. The division of labour between married couples and children spatialized and gendered tasks by fields, gardens, outbuildings, and dwellings. This Long Depression of the late 1800s, which involved a decline in the price of wheat, framed this dynamic of exploitation and independence: the surplus derived from the sale of grain declined since railways and steamships dropped the cost of transportation and competition from agricultural production in the United States, Argentina, and elsewhere in the international market. English-speaking settlers started associations and institutions to share economic strategies and learn new techniques, building a social movement around the political economy of farming. Some saw farmers as something other than capitalists. To that end, they understood agriculture required significant work and labour was the basis of all wealth. As Taylor observes, agrarianism saw railroad corporations, commodity buyers, and financiers as exploitative and the beneficiaries of government support.[38] It was thought that electoral representation of farmers might be required to attain a ‘commonwealth’ of producers in the region.[39] In doing so, their contrast

[38] Jeffery M. Taylor, *Fashioning Farmers: Ideology, Agricultural Knowledge and the Manitoba Farm Movement, 1890-1925* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1994) 90-95.

[39] Ibid 96-97.

between the agricultural west and industrial east, and the federal government's use of the tariff to support the latter more than the former, still helped reimagine the political community of Canada as a transcontinental economic entity.

Recent scholarship has traced the adaptations the Métis outside Manitoba made to their livelihoods and the significance of farming to them. This decline of the bison hunt meant the decline of marketable commodities and a shift in each household's economy and spatial dynamics. This included changes to the dominant seasonal forms of shelter and fuel. Cheryl Troupe identifies highly eclectic household economies for the Métis communities transitioning to more local livelihoods in the late nineteenth century Qu'Appelle Valley in the NWT, which turned on the construction of physical dwellings and derived food from cereals grown in fields, vegetables raised in gardens, dairy from supervised cows, and meat from tended animals and harvested from terrestrial mammals and waterfowl. For provisioning and shelter, Troupe points to the self-conscious organization of the tasks and the importance of men, women, youth, and children to food production in environments closer to their dwellings.[40]

Similar structural characteristics can be seen in Manitoba. In 1901, census enumerators recorded the description of occupational titles. This term and household relations provide an indirect window into the production and structure of household economies, given that the enumeration of agricultural outputs has not survived to the present. Table 1.4 unravels the proportion of these farm households relative to other kinds of rural households, the dwellings in small towns, and the residences of Winnipeg.

[40] Cheryl Troupe, *Mapping Métis Stories: Land Use, Gender, and Kinship in the Qu'Appelle Valley, 1850-1950* (PhD dissertation: University of Saskatchewan, 2019).

Table 1.2 Internal Structure and Residence Location of Private Dwellings, French-Catholic Métis, Manitoba, Canada, 1901

	Rural Farm		**Rural non-Farm**		**Urban 1,000-9,999**		**Urban 10,000-99,999**		**Grand Total**	
Household Structure	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)
Lone Head	*42*	*10.05*	*40*	*10.67*	*5*	*15.63*	*1*	*7.14*	*88*	*10.49*
Primary Individuals	3	0.72	11	2.93	4	12.50	0	0.00	18	2.15
Lone Head with Children	33	7.89	24	6.40	1	3.13	0	0.00	58	6.91
Lone Head with non-kin	6	1.44	5	1.33	0	0.00	1	7.14	12	1.43
Married Couples	*280*	*66.99*	*271*	*72.27*	*22*	*68.75*	*10*	*71.43*	*583*	*69.49*
Couples without Resident Children	18	4.31	34	9.07	3	9.38	2	14.29	57	6.79
Couple with Children	245	58.61	218	58.13	14	43.75	4	28.57	481	57.33
Married Couples with non-kin	17	4.07	19	5.07	5	15.63	4	28.57	45	5.36
Extended	*96*	*22.97*	*64*	*17.07*	*5*	*15.63*	*3*	*21.43*	*168*	*20.02*
Extended	80	19.14	57	15.20	4	12.50	3	21.43	144	17.16
Extended with non-kin	16	3.83	7	1.87	1	3.13	0	0.00	24	2.86
Grand Total	418		375		32		14		839	

Source: See Figure 1.1.

The 1901 census shows a relatively high proportion of farm households: nearly half of the enumerated dwellings were located on land where farming occurred. In these circumstances, kin relationships mattered: nuclear families accounted for almost 60 percent of farm households and extended families for nearly 20 percent. This distribution is similar when the presence of individuals in farm households and family structures is considered. However, a similar proportion of dwellings and a fewer individuals implied they were not farm households because they did not provide ‘farmer’ as an occupational title. However, we should not assume rural non-farm households did not ‘farm’ even if occupational titles might lead us to this conclusion. Importantly, rural farm and non-farm households shared two social and economic similarities: family structure and landedness. First, non-farm households shared a similar distribution of family members as farm households: nearly 60 percent of the non-farm households were nuclear families, and around 15 percent were extended families. Second, most non-farm households and farm households shared similar relationships and connections to a base of land, even if the former's acreage was typically less than the latter's. In these instances, a member of 365 farm and 243 nonfarm households, usually the household head, owned properties. While the manuscript reflected liberal ideas where the physical dwelling was conceptually disconnected from the location of their property, rural residences and acreage suggest individuals owned the land near their houses. Where the census enumeration suggested ownership and acreage, the nonfarm households tended to be what we might call smallholders. These properties contrasted family-based farm households that Martin Jérôme visited as a homestead inspector: the acreage of a majority of the former was typically less than 50 acres of rural land, the latter was usually greater than 50 acres, and a minority went in the opposite direction of this distribution. Nevertheless, the

implication is that farm and nonfarm households shared similar labour, but the former had income from another source.

Married Métis couples maintained meaningful productive and reproductive relationships with young adult children and elderly parents. Married Métis men and women were assigned crucial labour to unmarried male and female young adult children in rural household economies. They were not unusual. Regional agriculture typically drew on younger family members' efforts in seasonal activities. While maintenance, construction, and energy required year-round work, the spring and fall were periods of intense labour for young unmarried men in family-based farm households. In turn, unmarried women in their early adulthood filled the demand for reproductive tasks across the year: crafting and mending garments, preparing food, and tending gardens and barns. In 1901, enumerators did not undertake surveys of work-time allocation that would allow us to clarify social relations and household economic tasks. Household structures, specific age groups, and family relations can provide us with an indirect observation of unmarried young adult men and women's positions when enumerators visited dwellings at the mid-point of spring. Although Peter Baskerville and Eric Sager show urban unemployment to be highly complex, young Métis men and women might have noticed the countryside limited their paid work and savings potential more so than urban employers, particularly in less specialized services and trades in Winnipeg.[41]

A few young adult and middle-aged Métis men and women left the family house to set up their own in the city. Like many urban working-class families, their economic security came from married men, unmarried adolescent children's wage earnings, and married women's unpaid

[41] Peter A. Baskerville and Eric W. Sager, *Unwilling Idlers: The Urban Unemployed and Their Families in Late Victorian Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

labour. But, if we recall Manitoba Métis communities remained predominantly rural, Table 1.3 shows unmarried, young adult males and females living with their parents. Indeed, nearly four of five unmarried males and females in this life stage were declared sons and daughters of the household head. Young women and men might have differed quantitatively because each experienced different life expectations and social labour: Métis women tended to marry earlier than men, and parents typically relied on women and men for different tasks.

In contrast, there was a small proportion of employees, boarders, and lodgers. This suggests that departure from the parental household was rare. It indicates that, while some chose otherwise, family relations continued to inform the young adulthood of the unmarried. As such, even as industrialization disrupted family and household structures across late nineteenth-century Canada and ushered in highly mobile wage-earning unmarried young adults, unmarried Métis young adults experienced these conditions differently. Married parents typically housed and drew on them for farm labour, while unmarried young adults had a place to stay and support. The reciprocal actions cemented the social bonds of many family-based household economies.

Table 1.3 Household Status of Unmarried Females and Males (15-39 years old), French-Catholic Métis, Manitoba, Canada, 1901

Household Status	**Female**		**Male**		**Grand Total**
	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	
Household Head +/- Co-Resident Children	5	1.17	22	3.17	27
Child of Household Head	374	87.59	572	82.42	946
Sibling/Sibling-in-Law of Household Head	10	2.34	19	2.74	29
Grandchild of Household Head	5	1.17	6	0.86	11
Extended Relative of Household Head	6	1.41	14	2.02	20
Employee	18	4.22	30	4.32	48
Boarder/Lodger	6	1.41	26	3.75	32
Other Kinds of Household Relations	3	0.70	5	0.72	8
Grand Total	427		694		1121

Source: See Figure 1.1.

Elderly Métis women and men drew on similar household relations when they were not independent. Lisa Dillion reminds us that ageing was not a linear transition to social and economic dependency. Family relationships and networks still underwrote life transitions in late nineteenth-century Canada.[42] For most family-based farm households, the elderly's social position and economic welfare reflected parent-child dynamics and continued agricultural

[42] Lisa Dillon, *The Shady Side of Fifty: Age and Old Age in Late Victorian Canada and the United States* (Montréal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 2008) 133-214.

production. Indeed, unlike some European imperial nation-states, federal and provincial lawmakers did not make economic support for the elderly a public policy and administrative matter until the late 1920s. Instead, Christian religious institutions, charitable associations, and mutual aid societies provided old age support if families could not do so. During the late nineteenth century, the Roman Catholic church operated a care institution in the Town of St. Boniface near Winnipeg. If we look at the census schedules, we can see a few elderly Métis women were residents, but they were exceptional.

Table 1.3 illuminates the household position of elderly Métis individuals. The number of household heads and spouses suggests that old age and social dependency were not synonymous. Although not part of the table but indicated by the earlier points about household structures and unmarried young adults, this group of household heads and spouses often lived alongside their unmarried sons and daughters. However, some elderly Métis had alternative living arrangements because their spouse had passed away. They did not become boarders or lodgers. Instead, widows and widowers relied upon their children for social support and care. This was particularly evident for elderly women. As such, elderly widows often lived with adult children.

Table 1.4 Household Status of Elderly Females and Males (65 years and older), French-Catholic Métis, Manitoba, Canada, 1901

Household Status	**Female**		**Male**		**Grand Total**
	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	
Household Head +/- Co-Resident Children	7	8.54	62	81.58	69
Spouse of Household Head	30	36.59	0	0.00	30
Sibling/Sibling-in-Law of Household Head	1	1.22	2	2.63	3
Parent/Parent-in-Law of Household Head	36	43.90	10	13.16	46
Grandparent of Household Head	1	1.22	0	0.00	1
Extended Relative of Household Head		0.00	1	1.32	1
Employee	3	3.66	0	0.00	3
Boarder/Lodger	1	1.22	1	1.32	2
Other Kinds of Household Relations	3	3.66	0	0.00	3
Grand Total	82		76		158

Source: See Figure 1.1.

For the most part, married adult men took on this role. In other words, rather than the dwellings of a married adult daughter and son-in-law, elderly widows typically resided within the household of a married adult son and daughter-in-law. In doing so, many even lived with grandchildren. While the schedules cannot show the dimensions of support, like food provisions and fuel, their life-cycle transitions were secured by the landedness of their families. In turn, old age remained a time of connection to some lineal descendants.

Because of young people's labour and families' old age security, the Métis treated children as assets rather than liabilities to their economies. This can be glimpsed indirectly if we examine the reproductive practices of married men and women in their early and middle adulthood. It can be done by focusing specifically on the number of biological children under five in the households of married women between 15-49 years old. This measure, called a child-women ratio, is an indirect measure of fertility.[43] Peter Gossage and Danielle Gauvreau, using this method, point out that, rather than homogenization and uniformity, reproductive practices and fertility regimes were heterogeneous in 1901 Canada. As they observe, married women's reproductive practices reflected where the couple resided, the necessities of household labour, the cost of living and property, the duration of formal education, the linguistic community, and the geographic proximity of female kin. In the Canadian Prairies, urban working and middle-class women limited fertility to similar extents as those elsewhere. In contrast, married rural women, particularly farm women, had more infants and children than urban dwellers. This was similar to other parts of rural Canada, except for 'high fertility' French-speaking Catholic Québec. To that end, English-speaking Protestant farm families considered the labour necessary for Prairie agriculture when developing their reproductive practices.

The fertility regime of the Métis differed, albeit mostly in quantitative terms. Table 1.5 analyzes child-women ratios for the Métis in Manitoba in 1901. The analysis includes 639 married women between 15 and 49 years old and 800 children under five years old. Examining these figures by cohort reveals a relationship between age and fertility. This occurred in two ways: one related to the different cohorts of married women in early adulthood and several

[43] For a detailed discussion of the methodological pitfalls and comparison of this technique to observations of parish registers in Canada, see Danielle Gauvreau, Peter Gossage, and Lucie Gingras, "Measuring Fertility with the 1901 Canadian Census: A Critical Assessment," in *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History* 33, no. 4 (2000): 219–228.

cohorts of married women in middle adulthood. First, the married women between the ages of 15 and 19 years old and those between the ages of 45 and 49 years had, on average, a similar number of children under the age of five. The former, recently partnered, had fewer children than the cohort just above them, and the latter had fewer children than the younger cohort. Second, the number of children per woman was highest for married women in their late 20s and early 30s; enumerators recorded 1.55 children per 25–29-year-old married woman and 1.71 children per 30-34-year-old woman. For comparison, these ratios were higher than the same age cohorts of married women in Manitoba and similar to 25-29-year-old and 30-34-year-old women in Québec, even topping the ratio of the older cohort (1.71 versus 1.45).[44] The schedules cannot explain their fertility regime definitively, but we can draw out some implications based on the context. One implication might be that married couples adapted the fertility regime of the elderly to new agricultural circumstances and the end of the fur trade. To that end, married couples still needed children and youth for their household economies, drawing on nearby kin's support to ensure offspring survived infancy and early childhood. Alternatively, married couples could have made different decisions than the previous generation and had fewer children to account for growing land scarcity. Still, the schedules obscure the practice and lower infant and child mortality rates. In either case, they might have recognized that many children could disperse the risks of old age. After all, many men and women in their early and middle adulthood witnessed Métis in a similar age group house and socially support their elderly parents.

[44] Peter Gossage and Daniel Gauvreau, "Canadian Fertility in 1901: A Bird's Eye View," in *Household Counts: Canadian Households and Families in 1901,* edited by Eric Sager and Peter Baskerville (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007) 80.

Table 1.5 Age-Specific Marital Child-Woman Ratio, French-Catholic Métis, Manitoba, Canada, 1901

Age-Cohort	Number of Children under 5-years-old	Number of Married Women	Child-Woman Ratio
15-19	20	37	0.54
20-24	148	120	1.23
25-29	184	118	1.56
30-34	215	126	1.71
35-39	100	77	1.30
40-44	91	87	1.05
45-49	32	68	0.47
Totals	790	633	1.25

Source: See Figure 1.1.

Family members, generations, and nearby kin thus came together around farms and rural life, where regular communication was made possible. The dwellings, barns, gardens, and fields were not merely places where men, women, and children made food, clothes, and fuel. Household members and their nearby kin certainly laboured to keep themselves fed, clothed, and warm when the temperature was low, a social experience that shaped an awareness of how their efforts induced the material security of youth and elderly. But, because their work required self-conscious organization and necessitated various discussions, they also talked to each other on a routine basis. Their conversations, not to mention the songs and stories that might have been part of everyday life, escaped written documentation. As such, the language married men and women, children and elderly used to speak to one another is more difficult to discern than one would think. The census schedules provide some insight. Enumerators asked three questions about language. The answers could highlight the self-identification of what language these Métis men and women could speak to each other and their children.

For the households under analysis, the enumeration reveals that nearly every man and woman recorded as a household head or a spouse could speak French, and a smaller number

could also speak English. Their mother tongue, that is, a single language they acquired in childhood, was usually French. But some were Cree and Ojibwe. Their presence was more common in the sub-districts near Lake Manitoba's southeast than in the sub-districts near Winnipeg. Enumerators, however, recorded that none identified Michif as their mother tongue. However, respondents might have needed the terms to do so, and they instead fit themselves and their household members into the terms of the questionnaire. The nineteenth-century writers for the HBC, Catholic missions, and British and American imperial emissaries had barely registered the formation of a distinct language.[45] It was not an 'acceptable' answer. For their mother tongue, the most common answer was French.

However, we should be cautious about language shift because of our knowledge about the early-to-mid-nineteenth-century structural function of Michif and late-twentieth-century ethnographies. Michif-speakers left a sparse documentary footprint due to its historical origins and uses. Peter Bakker argues that it came from the economic complexity and predominantly oral communication of Métis communities from the 1820s to the 1870s. Bakker points out that the specific numbers of Michif-speakers are impossible to determine along with the exact timing of language formation. For example, in 1875, a French-language journalist in the Town of St. Boniface claimed that "les Métis français" combined French and Cree words when speaking.[46] The reporter clarifies neither the size of the potential language community nor their geographic location, even if their proximity or urban visits would be an implication. But, importantly, Michif was not what scholars of historical linguistics call a pidgin language. The early modern world

[45] For a thorough investigation of much of the available written archival record and observations on language, Peter Bakker, *A Language of Our Own: The Genesis of Michif, the Mixed Cree-French Language of the Canadian Metis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[46] Cited in Maria Mazzoli, "Michif Loss and resistance in four Metis communities," in *Zeitschrift für Kanada-Studien* vol. 39 (2019) 97.

system produced several pidgin languages. The Portuguese and English coastal entrepôts for the flow of enslaved people from Africa to the Americas and the commercial port of the Qing Empire in east Asia, where British and Dutch merchants operated, are historical examples where pidgins were used as simplified commercial languages among people who lacked a shared communicative system.[47] In fact, the fur trade in North America developed pidgins. Chinook jargon, for one example, was employed across the Pacific Northwest Coast.[48] However, because of the process of language intertwining for the bilingual children of French-speaking men and Algonquian-speaking women and the development of Métis socioeconomic institutions in the early nineteenth century, Michif was (and is) what Bakker calls a mixed language.[49] Rather than a simplified vocabulary and minimal grammar, Michif became a means of communication between family members and the symbolic terrain for composing songs and stories. The implication is that many of the Métis men and women in their early and middle adulthood in the 1901 census might have been exposed to and acquired knowledge and proficiency of Michif from their parents and extended relatives during their childhood and youth. In turn, their household economies, family-oriented labour, and rural life in the late nineteenth century might have provided the social circumstances to use Michif amongst themselves. However, the census does not provide sufficient evidence to make this conclusion. The linguistic studies of the late twentieth century placed the social and familial elements of a small number of Michif-speaking

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[47] For a brief overview of verbal and nonverbal communication in the European trade in African slaves, see Joan M. Fayer, "African Interpreters in the Atlantic Slave Trade," *Anthropological Linguistics* 45, no. 3 (2003): 281–95. For the use of simplified English in Canton and Macao, see Lisa Hellman, *This House Is Not a Home: European Everyday Life in Canton and Macao 1730–1830* (Leiden: BRILL, 2018) 149-155.

[48] For a brief discussion of Chinook jargon and its role in social circumstances of the Pacific Northwest fur trades, see John Sutton Lutz, *Makúk: A New History of Aboriginal-White Relations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008) xi-xii.

[49] Bakker, *A Language of Our Own*, 277-280.

men and women in their old age in several areas: the parkland west of Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipegosis in Manitoba, the Qu'Appelle River Valley in Saskatchewan, and Turtle Mountain in North Dakota in the United States.[50]

Still, rural Métis families near Winnipeg experienced French-Canadian settlement. French-Canadians had migrated west of Québec. After the late eighteenth century, the French-speaking Catholic Canadian peasantry became socioeconomically differentiated. Many noticed agricultural land was less readily available, so families could not reproduce close by like previous generations. Their social crisis accelerated during British North America's settlement boom from the 1820s to the 1840s. While many went to New England's emerging textile-producing factory towns, the francophone Canadian diaspora shaped Manitoba and the NWT boom and bust over the last three decades of the nineteenth century.[51] Thomas Côté identified them in his 1902 census table cited earlier.[52] French-speaking Catholic Canadians usually resided near local Métis communities. In 1901, their population size in some of these sub-districts was 97 in Assiniboia, 1358 in De Salaberry, 566 in Dufferin, 1153 in La Broquerie, 197 in Macdonald, 235 in Morris, 374 in Ochre River, 922 in Ritchot; 795 in St. François-Xavier; 775 in Taché; and 1660 adjacent to and within the Town of St. Boniface. As a homestead inspector for the Winnipeg District of the Dominion Lands Bureau, Jérôme had been through some of these areas.

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[50] Ibid. See also, John C. Crawford, "Speaking Michif in Four Metis Communities," in *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* vol. 3, no. 1 (1975) 47-55.

[51] Bruno Ramirez, *On the Move: French-Canadian and Italian Migrants in the North Atlantic Economy, 1860-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[52] "Population française au Manitoba" in *L'Echo de Manitoba*, 6 Febuary 1902, found at https://digitalcollections.lib.umanitoba.ca/islandora/object/uofm%3A2649316/manitoba_download/https://digitalcollections.lib.umanitoba.ca/islandora/object/uofm%3A2649316/datastream/PDF/download, accessed 8 December 2021.

For many Métis, French became necessary for their economic life. Young adult and middle-aged Métis men and women learned how to perform specific tasks—like harvesting terrestrial mammals and waterfowl, crafting garments, and preparing meals—requiring technology their parents acquired from exchanges rather than making themselves. Their consumer choices necessitated relationships to nodes in medium- and long-distance trade. Métis decedents in the early twentieth-century Surrogate Court, who were part of these age groups, provide a partial view of this activity. We must remember the limits of estate inventories because the documents came at specific times and met the particularities of legal administration. Estate inventories did not record the totality of their tools and clothing acquired and used across the life-cycle. For example, the inventory of farm implements and household items—40 individuals and 46 individuals of 110 estate inventories from 1901 to 1930—suggests that the decedents purchased technology. Even if primarily obscured by these categories, married Métis men and women required metal tools, like knives, axes, needles, kettles, and pots. At some point, merchants supplied those items. In close studies of account books in southern Ontario and the Madawaska Territory in New Brunswick in the nineteenth century, Douglas McCalla and Béatrice Craig point to storekeepers as a node for the flow of technology and consumer items in rural environments.[53] With bookkeeping procedures and the accumulation of capital in mind, merchants kept watch of the discrepancy between the purchase price for stocking stores and the sale of an item. In 1901, Métis men in the sub-districts of Ochre River and St. François-Xavier fulfilled the role of hardware merchant and general merchant. They supplied many of the nearby farm and nonfarm households. French-Canadian merchants filled this role in the sub-districts

[53] Béatrice Craig, *Backwoods Consumers and Homespun Capitalists: The Rise of a Market Culture in Eastern Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); Douglas McCalla, *Consumers in the Bush: Shopping in Rural Upper Canada* (Montreal-Kingston: McGill-Queen’s Press, 2015).

within 35 miles of Winnipeg to the south and southeast, like De Salaberry, Ritchot, St. Boniface, and Taché. Young adult and middle-aged Métis men or women had not opened retail outfits. Instead, their knowledge of French helped them communicate with French-Canadian commercial actors. These social experiences made French a language for economic exchanges.

Still, some Métis families faced different constraints, and their residential location made English economically practical. For the sub-district of Montcalm, around 20 miles south of Winnipeg, Ken Sylvester points out that French-Canadians typically relied on family labour to produce food and commodities in the late 1870s to 1890s. They depended on married women and young adults because their operations were not very liquid. The result was their use of credit and debt obligations to make ends meet when market prices became volatile. As such, few farm households had field and domestic opportunities where young men and women might garner a wage during the labour-intensive seasons.[54] Sylvester argues that French-Canadian farm households in Manitoba could have been typical for the broader Prairies. In an analysis of employment status and annual earnings, he points out that farm operations typically relied on family labour and ploughs, reapers, threshers, and binders to make homesteads viable, if not profitable. While less numerous, some farmers had accumulated the capital to hire seasonal labour and usually relied on young men who travelled to the region or passed through to somewhere else.[55] So, farms were usually more extensive than the standard homestead. Smallholding and renting Métis turned to their seasonal demand for waged labour as a source of income. In 1901, 154 married Métis men were enumerated as household heads and earned wages

[54] Kenneth Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism: Family, Culture, and Markets in Montcalm, Manitoba, 1870-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

[55] Kenneth Sylvester, “Household Composition and Canada’s Rural Capitalism: The Extent of Rural Labor Markets in 1901,” in *Journal of Family History* 26, no. 2 (April 2001): 289–309.

at some point in the previous year. To be sure, some found paid employment in building trades, the railway network, and general services, not the agricultural sector. But many were rural-waged labourers and spoke English, helping them communicate with interested employers.

However, married Métis men and women under 40 years old learned new communication skills to adapt to novel economic circumstances. Whether rural farm or not, married men and women in their early adulthood knew how to write to greater extents than their counterparts in middle adulthood. The age cohort distinction is held across household position and property ownership. Writing ability implies that these individuals could also read since writing and reading were mutually reinforcing. For these familial and household positions on rural farms, around 65 percent of individuals in each five-year age cohort from 20-39 years old were said to have the ability to write compared to less than 35 percent for individuals in five-year age cohorts from 40-65 years old. For the same categories on nonfarm, around 50 percent of individuals in almost every five-year-age cohort from 20-39 years old could write, compared to less than 35 percent in the five-year-age cohorts from 40-65 years old. When consideration is paid to these categories of middle-aged men and women, the percentage of individuals who reportedly had the ability declined as the age cohort increased. Their upbringing had been highly mobile and seasonal, so middle-aged Métis might have been exposed to Catholic mission schools minimally, if at all. Their attendance was necessary to acquire reading and writing ability on a broader scale. However, the *Manitoba Act* provided for a legislative assembly. After 1870, the elected lawmakers established a denominational school system. They allocated tax revenue for schooling, and religious school boards began operations. Because of their affiliation with Catholicism, many married Métis men and women in their early adulthood could have attended the schools in the Roman Catholic board until the early 1890s. While educators exposed them to

the Catholic hierarchy and Christian teachings, their school attendance included reading and writing in French because many of these institutions used French as the medium of instruction.

Their parents had multiple reasons to encourage formal education. For instance, Gerard Bouchard and Chad Gaffield situate the rise of mass schooling in nineteenth-century Ontario and Québec into the evolving political economy of rural agricultural households. They emphasize that literacy served family strategies. After the mid-nineteenth-century development of mass schooling, parents accepted that writing and reading skills helped children secure themselves as they established their households in increasingly competitive land and commodity markets.[56] Unlike late nineteenth-century Ontarian lawmakers, Manitoban policymakers mostly left parents and legal guardians to their own devices. They could send their children to school or not. If Métis parents had organized children's and youth's work, rural household economies might have made school attendance possible. Métis parents' legal experiences demonstrated the significance of reading and writing skills. For instance, in the 1870s and early 1880s, adult and elderly Métis men and women were exposed to the central states' administrative apparatus. Written texts were central to these brief encounters. There were multiple forms related to the *Manitoba Act*: the geographic surveys of land, the census enumeration of households and families, and the affidavits for their entitlement to property rights. At the same time, the legislative assembly established several legal offices and administrative bureaucracies—courts of laws and registrars of land deeds and contracts—which required written documents to operate more consistently. Notably, because provincial policymakers conformed to French and English principles of the *Manitoba Act*, the provincial printer released the laws in both languages until the 1890s. Provincial laws were relevant since the provincial legislative assembly outlined the 'bundle of

[56] Chad Gaffield and Gérard Bouchard, "Literacy, Schooling, and Family Reproduction in Rural Ontario and Quebec," in *Historical Studies in Education / Revue d'histoire de l'éducation* 1, no. 2 (1989): 201–17.

rights' to property across the 1870s. This included some instances, such as the distinct entitlements of married men and women and the estate administration processes.[57] As covered earlier, many Métis men and women formed household economies because they could own private property. In turn, written documents became a crucial element in the 'bundle of rights' to property. As such, in these circumstances, many of the Métis men and women who could spare their children from work in the 1870s and early 1880s must have known the role that literacy might play at some point in their children's lives.

For many, schooling and literacy skills could have even become a local political concern. Following provinces' legislative authority in the *British North America Act* (1867) and through the *Municipalities Act* (1880 and reformed in 1883), Manitoban lawmakers in the early 1880s set municipalities territorial boundaries and operational characteristics.[58] Michèle Dagenais reminds us that the formation of the Canadian national state included the development of these political units. Municipalities, as Dagenais contends, started as experimental sites. Local governments could be places where political practices and norms were socially arranged, practiced, and learned routinely.[59] As the British colonial states reformed after the attempted revolution in 1837 and 1838, municipalities became local political institutions because of their delimited territory and smaller population size within the colonies. Like those eventually developed in Manitoba, municipalities incorporated increasingly hegemonic liberal principles. Ward councillors

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[57] *The Revised Statutes of Manitoba,* vol. 2 (Winnipeg: Queen's Printer for the Province of Manitoba, 1892) 1033-1042, found at https://www.google.ca/books/edition/The_Revised_Statutes_of_Manitoba/kPIZAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1, accessed 18 June 2020.

[58] Ibid 1082-1161.

[59] Michèle Dagenais, "The Municipal Territory: A Product of the Liberal Order," in *Liberalism and Hegemony: Debating the Canadian Liberal Revolution*, edited by Michel Ducharme and Jean-François Constant (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009) 202.

determined by-laws, and adult male householders voted for their representatives annually. The municipal governments, to the exclusion of Indian reserves, managed the taxation system, and the estimated market values of real and movable property determined the rates of payment. Since municipalities were formed based on population density, Métis households often remained in Catholic parishes where Manitoba policymakers organized local governments. In some cases, like the early 1880s, the householders and local voters elected adult Métis men to municipal councils. For example, Jérôme won a local election. He served as a councillor for the Municipality of De Salaberry. After their organization, municipal councils were responsible for vital infrastructure, like roads and water drainage systems. Residents accessed and used these local installations on a routine basis. Many Métis men transitioned into middle adulthood and old age when taxation systems, statutory labour, and municipal infrastructure grew more complex and visible. While the provincial government had built highways south, northeast, and northwest of Winnipeg during the 1870s, local governments became more involved in constructing roads that connected municipal offices and other systems of local roads.[60] Most Métis, who travelled by horse and paid taxes at local offices, encountered the written materials that councils posted in French on the exteriors of municipal buildings. Literacy could keep them informed about the political ongoings in the area.

For the Métis, their socioeconomic reformation in Manitoba was a complicated process. As a Dominion homestead inspector, Martin Jérôme was a part of, witness to, and actor in an ongoing social, economic, and legal transformation, which changed who resided in the region, what relationships mattered, and how material life was produced and reproduced over time. Over the previous three decades, oscillating in scale and intensity, settler colonization was multi-

[60] Karen Nicholson, "A.C. Emmett and the Development of Good Roads in Manitoba," in *Manitoba History*, found at http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/27/emmettgoodroads.shtml, accessed 21 January 2023.

dimensional: the development of legal institutions for private property, the economic construction of commercial agriculture, the industrialization of transportation systems, and the operation of distinct levels of state administration. Although some relocated further west, many Métis men and women witnessed these changes in the 1870s and early 1880s when they married and formed households in their 20s. They had to adjust the mobile and seasonal economies of their childhood—raising vegetables near wood dwellings, hauling goods in cart trains, fishing in rivers and lakes, and harvesting terrestrial mammals and waterfowl—into new conditions. Adulthood was increasingly connected to private property and land ownership, particularly for men. Because bison populations collapsed, their mobilities became less expansive, and most couples occupied the rural land close to the dwellings where they lived together and raised children. Métis families developed tight local communities near Winnipeg, southeast Lake Manitoba, and Lake Dauphin due to the historical context of economic depression and social relations of agricultural production. Married adults turned to unmarried youth, supported the elderly, and saw children as assets rather than liabilities. Their material lives—planting and harvesting cereals and vegetables, cutting wood, tending animals, making food, mending clothes, and building and fixing physical structures—necessitated cooperation. And their reproductive efforts cemented social bonds between them and nearby kin. Because many visited merchants' shops and municipal offices in the countryside, French and literacy became economically and politically essential skills.

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<u>"[Nous] pouvons faire poids dans la balance de l'État" : Métis Politics and the Manitoba Schools Question</u>

In the 1890s, these Métis adults experienced and participated in significant Canadian political struggles. Their actions were related to the Manitoba government's legislation and administration. Provincial lawmakers had turned the *Manitoba Act* into a matter of contemporary political and legal debate because they had seemingly transgressed its sections by passing several laws. After the Liberal Party won the 1888 provincial election, lawmakers eventually passed three pieces of legislation: the *Official Languages Act* (1890), the *Department of Education Act* (1890), and the *Public Schools Act* (1890). This legislation related to, if not outright violated, the *Manitoba Act*. The former would abolish French as an official language in the legislature, courts, and government publications. The latter two statutes were interconnected. The laws outlined a public school system's structure, internal roles, and provincial administrative bureaucracy that would replace the twenty-year-old Protestant and Catholic denominational school system. Education reform was connected to the abolition of French as an official language since the primary language for instruction in Catholic schools in the province was typically French.

In doing so, provincial lawmakers sought to reform society according to a highly myopic vision. The ideas of an English-Canadian identity and its Britishness had been reshaped through settlement experiences. A common language in print media networks helped ameliorate the social and class division between farmers and 'non-producers.' As E.A. Heaman observes, English newspaper writers raised the idea of unfair tax burdens and preferential financial treatment for French and Catholic residents.[61] The perceived inequality between linguistic and religious communities precluded class solidarity and framed collective distinctions regarding national, if not racial, differences. Provincial lawmakers channelled the ideas into linguistic and

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[61] E. A. Heaman. *Tax, Order, and Good Government: A New Political History of Canada, 1867-1917* (Montréal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 2017) 167-169.

educational reform. School policies echoed similar ones across Canada and Britain, not to mention European empires' domestic nation-building projects. The laws drew upon Ontario's public education system and thus reformed the provincial state based on lawmakers' experiences and insights. In the context of Ontario, mid-nineteenth-century British colonial authorities and liberal professionals instituted a public school system to soothe anxieties over republicanism after the rebellion and proletarianization. Bruce Curtis sees these changes as a process of governing by education. The process brought together local ratepayers, elected representatives, and civil servants. Together, they standardized and routinized teacher training, textbook selection, curriculum development, and schoolhouse inspection. Youth could then be exposed to the norms and ideas deemed politically and economically necessary. The idea was that their eventual participation in a liberalizing state would be as equal, rights-bearing individuals, even as work under capitalism created inequalities and hierarchies. Because Canada federated and expanded westward, as a part of the curriculum in history and geography, the reading and writing instruction included the ideas of parliamentary democracy, constitutional monarchy, individual responsibility, and social respectability.[62] Although school attendance remained voluntary when combined with eliminating the French in political life, educational reform would erode sociocultural differences and distinct collective identities.

Jérôme witnessed political and educational reforms firsthand in the provincial legislature. He represented the electoral district of Carillon. While excluding the Town of St. Boniface, Carillon encompassed the area south and southeast of Winnipeg to the American border. Jérôme won this political office in 1888, served until an election loss in 1896, and won again in 1900. In

[62] Bruce Curtis, *Building the Educational State: Canada West, 1836-1871* (London: Falmer Press, 1988).

winning in 1888, Jérôme succeeded Roger Marion, another MNU founder.[63] Marion and Jérôme had similar lives. Both were born in the mid-nineteenth century and raised in mobile and seasonal fur trade families before they attended Collège de Saint-Boniface. Both married and formed a household in the 1870s. Both were even government employees and won elected office in the 1880s. Marion, for example, had been the mayor of the Town of St. Boniface before winning a provincial assembly seat for the area in 1888 and holding it until 1896.

However, as the *Manitoba Act* became a topic of legal and political analysis, Jérôme and Marion saw the idea of a public school system raise interest in the historical context of the denominational school system. Manitoba's legislative assembly operated like other provincial legislatures: elected representatives introduced laws, and a series of oral arguments were made during dialogue among the elected representatives. As such, provincial lawmakers raised the provisional government's representative and deliberative characteristics in 1869 and 1870. Their focus echoed English newspaper writers. In particular, provincial lawmakers questioned the commonalities between the provisional government's Bill of Rights and the *Manitoba Act*. The Bill of Rights included the demands of political and legal protections for the French and denominational schools. One contentious issue, however, was whether the *Manitoba Act* had been a treaty between independent governments or merely federal government legislation. If the latter, the provincial government might not have transgressed because education fell within its jurisdiction under the *BNA Act*.[64]

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[63] Gordon Goldsborough, "Roger Marion," in *Memorable Manitobans*, last modified 5 October 2018, found at https://mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/marion_r.shtml, accessed 4 April 2024.

[64] "Treaty with the Red River People," in *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, 8 January 1890, found at https://newspaperarchive.com/winnipeg-free-press-jan-08-1890-p-2/, accessed 31, May 2021; "That Bill of Rights," in *Manitoba Daily Free Press*, 15 January 1890, found at https://newspaperarchive.com/winnipeg-free-press-jan-15-1890-p-4/m, accessed 31 May 2021.

For many Métis, the provincial lawmakers identified the historical actions of the community and exacerbated political awareness of their common interests. The provincial government intruded upon them. Many Métis men and women made the French language necessary for their economic and political lives. They grew to know the new social environment, and many used the local Catholic schools to prepare their children. It fell on the MNU to reframe formal education, drawing the cultural lessons together to different ends. Annual picnics let Métis families take time in the less labour-intensive summer season and see others they might not regularly see in their local communities. The gatherings communicated national consciousness among youth and children and conveyed a Métis collective identity across generations. Because the provincial government disrupted an intergenerational family strategy, many Métis adults might have brought their concerns to the picnics. Unfortunately, the MNU records provide few insights into the matter. The ledger was focused primarily on planning meetings and association roles. However, the position of the MNU President suggests a relationship between the national institution and the legislative assembly. Marion and Jérôme served as Presidents at different times in the early 1890s. Marion and Jérôme must have owed their electoral office, in part, to Métis men because they represented the constituencies, and gender remained crucial to the provincial franchise. In 1890, during a national holiday speech, Marion could have synthesized a set of legal and political concepts. He employed the idea of constitutional rights, which reflected the provisional government's role in creating Manitoba.[65] For this discussion, the provincial government violated the collective rights of language and education under the *Manitoba Act*.

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[65] "La Fete Des Metis," *Le Manitoba*, February 14, 1890.

Jérôme, however, conceived a relationship between the provincial state and Métis national identity. In 1892, Jérôme drew attention to the Manitoba government's origins and the Métis' persistence as self-conscious political actors. Jérôme did so in a pamphlet. Jérôme published *Coup d'oeil rétrospectif sur ce qu'a été la nation métisse dans les affaires politiques lors de l'entrée de la province dans la confederation, et ce qu'elle est de nos jours.*[66] Importantly, he wrote explicitly for a Métis readership. Rather than the early-to-mid-nineteenth-century Métis political history, Jérôme wrote about late nineteenth-century Manitoba legislators. In doing so, he placed himself into a historical pattern of francophone Métis lawmakers. He criticized how French-speaking Canadian professionals and the Catholic clergy had not done enough to support their common interests. Jérôme touched on the indigeneity of the Métis and located the sociopolitical and cultural question of public schools and official languages into the majoritarian tendencies of legislative power and bureaucratic administration. It was not a one-off event. He wrote:

> Comme vous le voyez, mes chers compatriotes, il en est grand temps à la vue du danger qui nous menace un devoir sacré s'impose à nos coeurs, devoir à remplir envers nos enfants et ce pays que nous avons si longtemps défendu et au prix de tant de sacrifices contre les aborigènes de différentes nations et même contre le gouvernement usurpateur qui voulait s'emparer de notre beau pays sans égard pour l'ancienneté qui nous plaçait avant tous les autres. Puisque nous somme abandonnés et persécutés par ceux en qui, loin de nous être hostiles devraient au contraire prendre à toute heure notre défense, puisque l'on ne veut plus que nous comptions dans les affaires de l'État nous qui sommes les fondateurs de cette province, levons nous en masse, unissons nous comme autrefois, oublions les dissentiments qui pourraient régner parmi nous, l'on veut la guerre, faisons la en braves, l'on s'attaque à notre bon sens, à notre droit des gens, prouvons par notre courage, par notre énergie que nous pouvons encore compter pour quelque chose dans notre province, que nous pouvons faire poids dans la balance de l'État.[67]

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[66] Martin Jérôme, *Coup d'oeil rétrospectif sur ce qu'a été la nation métisse dans les affaires politiques lors de l'entrée de la province dans la confederation, et ce qu'elle est de nos jours* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Free Press Printer, 1892), found at http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/bibliography/2010.html, accessed 4 April 2024.

[67] Translation: "As you can see, my dear compatriots, it's high time, in view of the danger that threatens us, for our hearts to feel a sacred duty to our children and to this country that we have defended for so long, and at the

The Métis nation, as Jérôme asserted, came before the Dominion in 1870. He positioned the Métis as a principal collective force in Manitoba's founding, which settler colonization gradually undermined. His point was that continued collective action and elections might bring Métis influence to the provincial legislative assembly, where they could advocate and defend common interests. Jérôme's implicit argument was that partisanship did not necessarily serve their ends because the Liberal Party, which he helped found in the late 1880s, passed the legislation and resisted calls for repeal. As much as recent events addressed the idea of constitutional order and the role of rights, Jérôme concluded electoral politics and state power could serve the Métis nation in Manitoba.

If Métis readers followed Jérôme's argument, the federal government and judiciary could have reinforced the provincial state's political importance. Central authority and power had been a crucial idea for federalism. In 1867, a powerful federal government was used to unify and direct territorial expansion. Some framers of the *BNA Act* had contrasted Canada to the United States' decentralized republican system and its influence on the American Civil War. While the Métis and the creation of Manitoba added considerable friction to westward expansion, the federal government still retained significant constitutional powers. This included, for example, disallowance. Federal lawmakers could then invalidate—disallow—an enactment of a provincial legislature. Some did. In the early 1880s, the ruling Conservative government disallowed railway legislation in Manitoba and Ontario. Provincial lawmakers, however, gradually advocated for

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price of so many sacrifices, against aborigines of different nations, and even against the usurping government that wanted to take over our beautiful country, without regard for the seniority that placed us above all others. Since we are abandoned and persecuted by those who, far from being hostile to us, should on the contrary take up our defense at all times, since they no longer want us, the founders of this province, to count in the affairs of the State, let us rise en masse, let us unite as before, Let's forget any dissension that might exist among us. They want war, let's wage it bravely, they're attacking our common sense, our law of nations, let's prove by our courage, by our energy that we can still count for something in our province, that we can carry weight in the scales of the State." Ibid 10.

greater provincial autonomy. In the early 1890s, even as various petitioners requested the federal government disallow Manitoba's new education laws, the Conservative government declined to use the power of disallowance.

In 1892, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC), the highest court in the British Empire, ruled the province had not violated the *Manitoba Act*.[68] The JCPC essentially left the legislation intact. Although the Red River Colony and the HBC were not directly cited, the reason was implicitly historical. The 1670 Royal Charter had put Rupert's Land under the administration of the HBC. The Red River Colony, eventually operated by the HBC, neither established nor practiced a denominational school system. As a result, according to the Privy Council, the relevant clauses in the Manitoba Act did not create new rights to tax-funded religious schooling. But, in 1895, the JCPC partly contradicted the earlier ruling in a reference case on the *Manitoba Act's* denominational school guarantees. However, the result enabled the rights-bearing group—Roman Catholics—to petition the federal government to disallow the legislation.[69]

After the Manitoba schools question became the primary issue of the 1896 federal election, the Dominion and Manitoba reached an agreement on education policy. The compromise kept the public school system's financial arrangements and bureaucratic administration intact but introduced provisions for limited religious instruction and the use of French as the language of instruction in schools with at least ten students.[70] As Robert Vipond

[68] For a legal analysis of the litigation, see Gordon Bale, "Law, Politics, and the Manitoba School Question: Supreme Court and Privy Council," in *The Canadian Bar Review* 63, no. 3 (1985) 461-518.

[69] Ibid 498-502.

[70] Michel Verette, "Manitoba Schools Question," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, last modified 1 June 2016, found at https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/manitoba-schools-question, accessed 5 April 2024.

observes, the federal government's gradual disuse of the disallowance power developed Canada into a liberal state, where the levels of government had distinct powers and courts would resolve jurisdiction disputes.[71] Rather than quickly disallow laws that undermined the education and language provisions, federal policymakers strengthened the idea of the relative independence of provincial governments and their exclusive authority over social policies.

Many Métis still sought schooling for their children in the tumultuous 1890s. While the provincial government made English the official language, some francophone rural and urban merchants, like those in the Town of St. Boniface, and francophone journalists reported on the provincial government and municipalities. After 1893, a few parents might have wanted their young adult children to read Jérôme's pamphlet on political history and imagine themselves as a part of a Métis nation in Manitoba. In 1901, most Métis adolescents and young adults had been to school. They would have reached school age in the late 1880s and 1890s. Their schooling can be seen in their ability to write. Specifically, 10-14-year-olds and 15-19-year-olds Métis boys and girls demonstrated literacy to be quite common among these age cohorts. Their literacy was more widespread than the age cohorts between 20-24 years old and 60-65 years old. Around 70 percent of 10-14-year-olds (469 of 662 individuals) and a little over 65 percent of 15-19-year-olds (395 of 598 individuals) had acquired the skills. Gender did not necessarily constrain activity in educational institutions. In 1901, a little under 75 percent of 10-14-year-old girls (273 of 372 individuals) and a little over 70 percent of 15-19-year-old girls (246 of 345 individuals) could write, while a little under 70 percent of 10-14-year-old boys (274 of 399 individuals) and a little under 65 percent of 15-19-year-old boys (213 of 338 individuals). The figures suggest that educational reform failed to entirely disrupt Métis parents' behaviour.

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[71] Robert Vipond, "Alternative Past: Legal Liberalism and the Demise of the Disallowance Power," in *New Brunswick Language Policies* vol. 39 (1990) 126-157.

Because schooling remained an intergenerational family strategy, political action focused on the bureaucratic administration of the 1896 Dominion-Manitoba agreement. The public school system included several roles and relationships in the local context: the ratepayers who funded the operations of schools and elected trustees to the boards of the school districts. The Department of Education was a central bureaucracy. Their administrators oversaw the schools' compliance with the province-wide codes and standards. One notable position was a school inspector. The position was an intermediary between the local context and the central bureaucracy. Defined in the provincial legislation and allotted municipalities and school districts to inspect, school inspectors physically visited schools and interacted with students, teachers, and trustees. They then reported to the central bureaucracy members regularly. School inspectors also verified the teachers' provincial certification and the kinds of textbooks used during instruction.[72] In 1900, after winning the seat for Carillon, which he had lost in 1896, Jérôme made the school inspector a point of conflict in the Manitoba assembly. He emphasized identity. Roger Goulet, a married young adult Métis man, garnered the appointment to the Department of Education. His appointment became a public debate in the Town of St. Boniface and Winnipeg. While celebrated by *le Manitoba* as "un juste compliment aux premiers habitants du Manitoba, nos con-citoyens les Métis," *Manitoba Free Press* questioned his qualifications for employment in the provincial bureaucracy.[73] Jérôme recommended other potential nominees, who, like Goulet, were also

[72] For an analysis of school inspectors in an earlier period, see Bruce Curtis, *True Government by Choice Men? Inspection, Education, and State Formation in Canada West* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992)

[73] "M. l'Inspecteur Goulet," *Le Manitoba*, February 14, 1900, found at https://digitalcollections.lib.umanitoba.ca/islandora/object/uofm%3A2661329/manitoba_download https://digitalcollections.lib.umanitoba.ca/islandora/object/uofm%3A2661329/datastream/PDF/download, accessed 21 May 2021; "An Extraordinary Appointment," *Winnipeg Free Press*, February 16, 1900, found at https://newspaperarchive.com/https://pdftojp2.newspaperarchive.com/IIPViewerWeb/webresources/Download/ImagePDF/5099467/Winnipeg-Free-Press/Winnipeg/Manitoba/ca/February,16-1900/14/!winnipeg-free-press-feb-16-1900-p-14!/false/100/true/true, accessed 30 May 2021; "Mr. Goulet's Nomination," *Winnipeg Free Press*, February 19, 1900, found at

"natives of the country."[74] After investigating his educational and professional experience, Goulet became a provincial administrator and the school inspector for a province-wide set of school districts. His inspection zone mainly was the areas where French-speaking individuals resided.

Goulet's social and political experience differed from Jérôme and Marion in several essential ways. Jérôme and Marion, born around 1850, had been part of an age cohort who transitioned into adulthood during the 1870s. Their age cohort thus witnessed and participated in the provisional government's formation in 1869 and 1870. They also adapted to new social relationships and economic conditions amidst changes in the late 1870s through the early 1880s. These social and economic forces shaped Jérôme and Marion in some ways because both not only became a part of the construction of Métis nationalism but also represented the interests of constituents in municipalities and provincial government. Goulet, however, was part of an age cohort born in the late 1860s and early 1870s. His parents were from cohorts of similar age to Jérôme and Marion. The upheavals in the early 1870s, notably the Dominion military expedition and settler violence after the enforced transition from provisional to provincial government, cost Goulet his father, Elzéar. Unlike other generations, Goulet attended school during his childhood and adolescence. He witnessed the emergence of a national institution as a young adult. Rather than farm or rural wage earning, he seized an opportunity for greater education. He studied at the University of Manitoba, earning bachelor's and master's degrees. At the turn-of-the-century, due

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https://newspaperarchive.com/https://pdftojp2.newspaperarchive.com/IIPViewerWeb/webresources/Download/ImagePDF/5101734/Winnipeg-Free-Press/Winnipeg/Manitoba/ca/February,19-1900/12/!winnipeg-free-press-feb-19-1900-p-12!/false/100/true/true, accessed 30 May 2021; "The 'Brilliancy' of Mr. Roger Goulet," *Winnipeg Free Press*, February 20, 1900, found at https://newspaperarchive.com/https://pdftojp2.newspaperarchive.com/IIPViewerWeb/webresources/Download/ImagePDF/1187913/Winnipeg-Free-Press/Winnipeg/Manitoba/ca/February,20-1900/4/!winnipeg-free-press-feb-20-1900-p-4!/false/100/true/true, accessed 30 May 2021.

[74] "Notices of Motion," *Winnipeg Tribune*, April 6, 1900.

to political advocacy and bureaucratic reorganization, Goulet entered the provincial civil service. School inspectors, in a new role, enforced and routinized the language and religious provisions of the school system. Goulet acted as an intermediary between the local contexts and the central bureaucracy. Because he focused on French and bilingual districts, Goulet inspected schools previously organized under the Catholic section of the denominational school system and interacted with the residents and trustees of the school boards. Jérôme had imagined the continued influence of the Métis on the state, and Goulet provided the administration, which echoed the family strategies of many Métis in Manitoba's countryside.

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Conclusion: Individuals, Families, and Households in the Métis Nation

In an Empire where the sun supposedly never set, the Dominion had developed unevenly over the previous three decades, despite a transcontinental railway and farms built in the northern Great Plains and the evolution of provincial and federal governance over time. The North American fur trade, however, had ended throughout the region. In this chapter, I showed that industrial capitalism and agricultural production in the national economy reorganized rather than destroyed Métis identities. The political struggles of the 1890s in Manitoba provided the raw conceptual materials. Over the late nineteenth century, Métis communities shared social and economic experiences involving their formation of families and the production of household economies in the increasingly agricultural environments of the region. Their structural change to material life over time, like the development of private property, exchange relations, and municipal infrastructure, resembled what settler colonization had also forged elsewhere in Manitoba during the explosive period of growth in the late 1870s and early 1880s and continuities over the following decade and a half. In the midst of slowed lingering economic

depression, the provincial government's language and education policies strengthened the feeling and sense of collective difference among the Métis communities in Manitoba. The shared experiences of family formation and household economies extended to common relationships with educational institutions and interests in the schooling of children and youth. However, settler colonization's late nineteenth-century political economy and cultural hegemony reshaped the representative legislative institutions. In the 1890s, when the provincial government was increasingly centralized, the new Métis political elite referenced the events of 1869 and 1870 and the *Manitoba Act* to craft a shared Métis national identity. Their ideas of constitutional order, rights, and the liberal state, which circulated at national events and in print, centred the self-conscious Métis political actions in making Canadian federalism.

Chapter Two: Métis Families and Becoming the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa in Late Nineteenth-Century North Dakota, United States

In the late nineteenth century, when the British Empire reorganized, the United States expanded. Mass immigration, free labour, and trans-continental railways facilitated commodity production and exchange on a continental scale. Westward settlement and industrialization opened new opportunities for capital accumulation and created important class and regional divisions. However, the United States eventually went beyond continental North America. From Puerto Rico to the Philippines to Guam, the Republic used military force to establish colonial rule across oceans. Legal and racialized distinctions accompanied American political domination. Subaltern populations were governed differently than and primarily excluded from the American nation. Colonized labour, often under occupation and placed outside the citizenry, extracted natural resources and produced commodities for the United States.[1]

This chapter focuses on the United States in the late nineteenth century, highlighting how Métis families navigated American governance and exploring why a politicized Métis national identity failed to materialize immediately south of the border. In 1882, the American President, through an Executive Order, created an Indian reservation at Turtle Mountain near the United States-Canada border. In the 1880s and 1890s, industrial capitalist transformation and settler colonization folded the broader area into the northern part of the State of North Dakota,

[1]For Hawai'i, see Sally Engle Merry, *Colonizing Hawai'i: The Cultural Power of Law* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020). For the Philippines, see Paul A. Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States, and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006). For Puerto Rico, see Kelvin A. Santiago-Valles, *Subject People and Colonial Discourses: Economic Transformation and Social Disorder in Puerto Rico, 1898-1947* (New York: SUNY Press, 1994). For the Supreme Court and constitutional law in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War, see Bartholomew H. Sparrow, *The Insular Cases and the Emergence of American Empire* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006). For the diverse influence of American Empire on literary culture and understandings of identity, see Gretchen Murphy, *Shadowing the White Man's Burden: U.S. Imperialism and the Problem of the Color Line* (New York: NYU Press, 2010).

bordering the Canadian Province of Manitoba. In these contexts, Métis families rebuilt lives. I join a body of literature on federal policy reform and how the Office of Indian Affairs (OIA) operated.[2] The federal government sought to assert greater control over Indigenous communities and hoped to make new citizens if Indigenous people became property-owning farmers. As such, I evade the reification of social categories used by local administrators and central authorities who aimed for uniformity. The northern Great Plains had been differentiated because the fur trade and imperialism led to nearly two centuries of social, economic, and cultural changes. Amid this complexity, field officials and federal commissioners tried to make sense of communities and identities, like the Métis community at Turtle Mountain and their increasing proximity to the Plains Ojibwe community there. This group self-identified as the Turtle Mountain band of Chippewa Indians. Because settlement changed the economic dynamics of labour, land, and markets, the Turtle Mountain Métis adapted life cycles and coordinated family strategies without close social contact with the Manitoba Métis. Instead, even if they had everyday agricultural activities and nuclear household structures, the Turtle Mountain Métis had different social experiences and cultural expressions because their seasonal labour, mobility, and

[2] For policy development and reform, see Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2021); Stephen J. Rockwell, *Indian Affairs and the Administrative State in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986); Cathleen D. Cahill, *Federal Fathers and Mothers: A Social History of the United States Indian Service, 1869-1933* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2011); and C. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa, *Crooked Paths to Allotment: The Fight over Federal Indian Policy after the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2012). For case studies, some overlapping with the time period and others specific to it, see Frederick E. Hoxie, *Parading Through History: the Making of the Crown Nation in America, 1805-1935* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Melissa L. Meyer, *The White Earth Tragedy: Ethnicity and Dispossession at a Minnesota Anishinaabe Reservation, 1889-1920* (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 1999); David Rich Lewis, *Neither Wolf Nor Dog: American Indians, Environment, and Agrarian Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Nancy Shoemaker, *American Indian Population Recovery in the Twentieth Century* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999); Alexandra Harmon, *Indians in the Making: Ethnic Relations and Indian Identities Around Puget Sound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Chantal Norrgard, *Seasons of Change: Labor, Treaty Rights, and Ojibwe Nationhood* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2014); Rose Stremlau, *Sustaining the Cherokee Family: Kinship and the Allotment of an Indigenous Nation* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2011).

land management differed. While each practice accentuated their cohesion in the area, settler encroachment did not lead the Turtle Mountain Métis to more significant connections to markets and local governments. Federal authorities exacerbated divisions between the Turtle Mountain band and white settlers. Federal policymakers sought the Turtle Mountain band to agree to extinguish their territorial claim in northern North Dakota. During environmental disruption and economic depression, federal commissions used enrollment to reshape collective identity. This gradually cast Métis national identity to the margins and required the Métis to redefine themselves as part of a Turtle Mountain community.

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Seasons of Change and Continuity for Métis Families at Turtle Mountain

Before Turtle Mountain was established as a reservation, some Métis resided south of the Red and Assiniboine rivers and went back and forth across what would become the United States-Canada border. Over the first half of the nineteenth century, many Métis families kept houses and tended gardens near the intersection of the Red River and Pembina River. This intersection, called Pembina, was south of the boundary line. The Métis collectively hunted bison and freighted commodities outside of the area.[3] Pembina had become an economic node in a

[3] For an American political official's remembrance of bison hunting with Métis at Pembina, National Endowment for the Humanities, "The Pioneer Express. [Volume] (Pembina, Dakota [N.D.]) 1883-1928, December 27, 1895, Image 15," December 27, 1895, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88076741/1895-12-27/ed-1/seq-15/, accessed 18 August 2022. The English-language journalists in the area point to some Métis living and working in the area through the 1870s and early-1880s. See, National Endowment for the Humanities, "The Pioneer Express. [Volume] (Pembina, Dakota [N.D.]) 1883-1928, August 10, 1888, Image 2," August 10, 1888, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88076741/1888-08-10/ed-1/seq-2/, access 18 August 2022; National Endowment for the Humanities, "The Pioneer Express. [Volume] (Pembina, Dakota [N.D.]) 1883-1928, November 22, 1889, Image 3," November 22, 1889, https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88076741/1889-11-22/ed-1/seq-3/, accessed 18 August 2022. For a detailed study of the location and its broader connections to the region, Ruth Swan, *The Crucible: Pembina and the Origins of the Red River Valley Metis*, (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Manitoba, 2003); Jacqueline C. Peterson, "Gathering at the River: The Métis Peopling of the Northern Plains," in *The Fur Trade in North Dakota*, edited by Virginia L. Heidenreich, 47–70 (Bismarck: State Historical Society of North Dakota, 1990); Nancy Woolworth, "Gingras, St. Joseph, and the Metis in the Northern Red River Valley: 1845– 1873" in North Dakota History 42, no. 4 (1975) 17–27; and Émilie Pigeon, *Au nom du Bon Dieu et du Buffalo: Metis Lived Catholicism on the Northern Plains* (PhD Dissertation: York University, 2017).

merchant and transportation network. Independent traders and corporate employees operated posts in the area, and cart trails led southeast to the outposts at the upper Mississippi River Valley. Métis freighters, however, might have traversed those cart trails year after year and slowly noticed their destination transform over time.

Indeed, from the 1840s through the 1860s, the region west of the Great Lakes had been gradually folded into the American Republic. This occurred as white settlers pushed west, and an administrative structure was established to facilitate them. The Northwest Ordinances directed this social and economic process. These federal ordinances continued the pattern that had begun in various areas east of the Mississippi River several decades earlier and were applied to the northern region the United States claimed after the Louisiana Purchase.[4] The federal government had established central administrative systems to transition American-claimed territories into new individual states. The ordinances banned slavery in the northern territories, created surveys to parcel land uniformly, and allocated legal rights to private property. The territories could become state governments when populations reached 60,000 individuals. This process shaped the Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota territories, where the Anishinaabeg controlled the pelt trade with the American Fur Company. Settler colonization replaced the fur trade with the combination of agriculture, mineral and lumber extraction, and railway networks. By 1860, Michigan and Wisconsin had a combined population of 750,000 and Minnesota a little over 170,000. In the 1860s and 1870s, the federal government administered the *Homestead Act. It*

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[4] For the sociopolitical formation of the Republic and territorial expansion, see Alan Taylor, *American Republics: A Continental History of the United States, 1783-1850* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2021); Steven Hahn, *A Nation Without Borders: The United States and Its World in an Age of Civil Wars, 1830-1910* (New York: Penguin, 2016).

subsidized the construction of transcontinental railways, which channelled mass settlement into agricultural production and encouraged capital investment in a national transportation system.

By 1872, the national transportation system expanded west of the northern Great Lakes and transformed the United States' Dakota Territory. Grain merchants and retail outfits established operations at Fargo, while steamships hauled commodities along the Red River into the lower American Midwest. From 1860 to 1880, the population of the Dakota Territory went from 4,837 to 135,777.[5] In 1880, the Red River Valley counties of Richland, Cass, Trail, Grand Forks, and Pembina had population densities of 2 to 6 individuals per 640 acres and 6 to 11 individuals per 640 acres. The greater densities appeared closer to a water source.[6] The counties further south near Nebraska were the only areas to match or exceed these population densities. In contrast, the counties along Canada's boundary had two or fewer individuals per 640 acres. To be sure, the figures in the Red River Valley reflected families building their farms. However, large-scale operations drawing on debt, machinery, and wage labour for the mass production of cereals also emerged.[7] The population, however, shared a similar heritage. The formation of different social relationships and economic structures, based mainly on household and capitalist production of agricultural commodities and the new merchant and industrial transportation networks, quickly reoriented the region in the national economy.

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[5] U.S. Census Bureau; 1880 Census: Volume 1. Statistics of the Population of the United States, General Population Tables; found at https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1880/vol-01-population/1880_v1-09.pdf, accessed 10 December 2022.

[6] U.S. Census Bureau; 1880 Census: Volume 1. Statistics of the Population of the United States, Detailed Density Maps of Total Population; found at https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1880/vol-01-population/1880_v1-map-32.pdf, accessed 10 December 2022.

[7] Hiram M. Drache, *The Day of the Bonanza: A History of Bonanza Farming in the Red River Valley of the North* (North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1964) 131.

Settlement at Pembina and the Red River Valley helped displace many Métis. Some families went to Turtle Mountain. This was not an entirely unusual place for them. For many of these families, seasonal bison hunts and some limited winter activities were an integral part of their lives. Unlike the extensive northern Great Plains grasslands, Turtle Mountain and the immediate surrounding area was a mix of grasslands, forest, small lakes and ponds where bison typically took shelter and grazed.[8] In the 1870s, the Métis faced the loss of bison herds because settlers encroached on grasslands and specialized American hunters sought to satiate British and European industry's demand for leather.[9] By the late 1870s and early 1880s, many Métis families went to Turtle Mountain to remake their economies.[10] In March 1882, an English-language traveller commented on the built environment and an aspect of life. [11] The writer, who corresponded with a railroad company executive, wanted to know whether Turtle Mountain could be developed into profitable lumber operations and viable agriculture. The writer pointed out log dwellings and crop growth nearby, which Métis families had made.[12]

These Métis families at Turtle Mountain lived near Plains Ojibwe families. Laura Peers indicates that the social and economic processes of the fur trade changed the Ojibwe from the 1780s to the 1820s. Many re-established families, work patterns, and seasonality in the Red River Valley and northern Great Plains west and northwest of the Great Lakes. Their decision

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[8] For a *long durée* examination of bison populations in the Great Plains, Geoff Cunfer and Bill Waiser, *Bison and People on the North American Great Plains: A Deep Environmental History* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2016).

[9] M. Scott Taylor, "Buffalo Hunt: International Trade and the Virtual Extinction of the North American Bison," in *American Economic Review* 101, no. 7 (December 2011): 3162–95.

[10] Michel Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line: Creating a Border and Dividing a People* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2015).

[12] National Endowment for the Humanities, "Courier Democrat. (Langdon, N.D.) 1891-1920, June 15, 1893, Image 5," March 18, 1882, found at https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88076432/1893-06-15/ed-1/seq-5/, accessed 18 August 2022.

was motivated, in part, by declining animal populations in woodlands. From the 1830s to the 1860s, the Plains Ojibwe became socioeconomically differentiated. Some family groups had built and tended farms northeast of the HBC trade posts at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine rivers. But, across the region, many other families collectively hunted bison for food and trade. Peers suggest that their seasonal economies induced social contact and even kinship relations between the Plains Ojibwe and Métis. Their interactions were not always harmonious. According to Peers, Plains Ojibwe and Métis families sometimes gathered to hunt near Turtle Mountain at roughly the same time of the year, and competition for resources fueled discontent.[13] By the late 1870s and early 1880s, as agriculture started to dominate and bison populations declined, some Plains Ojibwe families came to Turtle Mountain more permanently.

Nonetheless, these Plains Ojibwe and Métis knew one another, and their loss of resources fueled efforts to find solutions in common. Some Plains Ojibwe and Métis sent petitions to the American federal government and visited Washington D.C. as the Turtle Mountain band. These diplomats sought an Indian reservation. The President, by Executive Order in 1882, "[withdrew] from sale and settlement and set apart for the use and occupancy of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewas and such other Indians of the Chippewa tribe" a contiguous section of lands in the northern part of the Dakota Territory. This comprised 20 townships and around 400,000 acres in the County of Rolette. But, based partly upon federal officials' reporting of the local population, an 1884 Executive Order reduced the reservation to the two townships and around 40,000 acres.[14] Keith Richotte contends that the Plains Ojibwe and Métis carried out their petitions and

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[13] Laura Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada 1780-1870* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2009) 156-157.

[14] Copies of the Executive Orders can be found in the 1900 Senate report about the historical community, American governance in the territory, and process for the acquisition of land in north-central North Dakota. U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Indian Affairs, *Papers Relative to An Agreement with the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians in North Dakota*, 56th Cong., 1st Session, 1900, S. Rep., serial 3878, 101-102. Found at

capital visits as part of an economic strategy. These Plains Ojibwe and Métis knew the American federal government had, historically, negotiated treaties with Indigenous nations and, now, the Turtle Mountain band could be financially compensated for land across the northcentral of the Dakota Territory. Richotte notes that Turtle Mountain band petitioners and diplomats distinguished their territorial claim from the Red River Valley lands of the Pembina and Red Lakes bands in the 1863 Old Crossing Treaty.[15] As such, unlike those groups of Plains Ojibwe families further east, the Turtle Mountain band had been ignored by the United States. The Plains Ojibwe and Métis families thought a reservation at Turtle Mountain provided a land base and a cash settlement could help individuals and families adapt to the agricultural economy.

Because of administrative systems and routines, the records of the territorial and federal government provide the grounds to describe the social and economic structure of Turtle Mountain from its creation in 1882 to the 1890s. Turtle Mountain comprised two townships in Rolette County. In 1885, an OIA field official kept a list of agency members but needed to indicate whether an individual lived on the reservation. Territorial officials, however, enumerated the county's population. The combined records allow us to estimate the reservation's population. The territorial officials omitted particular forms to distinguish reservation residents, and the enumerators did not take the initiative to do so. The enumerator did record names. Many of them, given names and surnames, were present on the agency list. Territorial census enumerators recorded 112 dwellings whose members corresponded to the individual population

https://www.google.ca/books/edition/United_States_Congressional_Serial_Set/rv1GAQAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0, accessed 18 August 2022.

[15] Keith Richotte Jr, *Claiming Turtle Mountain's Constitution: The History, Legacy, and Future of a Tribal Nation's Founding Documents* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2017) 47-67.

of Turtle Mountain, which the federal employee listed at 914 individuals. In 1900, another census took place after the Dakota Territory had petitioned for and achieved statehood in 1889.

The federal government crafted a unique schedule for reservations. The enumerator at Turtle Mountain reported 488 dwellings and a population of 2549. The Census Office required them to distinguish the "place in which…one or more persons regularly [slept]" was a "tent, tepee, or other temporary structure" or a "permanent dwelling of any kind."[16] Turtle Mountain featured a preponderance of immoveable shelters: 438 dwelling houses were reported as fixed, and 50 were listed as moveable. Over the 1880s and 1890s, the reservation population grew and continued to build log dwellings. Like the Canadian officials north of the border, the enumerator visited these dwellings, where wide-ranging oral interviews revealed the structural elements of Métis families. The names that the enumerator recorded of Turtle Mountain Métis families might provide important clues regarding their social and political organization.

For instance, Brenda Macdougall draws attention to the significance of surnames in her study of Île-à-la-Cross, an area slightly northwest of Batoche, Saskatchewan. The fur trade and HBC persisted into the late nineteenth century, and a large Cree vocabulary constructed a regionally distinct variant of Michif. Macdougall points out that patronymic naming practices were a way in which Métis families organized and identified social and historical relationships between and within generations across specific territories. Patronymic naming practices occur when children assume their father's surname. Macdougall suggests that, even if some surnames increased in specific areas and even became affiliated to geographies, this intergenerational

[16] Department of the Interior, Census Office, *Instructions to Enumerators* (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O. 1900) 24, found at https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/programs-surveys/decennial/technical-documentation/questionnaires/1900instructions.pdf, accessed 18 August 2022.

practice and social identity was common for Métis families.[17] This included families in the Red River Valley.

In 1900, 417 household heads at Turtle Mountain had a reported surname. Although the enumerator spelt many similar-sounding surnames differently, if we group them based on their similar sound, we can see roughly 149 at Turtle Mountain. Many shared surnames with Métis northeast and north of the American-Canadian border. Approximately 70 percent of Turtle Mountain surnames were similar to Manitoba Métis household heads in 1901. Dissimilar surnames are traceable to those revealed in studies of areas northwest and west, like the Qu'Appelle River Valley, Milk River Valley, and Judith Basin. The theoretical implication is that, based upon the intergenerational characteristics of patronymic naming practices, the families who used surnames at Turtle Mountain and Manitoba shared a common patrilineal ancestor and, thus, a distant or close kinship relation and a historical connection. As we will see shortly, the socioeconomics and politics of settler colonization around Turtle Mountain raised the idea of connection to the Métis across the United States-Canada border. Because of similar housing, shared surnames, and common family histories, the following analysis of age cohorts, marriage patterns, and household formation considers these different surname groups to be part of the Métis sociopolitical and cultural formation and collective identity before the late nineteenth century.

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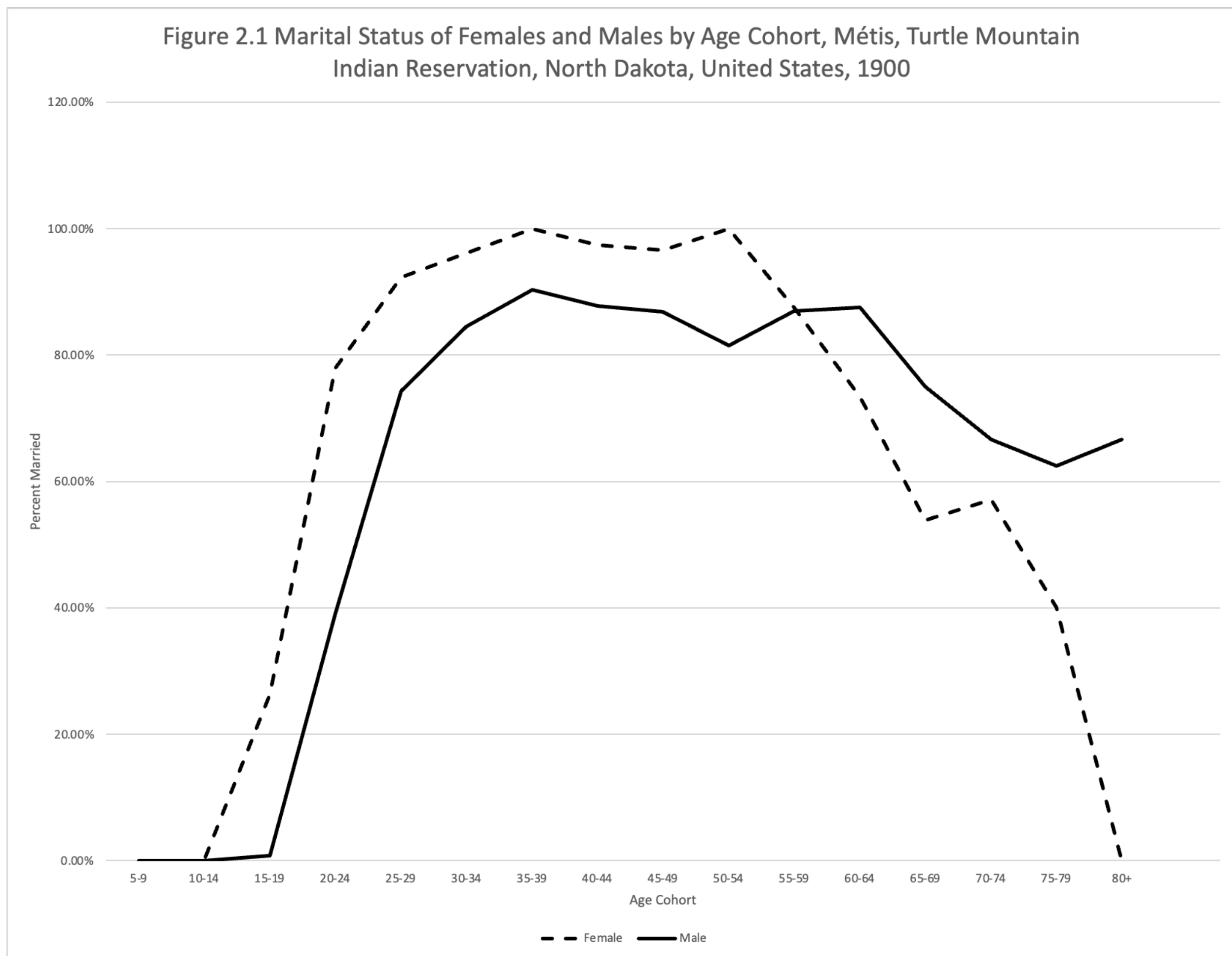
[17] Brenda Macdougall, *One of the Family: Metis Culture in Nineteenth-Century Northwestern Saskatchewan* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011) 17, 73-74, 76.

Table 2.1 Household Structures of Females and Males, Métis, Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation, North Dakota, United States, 1900

	Female		**Male**		**Total**	
Household Structure	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)	(#)	(%)
Lone-Headed Households	*52*	*5.13*	*79*	*7.28*	*131*	*6.24*
Primary Individual	1	0.10	4	0.37	5	0.24
Lone Head with Children	49	4.84	71	6.54	120	5.72
Lone Head with non-kin	2	0.20	4	0.37	6	0.29
Married Couple Households	*853*	*84.21*	*896*	*82.58*	*1749*	*83.37*
Couple with Children	770	76.01	800	73.73	1570	74.83
Couple without Resident Children	43	4.24	45	4.15	88	4.19
Married Couple with non-kin	40	3.95	51	4.70	91	4.34
Extended Households	*108*	*10.66*	*110*	*10.14*	*218*	*10.39*
Extended	107	10.56	107	9.86	214	10.20
Extended with non-kin	1	0.10	3	0.28	4	0.19
	1013	100.00	1085	100.00	2098	100.00

Source: Ancestry.ca. Original sources: United States, Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900*, Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1900: T623. The enumeration district is mentioned in the text.

In 1900, nuclear and extended families were the norm. While the five-year age cohorts were unbalanced, 556 men and women were in their early adulthood (15-39 years old), 278 men and women were in their middle adulthood (40-64 years old), and 62 men and women were in their old age (65 years old and up). Men and women aged between 25-29 years old and 60-64 years old were almost all married. The elderly were either married couples or widows. Whether married or otherwise, adult men and women were parents to 981 infants, toddlers, children, and adolescents under 15 years old. Adult men and women were usually organized into nuclear or extended families. Around 75 percent of individuals (1,570 instances) resided in a household

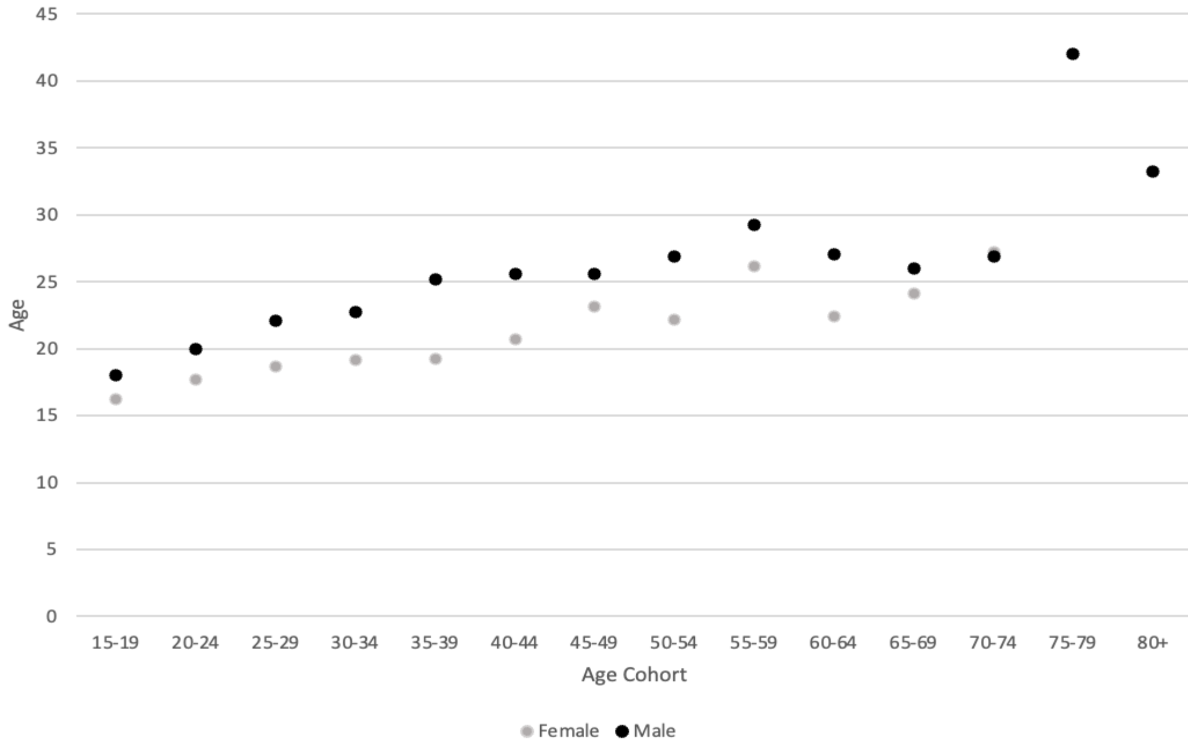


Source: Ancestry.ca. Original sources: United States, Bureau of the Census, Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1900: T623. The enumeration district is mentioned in the text.

based around a married couple and resident children, 10 percent of individuals (218 cases) lived in extended families, and a minority were divided almost equally among lone-headed households with resident children and married couples without resident children.

However, family formation changed over time because the age at first marriage between Métis men and women in their early adulthood differed from those in middle adulthood. The 1900 schedules offer insight into the timing of this life-cycle event. Federal enumerators asked questions about marriage duration, which reported how many years couples had been married and thus an estimate of the year of marriage. The answers mean we can pinpoint the average age at first marriage at Turtle Mountain rather than use age and marital status to create a synthetic

measurement. On the one hand, married men in the age cohorts between 40 and 64 years old tended to marry in their late 20s, and married men in the five-year age cohorts between 15 and 39 years old tended to marry in their early 20s. On the other hand, married women in the age cohorts between 40-64 years old tended to marry in their early 20s and married women in the five-year age cohorts between 15-39 years old tended to marry in their late teens. This implies that men and women born through the late 1830s and the late 1850s had probably married sometime before the late 1870s, with some of the men and women in the later birth cohorts, like the individuals in the late 1850s, marrying around then and the early 1880s. In contrast, men and women born in the early 1860s through the late 1870s had probably married in the early 1880s to the late 1890s, with each birth cohort likely later than the next. In 1900, middle-aged Métis men and women probably shared many life experiences as similar birth cohorts of Manitoba Métis but either relocated or formed families at Turtle Mountain when seasonal bison hunting and freighting declined. For younger generations of Métis men and women, their childhood and



Source: Ancestry.ca. Original sources: United States, Bureau of the Census, Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1900: T623. The enumeration district is mentioned in the text.

youth unfolded in that disruptive social and economic context. The reservation came to structure their marriages and family formation.[18]

This social process reflected and reinforced the construction of transformed household economies. American government observers, however, barely considered relationships of family and household contexts to socioeconomic structures and processes. In the 1880s, the Office of

[18] For a report on migration by a nearby English-language journalist, National Endowment for the Humanities, "The Bottineau Pioneer. (Bottineau, N.D.) 1885-1895, January 03, 1889, Image 2," January 3, 1889, found at https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88076679/1889-01-03/ed-1/seq-2/, accessed 18 August 2022. For dimensions of migration, which included from the east in the Red River Valley and further northwest and west, see National Endowment for the Humanities, "The Pioneer Express. [Volume] (Pembina, Dakota [N.D.]) 1883-1928, August 10, 1888, Image 2," August 10, 1888, found at https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88076741/1888-08-10/ed-1/seq-2/, access 18 August 2022;
National Endowment for the Humanities, "The Pioneer Express. [Volume] (Pembina, Dakota [N.D.]) 1883-1928, November 22, 1889, Image 3," November 22, 1889, found at https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88076741/1889-11-22/ed-1/seq-3/, accessed 18 August 2022.

Indian Affairs folded Turtle Mountain into an existing local agency in the Dakota Territory. The local administrator took a critical tone when reporting on the productive activities of Métis families. For example, an 1884 report emphasized that the Métis "lived on the buffalo all their lives," and the decline of the bison meant a loss of "their means of subsistence." The report implied that the federal government would have to provide financial assistance and economic education because the Métis lacked the skills and knowledge necessary to become agriculturalists.[19] The point was based upon assumptions and fleeting observations. Two years later, the same administrator requested staff to reside permanently at Turtle Mountain because other tasks precluded a more consistent presence. Their social influence was thought necessary to mitigate families' impoverishment and realize the federal government's reformist principles. For many Métis adults who had matured from the 1840s to 1860s and had formed independent households in the 1870s, seasonality and mobility had been an organizational principle for their parents' work. As mentioned in Chapter One, social aggregations in the mid-nineteenth century changed over spring, summer, fall, and winter. Hunting and freighting were some, not all, of the ways their work transformed the natural environment: the tillage of soils and tending crops for food; the raising and management of grazing lands and feed for horses; the cutting and moving trees for wood used in dwellings, carts, and fuel; and so on. Métis men and women who matured in the late 1880s and 1890s must have experienced seasonality and eclectic activities as children. By 1900, Turtle Mountain Métis families, whether nuclear or extended, had built and worked reservation farms. Like Manitoba Métis families, nearly 75 percent of the Turtle Mountain Métis

[19] U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of Devil's Lake Agency,* by John Cramsie (Washington D.C.: G.P.O., 1886) 61, found at https://images.library.wisc.edu/History/EFacs/CommRep/AnnRep86/reference/history.annrep86.i0011.pdf, accessed 18 August 2022.

were farmers. A minority were wage labourers. Even as the household economies' resource base changed in the late nineteenth century, their social relations required seasonal family labour.

This is reflected in married couples' reproductive practices. In 1901, married Manitoba Métis men and women recognized the role of youth in labour processes and the potential economic security for old age. Turtle Mountain Métis couples had acted similarly. The ratio of 15-39-year-old married women to children and reports of children born to married Métis women sheds some light on their commonality. In 1900, married Métis couples were typically in early adulthood and kept independent households with infants and children. Table 2.2 shows the fertility ratios for specific age cohorts of married Métis women. Without accounting for the particular cohorts, the census enumeration reported 1.23 children under five per married woman from 15-49 years old. Nearly three-quarters of these married women were within and between 15 and 34, while a little over half were in their 20s and early 30s. Married women in their late 20s to late 30s had higher child-to-woman ratios than older and younger cohorts: 1.63 in the 25-29-years-old cohort and 1.63 in the 30-34-years-old cohorts, and 1.62 in 35-39-years-old having 1.62 children. Middle-aged married women — those in their early- and late-40s — were quantitatively distinct: the average number of infants and children among the cohort of 40-44-year-olds was nearly half that of the preceding cohort and slightly more than 45-49-year-olds, which is characteristic of all populations of married women.

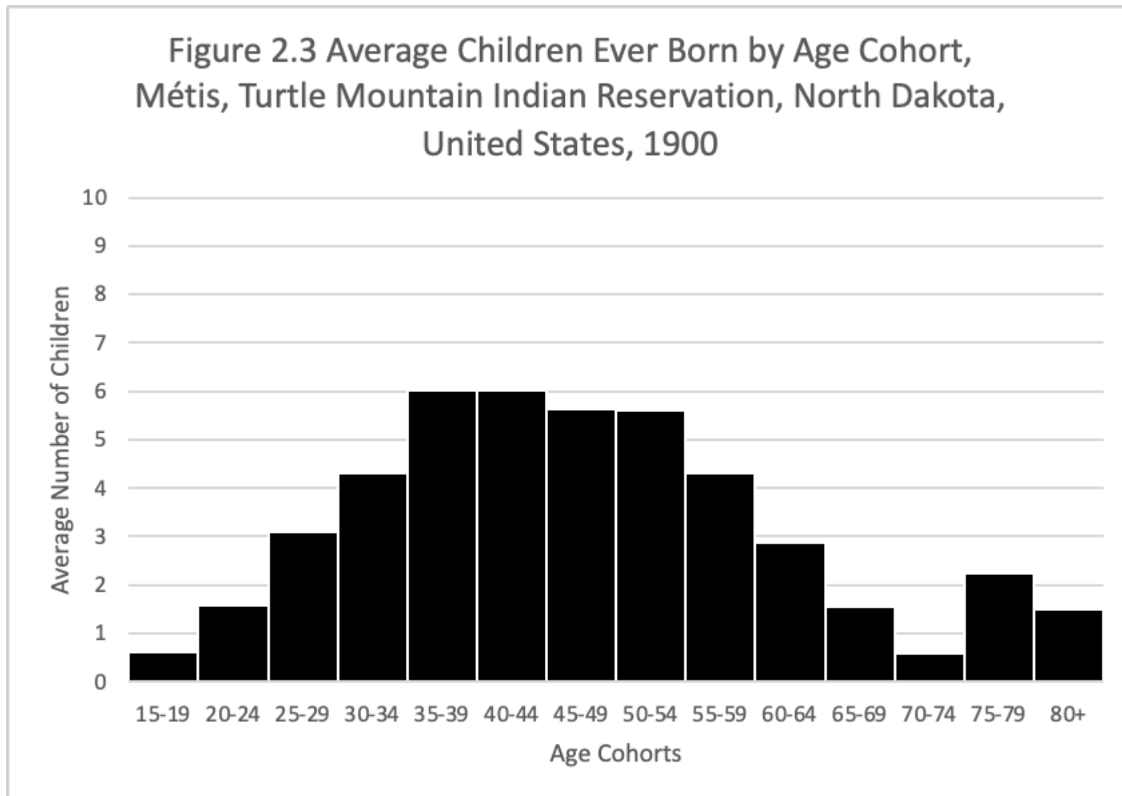
Table 2.2 Age-Specific Marital Child-Woman Ratio, Métis, Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation, North Dakota, United States, 1900

Age-Cohort	Number of Married Women	Number of Children under 5-years-old	Child/Woman Ratio
15-19	24	12	0.5
20-24	76	96	1.26
25-29	60	85	1.63
30-34	48	78	1.63
35-39	39	63	1.62
40-44	37	34	0.92
45-49	28	17	0.61
Grand Total	312	385	1.23

Source: Ancestry.ca. Original sources: United States, Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900*, Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1900: T623. The enumeration district is mentioned in the text.

The questionnaire required the interviewer to determine the number of children married women had carried to term. The answers allow us to estimate reproductive histories directly, unlike the indirect measure of a child-women ratio. Figure 2.3, according to the 1900 census, shows the average number of children born by five-year birth cohorts of ever-married Métis women at Turtle Mountain. Women's demographic histories in late early adulthood and early middle adulthood—35-39-year-olds, 40-44-year-olds, 45-49-year-olds—provide an example. Each age cohort had quite durable marriages: the average length of marriage for 35-39-year-olds was 18.5 years, for 40-44-year-olds was 21.1 years, and for 45-49-year-olds was 23.8 years. Married women in their late 30s and early 40s had six children over adulthood, while those in their late 40s had slightly fewer. It is not surprising to see lower averages among younger cohorts. They had only recently formed couples and households. On average, women in their late teens to early 30s were married for shorter durations than their older counterparts. The exception

was adult women married for 30-34 years, who averaged slightly fewer children—5.8—than women in the two younger age groups. However, the analysis of the 1900 manuscript schedules shows that women in the last cohort of early adulthood and the four in middle adulthood—from 35-39 years old to 55-59 years old—differed from women in the older cohorts of middle adulthood and the elderly, who averaged half or under half as many children.



Source: Ancestry.ca. Original sources: United States, Bureau of the Census, Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900, Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1900: T623. The enumeration district is mentioned in the text.

For Métis families at Turtle Mountain, which had maintained and formed over the 1880s and 1890s, labour in the spring and fall was socially necessary. Crop production contributed to economic welfare and passing knowledge and skills between generations. In the 1880s, the local OIA agent regularly mentioned farms and the use of agricultural technology to do so. In 1885 and 1886, the local agent revealed many ploughs and yokes in an unsystematic survey of

household tools.[20] In the 1890s, after an agricultural teacher was hired and wrote the annual reports, their writings explicitly mentioned various field grains and vegetables. They implied the broader use of metal tools in combination with horses or oxen.[21] In the spring and early summer, married and unmarried young men tilled, fertilized, and planted soils near their dwellings. Some families planned and omitted areas to maintain the moisture of the soil.[22] Weather patterns, soil hydrology, and insects shaped agricultural output. Cereals and vegetables sometimes came short of expectations based on the planted acreage.[23] In autumn, grains were cut and threshed. While the eastern manufacturing sectors and innovations in farm machinery had helped propel settlement decades earlier, the agricultural teacher omitted any reference to indicate their use of time-saving reapers and threshing machines. Fall harvests necessitated the use of family labour. This meant using cradles and scythes, threshing the stalks and storing the grain in outbuildings for further processing and sale. Coordination realized objectives in two seasons when one was

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[20] The information was written into a bound notebook with ruled lines rather than the standardized forms provided by the central authority of the Office of Indians Affairs. The surveyor does not appear to have followed a specific set of guidelines for enumeration of tools and other items in these years. The location of the records outside of the standardized format and routine outlined by the central authority of the federal bureaucracy provides some context for the records' lack of comprehensiveness.

[21] U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of Farmer, Turtle Mountain Reservation*, by E.W. Brenner (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1893) 230, available at https://images.library.wisc.edu/History/EFacs/CommRep/AnnRep93/reference/history.annrep93.i0018.pdf, accessed 18 August 2022; U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of Turtle Mountain Subagency,* by E.W. Brenner (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1895) 230, available at https://images.library.wisc.edu/History/EFacs/CommRep/AnnRep95/reference/history.annrep95.i0017.pdf, accessed 18 August 2022. For the abstracts of tools and supplies, see Abstract D Articles Issues to Indians, 3rd Quarter 1896 and Abstract D Articles Issued to Indians, 1st Quarter 1896; Abstracts of Articles Issued to Indians, 1888-1916; Turtle Mountain Agency, 1910-1947; Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75; National Archives at Kansas City, Missouri.

[22] Brenner remarked on the practice of summer fallow in 1890. U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Turtle Mountain Reservation,* by E.W. Brenner (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1890) 27, found at https://images.library.wisc.edu/History/EFacs/CommRep/AnnRep90/reference/history.annrep90.i0009.pdf, accessed 18 August 2022.

[23] U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of Farmer in Charge of Turtle Mountain Chippewa,* by E.W. Brenner (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1900) 311, found at https://images.library.wisc.edu/History/EFacs/CommRep/AnnRep1900p1/reference/history.annrep1900p1.i0019.pdf , accessed 18 August 2022.

contingent on the other. Their efforts produced wheat, barley, oats, and leafy and root vegetables. The result was food in the household, feed for horses and livestock, and commodities for exchange in local markets.[24]

However, Métis families confronted the limitations of their land base at Turtle Mountain. Federal policies were a constraint. The 1884 Executive Order shrank the reservation's geographic size. The decline was quite stark from its original boundaries, but the reservation size paled compared to the hunting and freighting territory of older Métis men and women. In 1897, the instructor surmised that the fields per household were 30 acres or less, and some were smaller than their neighbours.[25] Social and economic forces were then another constraint.

In the early 1880s, Plains Ojibwe and Métis petitioning for land had influenced federal actions. Their land claim had been extensive, so the General Land Office halted surveys in the northcentral Dakota Territory. While federal officials aimed to investigate the land claim, the break on white settlement was short-lived. In the late 1880s, the federal bureaucracy restarted surveys and the local offices to allocate homesteads.[26] From 1880 to 1900, the counties along the American-Canadian border ballooned to a population of 42,264.[27] This growth reflected the spur

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[24] U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of Turtle Mountain Subagency,* by E.W. Brenner (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1895) 231, found at https://images.library.wisc.edu/History/EFacs/CommRep/AnnRep95/reference/history.annrep95.i0017.pdf, accessed 18 August 2022.

[25] U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of Farmer in Charge of Turtle Mountain Chippewa,* by E.W. Brenner (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1897) 213, found at https://images.library.wisc.edu/History/EFacs/CommRep/AnnRep97/reference/history.annrep97.i0020.pdf, accessed 18 August 2022.

[26] U.S. Department of the Interior, United States General Land Office, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of General Land Office Made to the Secretary of the Interior for the Year ...* (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1887).

[27] In 1900, the County of Cavalier was 12,580, the County of Towner was 6491, the County of Bottineau was 7532, the County of McHenry was 5,253, and the County of Pierce was 4765. At the same time, not including the Indian reservation, the County of Rolette was 5644. As we will see, this number included some Métis individuals, who the local agency denied from living on the reservation. U.S. Census Bureau; 1900 Census: Volume 1. Statistics of the Population of the United States, General Population Tables; found at

lines radiating outwards from the transcontinental railway. Decades earlier, industrialists had often invested in regional railways facilitating agricultural and urban development.[28] Turtle Mountain received branch lines from the Northern Pacific Railroad on its east and west ends in the late 1880s. The network, though, failed to connect to the transcontinental line of the CPR. Farms, villages, and railway stations then quickly formed around the reservation. By 1900, 1,003 farms with an average size of around 257 acres encased Turtle Mountain's two townships. Most households owned their farms, while merchants and professionals in the nearby villages of St. John and Dunseith became crucial sites for economic exchanges.[29]

Nonetheless, Métis families used nearby forests to adapt to land scarcity. Chantel Norrgard observes the decline of the fur trade and Ojibwe families' transition to reservations in Minnesota and Wisconsin near Lake Superior from the 1870s to the 1890s. She notes that ecological limitations undermined their farms. Lumberers, however, established capitalist enterprises. Urbanization had raised the demand for building materials, and timber production required a labour force. In turn, Ojibwe men often earned wages in logging operations. Their roles ranged from cutting and milling to coopering. Norrgard points out that wage work, hunting and fishing, and wild rice harvests co-existed in a new seasonality.[30]

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https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1900/volume-1/volume-1-p5.pdf, accessed 15 December 2022.

[28] Jeremy Atack, et al, "Did Railroads Induce or Follow Economic Growth? Urbanization and Population Growth in the American Midwest, 1850-1860," in *Social Science History* vol 34, no. 2 (2010) 171-197.

[29] U.S. Census Bureau; 1900 Census: Volume 5. Agriculture, Part 1. Farms, Live Stock, and Animal Products, found at https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1900/volume-5/volume-5-p4.pdf, accessed 15 December 2022.

[30] Chantal Norrgard, *Seasons of Change: Labor, Treaty Rights, and Ojibwe Nationhood* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2014) 86-108.

In the early 1880s, English-speaking travellers commented on Turtle Mountain's forests and emphasized how households and regional manufacturers might use them.[31] However, the area failed to draw similar capital, even as spur lines linked the area to regional cities and distant markets. Lumberers were not then demanding seasonal waged employees, though farms around the reservation did to a minimal extent. Some agricultural operations combined credit and machinery for large-scale production. Their efforts drew on hired labour for seasonal tasks. In the 1890s, Turtle Mountain's agricultural instructor directed attention to wages and off-reservation farm work as an income source, and the 1900 census did the same. Their work was in the spring or fall. Large-scale farm operations might have had the cash and crops to hire for planting and harvesting.

In summers, many Métis families turned to the area's dense forests and wetlands off the reservation to hunt for food. In 1885 and 1886, the local OIA agent's household survey revealed Métis families' firearm ownership. Although mass production made firearms more widely available in the United States, the survey indicates a minority of Turtle Mountain Métis families owned a firearm. The survey does not provide enough clues to offer a reasonable explanation. If we consider the economic context, we might speculate that some Turtle Mountain Métis could not acquire firearms because they could not access the exchange networks necessary to purchase them. Alternatively, we might wonder if the survey underestimated firearm possession since the surveyor did not appear to have systematic rules, and respondents may not have divulged information voluntarily.

[31] National Endowment for the Humanities, "Bismarck Tribune. (Bismarck, D.T. [N.D.]) 1878-1884, April 07, 1882, Image 5," April 7, 1882, found at https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042331/1882-04-07/ed-1/seq-5/, accessed 18 August 2022.

Nevertheless, a little over 40 percent of Métis families (51 of 124) possessed firearms. Shotguns were the most common type and helped harvest migratory birds. Although the harvest fluctuated, summer and early fall waterfowling provided a modest source of meat. Wetlands dotted the area around Turtle Mountain, and waterfowl did as well.

However, in the early 1890s, English-speaking urban professionals and state administrators set their sights on the environments around the reservation. Reformers echoed contemporary ideas about the natural environment when they argued the Turtle Mountain forests and wetlands should be turned into a 'national park.' Their efforts sought to use political power and administration to create new norms and values.[32] Reformers thought recent industrialization and urbanization brought severe costs to the natural world. Recent events, notably the well-publicized slaughter of bison on the Great Plains and deforestation in the Great Lakes and Pacific Northwest, reinforced their views. However, the emergence of a professional class also created the negative impressions of a group physically alienated from working the soil. The environmental conservation movement imagined the government, particularly the President, would limit private land ownership and turn specific areas into 'the public domain.' As such, the federal government might oversee and manage 'the public domain' as protected environmental landscapes. Leisure-oriented urbanites could then travel to new parks and recoup the ecological relationships. Karl Jacoby situates Yellowstone National Park, further west of the Turtle Mountain forests and wetlands, as part of this process. Still, Jacoby argues that environmental concerns have important consequences for rural people across the United States. Laws and their

[32] For an overview of different arguments for a "national park" at Turtle Mountain, see National Endowment for the Humanities, "Jamestown Weekly Alert. [Volume] (Jamestown, Stutsman County, D.T. [N.D.]) 1882-1925, December 03, 1891, Image 4," December 3, 1891, found at https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85042405/1891-12-03/ed-1/seq-4/, accessed 18 August 2022.

regulatory codes turned social and economic practices into criminal offenses. Harvesting animal populations and cutting trees, for instance, were now open to fines and detention.[33] Rather than a national park and tourist destination, the Turtle Mountain woodlands were to become North Dakota's Forest reserves. In the early 1890s, the President made removing the area from private ownership possible. The North Dakota Department of Forests and Irrigation noted that the scientific management of the Turtle Mountain timber had social and economic value. Their report contended that a forest reserve would maintain a fuel supply and building materials for railways, farm operations, and towns nearby.[34] Neither the federal government nor the state acted very quickly, however. Many Métis families must have known about and benefited from the administrative absence. Young and older men could harvest those woodlands without the prying eyes of forest and game wardens. However, the point is that their ability to use the wetlands made them more dependent on farming or waged labour to meet their household needs.

In the same season, Métis men, women, and children also foraged and sold their products nearby. Their household tools often included axes and energy needs necessitating a wood supply.[35] In 1899, the agricultural instructor implied that urban dwellers had a demand for fuel and purchased cordwood from Métis men who had hauled the produce made after they had cut down and processed trees on the reservation.[36] Berries were another item, but so was herbage.

[33] Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2014) 2-3.

[34] North Dakota Department of Irrigation and Forestry, *Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Irrigation and Forestry* (Bismarck: State Printers., 1892) 71-75.

[35] In the early-1890s, the agricultural instructor noted the changes in the size of forests in and around the Indian reservation. See, U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of Turtle Mountain Subagency,* by E.W. Brenner (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1894) 220, found at https://images.library.wisc.edu/History/EFacs/CommRep/AnnRep94/reference/history.annrep94.i0017.pdf, accessed 18 August 2022.

[36] U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of Farmer in Charge of Turtle Mountain Chippewas,* by E.W. Brenner (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1899) 271, found at

The latter could be sold to local merchants, making the acquisition of ammunition and other supplies possible. In the 1890s, the agricultural instructor often noted the gathering of snakeroot outside the reservation.[37] Picked and washed by hand; snakeroot grew from seeds, or roots set the previous year over the spring and summer. An English-speaking journalist pointed out the merchant demands in nearby towns and price increases for snakeroot in the early to late summer.[38] Snakeroot had become an essential raw material in manufacturing and distributing some therapeutic medicines as merchants and the railways created a supply chain for drug manufacturers. Métis men, women, and children thus satiated a burgeoning set of consumers. As T.J. Jackson Lears shows, the distant urban middle- and working-class encountered grand promises of physical and mental welfare in the printed advertisements of pharmaceuticals.[39]

In winter, Métis families divided maintenance work, some of which were also performed throughout the year. In the 1890s, the agricultural instructor usually reported a consistent number of cattle, pigs, and sheltered fowl in enclosed areas near houses. For many married Métis men

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https://images.library.wisc.edu/History/EFacs/CommRep/AnnRep99p1/reference/history.annrep99p1.i0020.pdf, accessed 18 August 2022.

[37] U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of Turtle Mountain Subagency,* by E.W. Brenner (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1894) 219, found at https://images.library.wisc.edu/History/EFacs/CommRep/AnnRep94/reference/history.annrep94.i0017.pdf, accessed 18 August 2022; U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of Farmer in Charge of Turtle Mountain Chippewas,* by E.W. Brenner (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1898) 224, found at https://images.library.wisc.edu/History/EFacs/CommRep/AnnRep98/reference/history.annrep98.i0019.pdf, accessed 18 August 2022.

[38] National Endowment for the Humanities, "Courier Democrat. (Langdon, N.D.) 1891-1920, September 22, 1898, Image 5," September 22, 1898, found at https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88076432/1898-09-22/ed-1/seq-5/, accessed 18 August 2022; National Endowment for the Humanities, "Courier Democrat. (Langdon, N.D.) 1891-1920, September 22, 1898, Image 5," September 22, 1898, found at https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88076432/1898-09-22/ed-1/seq-5/, accessed 18 August 2022.

[39] T.J. Jackson Lears, *Fables Of Abundance: A Cultural History Of Advertising In America* (New York: Basic Books, 1995) and T.J. Jackson Lears, "From Salvation to Self-Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1810-1930" in *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980,* ed. T.J. Jackson Lears and Richard Wightman Fox (New York: Random House, 1983) 3-38.

and sons, some work went into mending and monitoring fences. They provided hay and oats when animals could not graze and slaughtered spare pigs for a source of meat. Many married Métis women and girls managed the garden plots near the house in spring and fall. This included boiling, baking, and roasting grains, vegetables, and meat into food.[40]

In sum, the colonization of the Red River Valley in the 1870s and early 1880s impinged upon the Métis' sociopolitical formation. Family strategies and economic forces widened the social distance between collections of households. Material lives were similar, but geography divided them. In less than a generation, villages, towns, farms, and crop fields spread across the region. Even as agricultural development gradually became a force of separation, similar age cohorts of Métis men and women spread across the emerging boundary between the United States and Canada, sharing family and household formation patterns. This included the development of nuclear families and households separate from parents, the construction of wood dwellings, working fields, and crops, and the importance of youth and children without capital and industrial technology. Their actions operated within and reinforced the proximity to kinship relations. However, agriculture and industrial economies replaced the structural dynamics and relationships of the fur trades, which had been the basis of the household economy several decades earlier. The end of bison hunting and freighting mitigated the routine encounters with other Métis families and households, notably those residing around the Red and Assiniboine rivers and near the southeast of Lake Manitoba and Lake Dauphin. Their socioeconomic life was expressed within a more local rubric than previous generations. At Turtle Mountain, this included the harvest of animals and woods in the forests, the production of commodities from

[40] U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of Farmer in Charge of Turtle Mountain Chippewas,* by E.W. Brenner (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1899) 271, found at https://images.library.wisc.edu/History/EFacs/CommRep/AnnRep99p1/reference/history.annrep99p1.i0020.pdf, accessed 18 August 2022.

foraged resources, the waged tasks for farms, and the sale of items to merchant operations formed in the late 1880s and 1890s. Their efforts cemented social bonds. This process, and an historically similar one across the United States-Canada border, limited their communication with Manitoba Métis families. In turn, socioeconomic circumstances precluded their exposure to the political idea of the Métis nation and its institutionalization in the British Empire.

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Under a Watchful Eye: The Unevenness of Federal Administration at the Reservation

The 1870s marked a shift in federal policies from the pre-Civil War years. Michael Witgen argues that the American federal government had made the Northwest Ordinances and federal treaty-making power crucial to expansion. He does so to untangle the socioeconomic texture of settler colonization and various experiences of the Anishinaabeg around Lake Michigan and Lake Superior. He observes that rather than merely forging diplomatic relationships, a distinct political economy emerged in this interconnected process. Territorial officials and merchants funnelled cash annuities into their economic networks, and land privatization helped the agro-forestry complex. The "political economy of plunder" had, according to Witgen, at least two significant consequences. The Anishinaabeg largely resisted federal policies in the 1830s. Their experience differed significantly from the Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, Chickasaw, and Seminoles in the southeast United States. The northeast's textile industries raised demand for cotton and plantation production, and unfree labour required large amounts of land to increase output. The central state forcibly deported these communities west of the Mississippi River, enabling the planter aristocracy to seize and expand onto their territories.[41] In contrast, the Anishinaabeg persisted because of the exchange system: traders

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[41] Michael John Witgen, *Seeing Red: Indigenous Land, American Expansion, and the Political Economy of Plunder in North America* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2021) 22.

continued to seek furs, and external interests desired cash annuities enumerated in treaties.[42] In turn, the socioeconomic context reshaped political and cultural identities. Male labourers and traders, some from the French-speaking peasantry in the St. Lawrence River Valley, and Anishinaabe women married. Their children became intermediaries in the diplomatic and commercial exchanges of the Republic.[43] As interpreters and government officials, they mediated the concepts of race and citizenship as the Northwest Territory turned into individual states from the 1830s to 1860s.

In the 1870s, American policymakers operated under a slightly different rubric when western expansion hit the northern Great Plains. In 1871, federal lawmakers buried a policy change in an annual bill to fund the United States' treaty obligations, ending the formal treaty-making process with Indian tribes. As Michael Oberg observes, these lawmakers continued a process that started decades earlier in the federal removal policy. Congress explicitly signalled that the idea of distinct and self-governing sociopolitical entities in diplomatic relations with the Republic would no longer guide laws and administration.[44] Rather than necessarily extend the older "political economy of plunder" westward, the President carved out the Turtle Mountain reservation, and Congress allocated cash for local administrators to spend on food, farm supplies, and equipment.

In the 1880s and 1890s, Turtle Mountain's local officials answered to the federal policymaker's paternalistic social and economic agenda. The OIA became necessary for the

[42] Ibid 19.

[43] Ibid 23-25.

[44] Michael Leroy Oberg, "The Way Things Matter," in *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 20, no. 2 (April 2021): 330–32.

American central government.[45] Stephen Rockwell contends that the OIA bridged the Republic's formation of the administrative state and forces of territorial expansion. Decades earlier, for instance, federal officials operated outposts and oversaw a trade license system in the Northwest Territory. From the 1870s to the 1890s, central bureaucratic authorities co-ordinated a more coherent policy and field agents followed the routines and exercised discretion. Both central and local administrators were gradually brought under the auspices of a professional and expertise-oriented civil service. In this period, reservations became the centrepiece of federal Indian policy. Reservations were portions of land often outlined in treaties and held in trust by the federal government. Federal policymakers ostensibly turned them into territorialized administrative units to monitor and isolate subject populations from broader socioeconomic and political developments.[46] Because of treatymaking and foreign diplomatic relations in Indian affairs, Cathleen Cahill argues that federal policymakers brought Indian affairs into domestic social policy after treatymaking and diplomatic protocols ended. Their new proposals were thus implemented through these territorialized administrative units.[47] This reflected, according to Cahill, the contested ideas of race and citizenship in the aftermath of the American Civil War and the programs implemented by the federal government for the freed people of African descent. She states, "[Senators] spoke the language of free labor, emphasizing the dignity of self-

[45] Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986).

[46] Stephen J. Rockwell, *Indian Affairs and the Administrative State in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). For the relationship of the OIA to the wider federal presence in the American west, see Richard White, *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own: A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2015).

[47] Cathleen D. Cahill, *Federal Fathers and Mothers: A Social History of the United States Indian Service, 1869-1933* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2011).

support, the sacredness of contract, and the fear of dependency."[48] Cahill contends that the development of social programs, like those for land, housing, employment, and education, mobilized the resources of the central state in ways that the federal system of government and veteran pensions had never done before. In doing so, federal policymakers hoped to end a divide between 'Indians' and citizens of the Republic.

Turtle Mountain experienced federal administration slowly and unevenly after the passage of the *General Allotment Act* (1887). Known as the Dawes Act, this policy was similar to the earlier *Homestead Act*. Individuals could attain the "bundle of rights" to private property and fee-simple ownership of reservation land, making them subject to the law and encouraging them to fulfil the political and economic duties of citizenship.[49] C. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa shows how hegemonic ideas of capitalist production and economic expansion shaped federal lawmakers' approach to the subject. He also suggests allotment was a structure developed over time rather than an immediate event that happened everywhere, all at once, out of nowhere. Genetin-Pilawa shows liberal concepts of private property, ideas of productivity, and the systems of administration that emerged from the 1830s onward. Policy reformers and federal lawmakers gradually marginalized alternatives. Allotment was a legal means to control and reform Indigenous communities socially, but the policy and private economic interests also dovetailed quite neatly.[50] This was seen in the concept of "surplus" land. Some reservations had unallotted land because a disparity existed between the amount of land and the population. The federal

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[48] Ibid 17

[49] Rose Stremlau, "'To Domesticate and Civilize Wild Indians': Allotment and the Campaign to Reform Indian Families, 1875-1887," *Journal of Family History* 30, no. 3 (2005): 265–86.

[50] C. Joseph Genetin-Pilawa, *Crooked Paths to Allotment: The Fight over Federal Indian Policy after the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2012) 14-15.

government could purchase and make the “surplus land” part of the wider public domain and thus available to settlers.[51] But increasingly powerful private enterprises in transportation, banking, and natural resource extraction also served to benefit. This included land companies, wider railway networks, new household consumption zones, agricultural commodity production in the northern and southern Great Plains west, and mining and timber operations.[52]

In 1884, Turtle Mountain’s size was reduced to 40,000 acres. The Executive Order partly induced the combined settlement process and economic expansion in the late 1880s and 1890s over the region’s roughly 10,960,000 acres.[53] The agricultural instructor commented on the future of the Turtle Mountain population and their limited land because surveyors and administrators had not prepared the reservation for allotment. The annual reports, however, sought a more extensive territory for the eventual administration of allotments. The local agent differed and sometimes suggested the federal government could remove Turtle Mountain’s reservation population elsewhere. The White Earth Indian Reservation in neighbouring Minnesota was a possible location.

Turtle Mountain Métis and Plains Ojibwe avoided removal because federal laws and bureaucratic administration allotted White Earth reservation. The people who lived there were Anishinaabeg, who had signed a treaty with the United States in 1867. Over time, federal officials assumed White Earth would enable the central state to concentrate the Anishinaabeg of

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[51] Leonard Carlson, *Indians, Bureaucrats, and Land: The Dawes Act and the Decline of Indian Farming* (New York: Bloomsbury, 1981) 37.

[52] For a sketch of Indian Territory after 1871, see Alaina E. Roberts, “Who Belongs in Indian Territory?,” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 20, no. 2 (April 2021): 334–37.

[53] For the communication of federal officials and their perspective, see Department of the Interior, United States General Land Office, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of General Land Office Made to the Secretary of the Interior for the Year ...* (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1887) 233-235, found at https://www.google.ca/books/edition/Report_of_the_Commissioner_of_the_Genera/vmRGAQAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=General+Land+Office+turtle+mountain+1887&pg=PA233&printsec=frontcover, accessed 22 July 2022.

Minnesota and Wisconsin into one area. The Pembina band, for example, were relocated from the Red River Valley to White Earth. Melissa Meyer addresses the relationship of the *Nelson Act* (1889) and *Steenerson Act* (1904) to the dispossession of White Earth Anishinaabeg. Although federal officials and private profit certainly mattered to the process, Meyer draws attention to how the transition to reservation life polarized Ojibwe residents and led to different responses to allotment. Their fur trade experience shaped new social roles, and according to Meyer, agro-forestry adaptation reflected families' earlier divides between trapping and trading activities. The reservation economy accentuated differentiation, and federal administrators deployed categories of blood to make sense of these social and economic distinctions. The outcome was that some of the reservation's multi-lingual professionals labelled the "mixed-bloods," became active participants in the allotment and facilitated the mass dispossession at White Earth.[54] From the late 1880s through the early 1900s, the administrative process resulted in extensive seizure and land redistribution away from the Ojibwe.

Because the reservation remained unallotted, Turtle Mountain Métis managed land differently than White Earth and their agricultural orientation precluded similar social differences and professional distinctions. Many Métis families partly directed land tenure at Turtle Mountain. In the summer of 1886, the field agent suggested that members of households had "marked out the boundaries of their claims."[55] The agricultural instructor, unlike the field officer, became one of the Devil's Lake Agency's few employees who actually lived at Turtle Mountain and witnessed the outcomes of these interactions. In 1897, the agricultural instructor

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[54] Melissa L. Meyer, *The White Earth Tragedy: Ethnicity and Dispossession at a Minnesota Anishinaabe Reservation, 1889-1920* (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 1999).

[55] U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of Farmer in Charge of Turtle Mountain Chippewa,* by E.W. Brenner (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1886) 60, found at https://images.library.wisc.edu/History/EFacs/CommRep/AnnRep86/reference/history.annrep86.i0020.pdf, accessed 18 August 2022.

addressed how the Turtle Mountain population managed land without federal survey and allotments. As will be discussed in Chapter Four, residents struggled over grazing land and resources. Some took their disputes to the Court of Indian Offenses at Turtle Mountain, established in the late 1890s. According to their report, residents took it upon themselves to determine where farms and work were "suitable" and even produced some with larger fields and areas where they overlapped.[56]

Many Métis families turned to federal administrators to supply themselves for this work. Their relationships regulated the extent of their exchange in local markets. The agricultural instructor did not merely observe economic life impartially. The OIA handbook stated that federal employees' primary objective was to make "[every] able-bodied Indian…be engaged in some useful industrial pursuit, from which to earn in whole, or as far as practicable, his self-support." According to the manual, these officials were to use "every possible influence."[57] Rather than operate an agency farm, the agricultural instructor directly communicated the processes and routines for crop production, livestock management, and food preparation. Their actions should, over time, create independent household economies and encourage market participation by selling agricultural commodities and purchasing supplies.[58] Many Métis men and women experienced eclectic material circumstances over their life course. For them, agriculture and herd management were not wholly unfamiliar. In reports, the agricultural

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[56] U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of Farmer in Charge of Turtle Mountain Chippewa,* by E.W. Brenner (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1897) 213, found at https://images.library.wisc.edu/History/EFacs/CommRep/AnnRep97/reference/history.annrep97.i0020.pdf, accessed 18 August 2022.

[57] U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Regulations of the Indian Office*, (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1904) 99, found at https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100471194, accessed 18 August 2022.

[58] David Rich Lewis, *Neither Wolf Nor Dog: American Indians, Environment, and Agrarian Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) 16-20.

instructor at Turtle Mountain emphasized that soil conditions and climate influenced their efforts and cash income. Water availability and cold weather often undermined crop growth, and small plots produced variable yields. Based upon Congressional funding, the agricultural instructor and field agent regularly distributed seeds, building supplies, and clothing materials for their production and reproduction. The items, stored in a warehouse built in 1883, had specific uses. The agency officials recorded their distribution into tabular forms. Some Métis men, who agency officials reported as household heads, acquired cloth, cotton thread, and metal needles for the craft and repair of garments; metal sheeting, barbed wire, and nails for fences and buildings; and seeds for vegetables and cereals of shorter and longer growing seasons.[59]

The tabular forms also included their acquisition of technology and equipment. Outside the reservation, agricultural production increasingly used cheaper industrially manufactured implements and often did so on credit. Their actions followed hegemonic ideas of farm productivity and efficiency, which famous writers and speakers oriented toward commercial exchange. Family farms and agricultural employers incorporated complex machines—disc plows, seed drills, cultivators, reapers, and steam threshers—into tilling, planting, harvesting, and threshing processes.[60] Mechanization then changed the amount of time required for the tasks, reducing the duration of farm work, the number of labouring hands to accomplish objectives, and

[59] Abstract D Articles Issues to Indians, 3rd Quarter 1896 and Abstract D Articles Issued to Indians, 1st Quarter 1896; Abstracts of Articles Issued to Indians, 1888-1916; Turtle Mountain Agency, 1910-1947; Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75; National Archives at Kansas City, Missouri; Abstract D Issues to Indians of Goods and Supplies, December 31, 1894, Abstract D Issues to Indians of Goods and Supplies, March 31, 1895, Abstract D Issues to Indians of Annuity Goods and Supplies, June 30, 1896, Abstract D Issues to Indians of Supplies and Goods, September 30, 1896, Abstract D Issues to Indians of Goods and Supplies, January 1, 1897, Abstract D Issues to Indians of Goods and Supplies, March 31, 1898, Abstract D Issues to Indians of Goods and Supplies, March 31, 1899, Abstract D Issues to Indians of Goods and Supplies, June 30, 1899; Abstracts of Articles Issued to Indians, 1888-1916; Turtle Mountain Agency, 1910-1947; Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75; National Archives at Kansas City, Missouri.

[60] Thomas D. Isern, *Bull Threshers and Bindlestiffs: Harvesting and Threshing on the North American Plains* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2021).

opening the possibility of larger-scale farm production. But Turtle Mountain's administrators might have been keen to keep costs low and avoided the increasingly affordable labour-saving technology. Officials understood the land base to be a constraint on the scale and productivity of agricultural production. Their annual reports and the surviving records sometimes drew attention to farm equipment. Métis families typically received hand and animal-assisted agricultural and forest tools. This included yokes, harrows, and ploughs for fields; hoes for the garden work; scythes for cutting grass and crops before processing them further; and broad axes for felling and partitioning trees. For users, manual tools might have been less efficient than other machines but still conformed to and reinforced the social coordination of labour and the importance of entire families to these actions.

But, although exceptional, some Métis men became federal employees. Positions had different lengths of service (regular and irregular) and specialization. The Department of the Interior required the field agent to draft lists of employees, specialization, and service costs necessary for local operations. The OIA reviewed and approved their submissions. The field officer, for example, selected candidates for the roles of blacksmith, farmer, field matron, police, school superintendent, and teacher. Employment lasted one year unless the field officer retained their service. Congress and the President gradually came to regulate agency employees in two critical ways. First, federal legislation in 1875 and revisions in 1883 led OIA authorities to direct field agents' selections. According to new rules, field officers were to prioritize 'Indians' employment "in every position which they [were] capable of filling properly." The officer would also judge the qualifications for those deemed 'competent' enough for specialized work usually permitted for 'whites.'[61] Second, Congress introduced initiatives to create a competitive, skill-

[61] U.S. Department of the Interior, *Regulations of the Indian Office*, (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1904) 99, found at https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100471194, accessed 18 August 2022. 14. Sec. 5 of *Indian*

based, and non-partisan federal service in 1883. The President, by an 1896 Executive Order, required the Secretary of the Interior to classify the employees of the Indian Service under the United States Civil Service Commission. The order introduced further certification and examination of employees' qualifications for specified positions in the federal bureaucracy.[62] Some married adult men and a few unmarried women became permanent employees. Their positions were skilled trades, patrolmen, interpreters, and school instructors.

The federal administration operated Turtle Mountain's schools separately from the local government's public schools. Elisabeth Anderson draws attention to the interconnection, from the 1840s onward, among industrialization, the legal prohibition of child factory labour, and the common schools movement.[63] Although originating in the American Northeast, she shows how individual reformers and class formation influenced institutional politics in state and local governments. An emergent professional class became concerned about child labour's supposed destructive effects on family structures, fearing the rise of criminality and working-class rebellion.[64] State governments then regulated household organizations at the behest of advocates

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Appropriations Act (1875) states: "and where Indians can perform the duties they shall be employed." Sec. 6 of *Indian Appropriations Act* (1883) states: "and preference shall at all times, as far as practicable, be given to Indians in the employment of clerical, mechanical, and other help on reservations and agencies." *An Act Making Appropriations for the Current and Contingent Expenses of the Indian Department, and for Fulfilling Treaty Stipulations with various Indian Tribes, for the Year Ending June 13th, 1875, and for Other Purposes,* Public Law 132, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 18 (1875) 449, https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/ll/llsl//llsl-c43/llsl-c43.pdf, accessed 18 August 2022; and *An Act Making Appropriations for the Current and Contingent Expenses of the Indian Department, and for Fulfilling Treaty Stipulations with various Indian Tribes, for the Year Ending June 13th, 1884, and for other Purposes*, Public Law 61, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 22 (1883) 453, https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/ll/llsl//llsl-c47/llsl-c47.pdf, accessed 18 August 2022.

[62] *An Act to Regulate and Improve the Civil Service of the United States,* Public Law 27, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 22 (1883) 403-407, https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/ll/llsl//llsl-c47/llsl-c47.pdf, accessed 18 August 2022; "Executive Order 89 of May 6, 1896, Civil Service Rules Revised and Codified," found at https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Executive_Order_89, accessed 18 August 2022.

[63] Elisabeth Anderson, *Agents of Reform: Child Labor and the Origins of the Welfare State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021) 11.

[64] Ibid 118-126

who wanted a tax-funded and universally accessible education system. School advocates grew in number and across class lines as reformers witnessed western expansion and mass immigration and saw childhood as a distinct life stage. Public education thus 'protected' children and youth of working-class and immigrant families and gradually incorporated them into an industrial capitalist economy and political life of the far-flung democratic republic.[65] Settlers brought similar ideas and institutions to the northern Great Plains.

For instance, North Dakota's state constitution required the legislature to provide a "uniform system of free public schools throughout the State." In 1890, North Dakota lawmakers made attendance compulsory. In Rolette County the previous year, administrative authorities reported on 16 schools in the county. The attendance rate was 64 percent for 622 children and youth between seven and 20 years old.[66] As settlement unfolded, the system grew slightly to 24 schools, with 82 percent of 1102 school-age children and youth attending them.[67]

Turtle Mountains schools differed because federal policies reframed the broader public school movement and separated the reservation population. Margaret Jacobs points out that federal policymakers and school advocates brought a highly racialized view and heavier hand to 'Indian' education.[68] Importantly, parents, who the central authorities understood as under their guardianship, had minimal recourse to legislative representatives because their wardship

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[65] Carl Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011); Johann N. Neem, *Democracy's Schools: The Rise of Public Education in America* (Baltimore: JHU Press, 2017).

[66] Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Public documents of the state of North Dakota*, vol 1. (Bismarck: State Printers of North Dakota, 1890) 42.

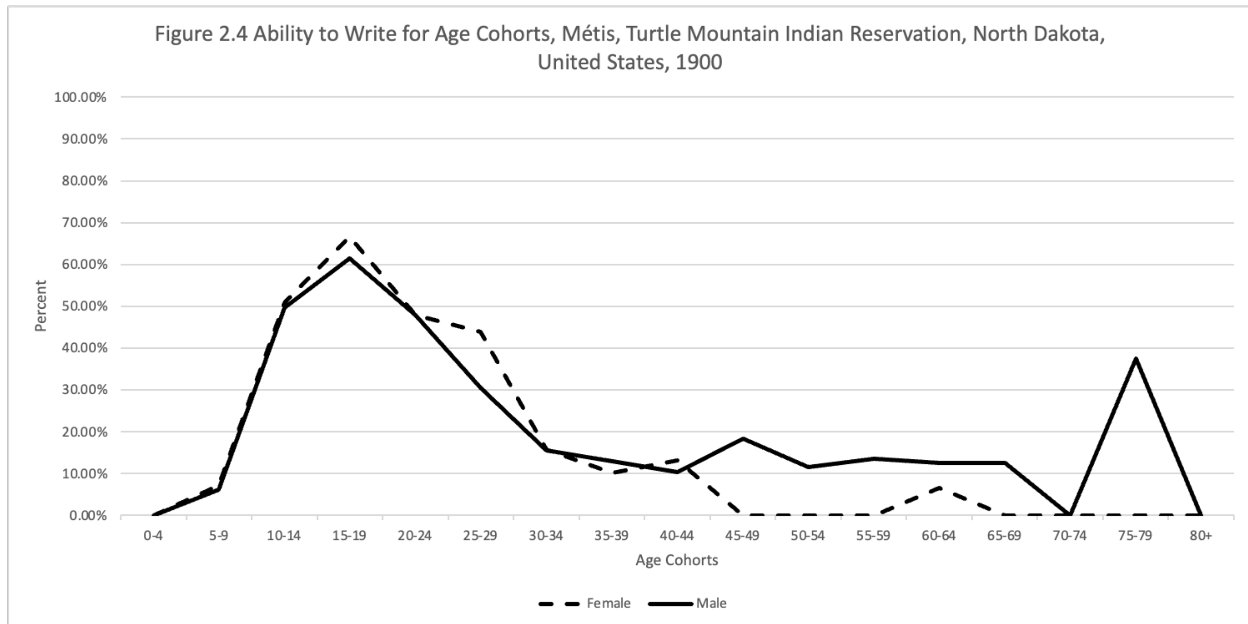
[67] Superintendent of Public Instruction, *Public documents of the state of North Dakota*, vol 1. (Bismarck: State Printers of North Dakota, 1896) 226 and 238.

[68] Margaret Jacobs, *White Mother to a Dark Race: Settler Colonialism, Maternalism, and the Removal of Indigenous Children in the American West and Australia, 1880-1940* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009) 57-58.

constrained political participation in republican institutions. In turn, child removal could limit parental transmission of community norms, attitudes, and practices to a younger generation and replace 'tribalism' with individualism. Schools, notably in their use of English as the language of instruction, would undermine sociopolitical cohesion and cultural coherency. This would erode perceived collective differences. In 1884, Turtle Mountain's agency opened and began to operate a reservation day school and contracted the Sisters of Charity, a Roman Catholic order based in Montréal in Québec, to operate a boarding school. In the day school, teachers hired by the local agent held sessions at the schoolhouse in the morning and afternoon. Rather than reside at the educational institution, children left their family-based household and returned after the school day. Over the next fifteen years, the local agency constructed and managed three additional day schools. One teacher was hired for each schoolhouse. Each had a capacity for around 50 youths between 5 and 15 years old.[69] In the mid-1890s, teachers distributed prepared meals to day-school attendees.[70] Thus, Turtle Mountain had multiple schools, drawing reservation youth away from the county's public schools.

[69] Record of Employees, 1883-1894, 25-54, and Record of Employees, 1895-1913, 1-20; Record of Employees, 1883-1913; Fort Totten Agency, 1903-1947; Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75; National Archives at Kansas City, Missouri.

[70] U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of the Turtle Mountain Subagency,* by E.W. Brenner (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1895) 231, found at https://images.library.wisc.edu/History/EFacs/CommRep/AnnRep95/reference/history.annrep95.i0017.pdf, accessed 18 August 2022.



Source: See Table 2.1.

The 1900 census provides a clue regarding schooling on the reservation. Enumerators, like those in Manitoba, recorded literacy. It was a possibility for some before the late nineteenth century. William Davis, born at St. Boniface in 1845, had learned to write from Catholic missionaries when his bison hunting family moved to Pembina. As Pigeon notes, Davis kept dairies, written in French Michif, over his life. Pigeon shows Davis made the transition to Turtle Mountain a part of his journaling in the late nineteenth century.[71] But Turtle Mountain's young adult Métis men and women, specifically the 'older' cohorts (30-34-year-olds and 35-39-year-olds), had not acquired the skill. They were children and adolescents when many Manitoba Métis attended schools and adopted writing in the 1870s and early 1880s.

Like the middle-aged Turtle Mountain age-cohorts, under 20 percent of Métis men and women (11 of 71 men and 8 of 51 women in the 30-34-year-old cohort and 8 of 62 men and 4 of 39 women in the 35-39-year-old cohort) acquired the skill. In contrast, a more significant

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[71] Émilie Pigeon, *Au nom du Bon Dieu et du Buffalo: Metis Lived Catholicism on the Northern Plains* (PhD Dissertation: York University, 2017).

proportion of 10-14-year-old, 15-19-year-old, and 20-24-year-old Métis men and women could write. Born after 1876, their upbringing corresponded to the opening and operation of reservation day schools and a nearby boarding school. In each age cohort, around 50 percent of Métis men and women could write (63 of 127 men and 62 of 122 women in the 10-14-year-old cohort; 78 of 127 men and 60 of 90 women in the 15-19-year-old cohort; and 45 of 94 men and 47 of 98 women in the 20-24-year-old cohort). In the late 1880s and 1890s, federal administration, agriculture, and trade networks necessitated multiple processes involving paper and written information. The enumerative practices that Métis men and women experienced included the forms and surveys when household heads acquired supplies and technology, dealt with the local agent, and the written materials at merchants' stores in St. John, Rolla, and Dunseith. Some couples might have adjusted their children's lives, and day schools kept them close under their oversight. Others could have had different priorities. In the 1890s, agricultural instructors told central authorities that the day schoolhouses often failed to reach capacity. Their reports emphasized how Métis parents organized economic activity by season, drew on their children's work, and limited their exposure to school instruction.

In addition to formal education, the Turtle Mountain Métis, like their counterparts in Manitoba, remade institutional life. The Roman Catholic church, legitimatized by the American federal government, was on the reservation. Catholic priests had established a mission near the intersection of the Pembina and Red Rivers in the 1840s. Many Métis men and women celebrated their marriages, baptized their children, and buried their deceased relatives at the church. Pigeon argues that the 1850s to the 1870s brought political and economic changes that raised the importance of Catholicism for Turtle Mountains Métis in the 1880s and 1890s.[72]

[72] Ibid.

Unlike the late 1870s, the central state decentered Protestant and Catholic religious authorities from the OIA. However, federal policymakers accepted the role of Christianity in their reformist agenda. Christian instruction and churches were considered significant institutions alongside private property, houses, and schools. Turtle Mountain Métis men and women already adhered to some Catholic practices. Their affiliations to local religious institutions furthered the social distance between them and Métis communities in Manitoba, even as church officials might have reinforced the use of French in social and cultural life.

In sum, federal governance and administration at Turtle Mountain regulated, even if unevenly, Métis families' social and economic activities. Their material lives were monitored and commented on by administrators. Field officers translated central authorities' policy into local circumstances. Because Congress financed operations, the local agency included an agricultural instructor, supplies and technology for household use and agriculture, and schools. The administration partly followed how federal policymakers reinterpreted the American constitutional structure in the early 1870s. Central authorities marginalized the idea of government-to-government relationships between the American Republic and self-governing Indigenous polities. As such, the concept of federal guardianship of Indigenous wards sanctioned paternalistic laws and administrative routines in the 1880s and 1890s. Turtle Mountain Métis families had to negotiate new policies and administration when they made their social and economic lives. This included the American President's depreciation of the reservation size, the absence of cash annuities and the procedures for allotment, the distribution of agricultural and household technology, the management of schools, and the operation of Catholic churches. Importantly, Turtle Mountain Métis retained some control over the family and household formation processes, which reflected and reinforced access to reservation land and inter-

generational kin relationships. In turn, their manual tools reinforced the role of family labour and cemented social ties. Over time, the reservation became a distinct sociopolitical and economic space in Rolette County and North Dakota. The Turtle Mountain population built different relationships with merchants and intermediaries than white settlers because they did not receive treaty annuities to spend, and they had more eclectic livelihoods than nearby farmers. The capitalist modes of production and central state thus combined to marginalize the Métis in the new American political economy.

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Land, Enrollment, and Remaking the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians

In the late nineteenth century, the United States moved slowly to extinguish the Turtle Mountain community's land claim because American authorities were unsure whether earlier treaties covered the territory and who could receive compensation from a potential agreement. In the late 1870s and early 1880s, between the end of government-to-government relationships and the advent of allotment, American officials came to know and understand the Turtle Mountain community in a few ways. For example, Turtle Mountain Métis and Plains Ojibwe petitioners continued communicating with Congress. In an 1876 petition, they claimed to occupy and possess land near the United States-Canada border. This petition positioned them as a band of the "great Chippewa Nation" and identified the group's political organization, drawing federal policymakers' attention to "principal chiefs" and the role of a council in diplomacy and collective governance.[73] In 1881, the OIA acting commissioner acknowledged the Turtle Mountain band's self-regulation. In a letter to the Devil's Lake field agent in the Dakota Territory, the OIA acting

[73] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Indian Affairs, *Papers Relative to An Agreement with the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians in North Dakota*, 56th Cong., 1st Session, 1900, S. Rep., serial 3878, 104, found at https://www.google.ca/books/edition/United_States_Congressional_Serial_Set/rv1GAQAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0, accessed 18 August 2022.

commissioner wanted to know the "number of Indians now scattered over the territory claimed by [the Turtle Mountain band] who could be gathered upon a reservation as proposed." After interviewing the petitioners, the field agent reported that the Turtle Mountain band estimated "their own people" to be around 2500 or more.[74] How the interviewees came to this number was not clearly articulated. However, the field agent suggested social deliberation when respondents invoked differences between the Turtle Mountain band, on the one hand, and Cree and Assiniboine, on the other. The federal official understood the community differently, dividing the Turtle Mountain population into "full-blood and mixed-blood."

Katherine Ellinghaus contends that, even though these terms became American legal and bureaucratic jargon, federal lawmakers failed to define the meaning of 'blood' clearly. In turn, local administrators largely neglected to remedy the ambiguity when the category was used in the field. She points out that their pronouncements at different administrative levels reflected widespread and contemporary "folk biology." The result was policymakers and administrators used terms like "blood, civilization, nation, and culture" interchangeably and channelled them into the broader idea of race.[75] In 1887, the Dawes Act, according to Ellinghaus, necessitated that the central state enumerate the people who constituted Indigenous polities because allotment required civil servants to allocate private property. Individual names had to be administratively legible. Written lists would, therefore, create an enrolled population who qualified for allotments. Enrollment then determined who belonged to a group the federal government recognized as an

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[74] Ibid.

[75] Katherine Ellinghaus, *Blood Will Tell: Native Americans and Assimilation Policy* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2017) xvii. For how the "common knowledge" understanding of race impacted naturalization law and the legal administration of citizenship going into the 1920s, see Ian Haney Lopez, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: NYU Press, 1997).

'Indian tribe.' Local administrators, Ellinghaus argues, fixed ambiguous categories of 'full-blood' and 'mixed-blood' in an "arbitrary, haphazard fashion."[76] Their enumerations, as she reminds us, resulted in cases when the field officer ruled that "mixed-blood" was a reason for exclusion from enrollment at some agencies. Turtle Mountain was folded into the federal policy rubric, and field officials frequently used "blood" in reports from the late 1880s. They were silent as to whether 'mixed-blood' provided a reason for exclusion from the written lists of the Turtle Mountain band. In 1887, the field officer implied that this distinction was based upon whether individuals spoke English and French alongside "Cree and Chippewa" and affiliated with the Catholic Church.[77]

Enrollment at Turtle Mountain still set critical boundaries. For administrative officers and agency employees, the enumeration and writing lists of who constituted the Turtle Mountain community became tied up in what and how they knew about the political expansion of Canada in the 1870s and early 1880s. For example, the field officer identified sound criteria for excluding individuals from the enrollment lists. This was the *Manitoba Act* and its federal administration. The implication was that men and women who "have each received 160 acres of scrip from the Canadian government in the Province of Manitoba" should be barred from a "share in the benefit accruing from the cession of lands in question by the establishment of a permanent reservation for the claimants."[78] In 1886, the field officer reported the presence of

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[76] Ellinghaus, *Blood Will Tell*, xvi.

[77] U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of Farmer in Charge of Turtle Mountain Chippewa,* by E.W. Brenner (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1887) 34, found at http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/History/History-idx?type=article&did=History.AnnRep87.i0008&id=History.AnnRep87&isize=M, accessed 10 June 2020.

[78] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Indian Affairs, *Papers Relative to An Agreement with the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians in North Dakota*, 56th Cong., 1st Session, 1900, S. Rep., serial 3878, 99, found at https://www.google.ca/books/edition/United_States_Congressional_Serial_Set/rv1GAQAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0, accessed 18 August 2022.

individuals and families "who came across the line from Manitoba after having disposed of their scrip and lands issued to them." According to the field officer, this group resided within or near the Turtle Mountain reservation.[79] The field officer failed to indicate whether this claim was based upon a careful look at the Winnipeg Land Titles Office records. The field officer emphasized how administrative duties elsewhere limited their presence at Turtle Mountain. In 1887, the agricultural instructor reported the settlement of reservation disputes. According to the farm teacher, some parties claimed their opponent was Canadian. "I would state that there is no doubt there are many of the mixed-bloods on the reserve who have no right here at all, many being of Canadian birth, or having acquired rights there by the same tactics they are practicing here, have them still in force or been paid for them." Because the United States government was "badly imposed upon," the agricultural instructor recalled American treaty-making in the Great Lakes. Their report suggested the federal administrative bureaucracy operate a "comprehensive system…by which these people must establish their identity" if the extinguishment of "titles of mixed bloods from Lake Superior west for the past forty years" were to continue.[80] In 1889, the agricultural instructor failed to consider extant procedures of the Turtle Mountain band and centred the federal government's power to determine community composition. The report

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[79] U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of Farmer in Charge of Turtle Mountain Chippewa,* by E.W. Brenner (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1886) 60, found at https://images.library.wisc.edu/History/EFacs/CommRep/AnnRep86/reference/history.annrep86.i0020.pdf, accessed 18 August 2022.

[80] U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of Farmer in Charge of Turtle Mountain Chippewa,* by E.W. Brenner (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1887) 34, found at http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/History/History-idx?type=article&did=History.AnnRep87.i0008&id=History.AnnRep87&isize=M, accessed 10 June 2020.

blithely asserted, "[the] question who is a Turtle Mountain Indian needs acute discrimination to decide."[81]

Ironically, Michel Hogue shows enrollment near the United States-Canada border was chaotic in the 1880s and 1890s. Federal administrators' reports and correspondence, as Hogue highlights, show enrollment "rarely followed a fixed criteria." In many cases, government officials relied on local hearings where dialogues ostensibly set the composition of the Turtle Mountain band.[82] These conversations did not seem to favour the ideas of the respondents. In 1890, Congress funded and appointed a commission of federal officials to visit the reservation. It was asked to enumerate who was entitled to payment "for a large tract of land which they claimed by right of original occupancy." The commissioner reported that the enumerators at Turtle Mountain interacted with many respondents who spoke about their family's historical experience as Red River Valley hunters in the 1850s. According to the federal commissioner, this group worked and moved north and south "without reference to an international boundary line," and "nothing suggested at the time the importance of distinguishing between American nativity and British allegiance."[83] In light of the interviews, the enumerators would have heard different sociopolitical distinctions and could have recognized the arbitrary characteristics of their categories. However, the commissioner reported some individuals and families were

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[81] U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of Farmer in Charge of Turtle Mountain Chippewa,* by E.W. Brenner (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1889) 144, found at http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/History/History-idx?type=article&did=History.AnnRep89.i0008&id=History.AnnRep89&isize=M, accessed 10 June 2020.

[82] Michel Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line*, 222.

[83] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Indian Affairs, *Papers Relative to An Agreement with the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians in North Dakota*, 56th Cong., 1st Session, 1900, S. Rep., serial 3878, 95-96, found at https://www.google.ca/books/edition/United_States_Congressional_Serial_Set/rv1GAQAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0, accessed 18 August 2022.

nonetheless denied a spot on the written lists. According to the commissioner, enrollment pertained to "American Chippewas" only.[84]

In the early 1890s, the Turtle Mountain community organized meetings to discuss the issue. Their collective meetings involved social deliberation around political and legal questions faced by the attendees. In the fall of 1890, federal commissioners encoded the Turtle Mountain band into enrollment lists, but Congress also authorized them to negotiate compensation and potentially end the land dispute. Federal commissioners had undertaken enrollment to determine who would eventually be entitled to cash payment and allotment. In the winter of 1891, around 112 adult men, predominantly Métis but also Plains Ojibwe met at the Roman Catholic church. Métis and Plains Ojibwe attendees shared political concerns. According to agricultural instructors, the latter worked seasonally and established small farms separate and further away from Métis families. However, their population was much smaller—67 dwellings and 249 individuals—than the Turtle Mountain Métis, and they were less inclined toward the Catholic church. The meeting, however, included the legislative origins and powers of the federal commission, the territorial boundaries of their claim to Indian title in the United States, the absence of this area from the content of treaties between the United States and the Sisseton and Wahpeton Sioux nearby; and the material and economic impact of settlers in the American-claimed territory over the previous decade. In the following winter of 1892, council attendees more than doubled, with 271 adult men, again predominantly Métis but also Plains Ojibwe. Their discussion included the division of power and the distinct social roles in their political structure, the establishment of committees for negotiations, and the council's authority to determine the composition of the Turtle Mountain band collectively. In the fall of 1892 and 1893, two councils

[84] Ibid.

kept similar numbers of attendees. The 1893 council, which included a chairperson, secretary, and interpreters, deliberated on previous issues because Congress had finally appointed a federal commission to negotiate, and attendees expressed their disapproval of the formal agreement and enrollment list.

In the 1890 council, the attendees approved the appointment of a legal advocate to help in the negotiations with the United States government. Federal commissioners had asserted control in enrollment, and participants might have come to think that government officials had failed to consider their procedures and interests. John Bottineau became the Turtle Mountain band's legal representative. He shared many of the band's historical experiences. Born in 1837 near the Red River Valley, Bottineau grew up in a Métis family hunting, trading, freighting, and farming that connected the upper Mississippi River Valley and the northern Great Plains. He received an American legal education in the Minnesota Territory and married Marie Renville from the Métis community at the Pembina and Red River. Bottineau helped in the Turtle Mountain petitions and memorials to Congress. He served two crucial functions. First, he represented the Turtle Mountain band before a future federal commission and advocated for their interests. For example, Bottineau helped polish the council minutes into written petitions. In one document, drawn from the 1892 meeting, the petitioners referred to the United States' community membership and the potential 'blood' could play in making exclusions. The petition stated: "[it] is further resolved that all the mixed bloods descendants of our tribe belonging to our said band are hereby recognized to be Indians for all intents and purposes and are fully entitled to the benefits hereof the same as any of the full bloods of our tribe and band."[85] Second, Bottineau helped translate the underlying meaning of federal commissioners, notably compensation and

[85] Ibid 119.

context. In 1892, administrators recognized his importance, going so far as to threaten Bottineau with legal detention if he attended the Turtle Mountain band's negotiations with the federal commission. Bottineau did not take the threats lightly and transmitted their protests to the agreement sent to the Senate.[86]

For Métis attendees at councils, their disapproval reflected the threat the agreement terms posed to social and material life at Turtle Mountain. During negotiations, they considered residential proximity to kin relations a common interest. As Métis men and women aged, they formed deep attachments to their neighbours and land, tending crops and livestock seasonally. The 1884 Executive Order had led reservation land to become scarcer over time. However, the 1893 petition contested their potential removal to White Earth or further west. The federal commissioner reported: "[they] would rather put up with a very small farm for the head of each family and remain there than take liberal allotments for themselves and their children elsewhere."[87] The agreement provided a federal survey of the reservation land and the private ownership of houses and fields of at least 40 acres. However, it also included a provision for enrollees without access to reservation land. According to the agreement, these enrollees could "take homesteads upon any vacant land belonging to the United States without charge."[88] The federal commissioners neglected to specify the exact location. Many Métis individuals must have noticed settlers had encroached nearby because their household economies typically took them off the reservation to hunt and forage. In an earlier petition, the Turtle Mountain band stated, "a large immigration, attracted by the profits of wheat raising and the fine pasture has for the last

[86] Ibid 31.

[87] Ibid 15.

[88] Ibid 16.

ten years been pouring into the Northwestern Dakota."[89] The agreement posed new social constraints, particularly for the upcoming life events for young unmarried Métis men and women. Congressional ratification and federal implementation would initiate their dispersal to areas further from the reservation, the rearrangement of local kin networks, and the loss of labour for intensive tasks. For some older Métis men and women, the potential future shared similarities to their dispersal decades earlier. In the 1893 council, Bottineau had distributed printed copies and likely pointed to the federal commissioner's report when he described the agreement to attendees.[90] In the report to Congress, the official embedded the agreement into the social reformist currents of federal Indian policy. The federal commissioner claimed reservations constituted a form of segregation and thus slowed the communication of the norms, behaviours, and values for households, work, and consumption in capitalist production and market exchanges.[91] The council attendees might have known dispersal shaped the agreement provisions.

However, Turtle Mountain petitioners also disliked the size of the cash settlement and the method of administration. The agreement proposed the United States pay $1,000,000 for nearly 11,000,000 acres in northern North Dakota. The federal commissioner recognized that American treaties signed decades earlier failed to account for the land but reasoned the monetary sum was fair because the Turtle Mountain band's claim was supposedly ambiguous.[92] The agreement proposed that the federal bureaucracy administer the funds annually for over twenty years, earmarking some cash for agricultural machinery and supplies. Most enrollees could have taken

[89] Ibid 110.

[90] Ibid 116.

[91] Ibid 22.

[92] Ibid.

the provision of farm equipment to be a bit empty. They had not necessarily acquired the most recent advances in labour-saving technology. Their demands were met, particularly the firearms, ammunition, and cookery, which came from local merchants. In the 1892 fall council, Bottineau filed a petition. It stated:

> [Forty-five] thousand dollars in farming machinery, products, seed, and other trucks or material which the Indians believe, from past experience, invariably proves more profitable to the commission or middle men, transportation and other agents than themselves, and only $5,000 in cash to be divided per capita, during said twenty years, netting each individual only $1.50 or $1.60 for his share in cash.[93]

In the 1893 council, the petitioners restated their concerns.[94]

The Turtle Mountain people probably realized their concerns were only sometimes the main priority for federal commissioners. These officials must have known that merchants, professionals, and county officials influenced agricultural development and railway networks near Turtle Mountain. Those groups related to and knew the reservation differently from its residents. Retailers and commodity traders helped homesteads more intricately and directly than Turtle Mountain Métis families. County officials, who faced regular elections, had a slightly different relationship. Local governments administered taxes and property registries, built road infrastructure, and developed public schools. In doing so, the Turtle Mountain reservation and the white settler population were unevenly connected.

The uneven connection led to social and political conflicts, which the federal government responded to. However, local officials confronted Métis families in Rolette County. After the American President reduced the reservation size, the OIA started enrollment, and the General Land Office opened the region to settlement; the local government threatened Métis

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[93] Ibid 37.

[94] Ibid 116.

families deemed an off-reservation population. In the early winters of the late 1880s, the Rolette County tax collectors and the sheriff seized livestock from this group for the non-payment of assessed taxes. Some Métis and Plains Ojibwe men on the reservation joined to take the animals from the county warehouse.[95] In the winter of 1890, the agricultural instructor requested an American military unit after reservation residents took supplies from the agency warehouse. The infantry then occupied the reservation for most of the period before the arrival of the federal enrollment in the fall. Afterward, merchants, professionals, bankers, and former and serving county officials acted. Self-proclaimed citizens—62 men—wrote a petition to their Congressional representatives. Their petition called for the federal government to abolish the reservation and remove the enrolled population. These memorialists communicated that the administrators and commissioners treated Turtle Mountain differently than expected. The self-proclaimed citizens argued that federal officials were "clothing them in citizen's garb while protecting them as Indians" and encouraging them to resist the local authorities. These memorialists contrasted Turtle Mountain to "[thousands] of…sturdy young men of other States" who had, from their perspective, experienced the "hardships of pioneer life."[96] The petition expressed confusion over the composition of the Turtle Mountain band and, citing the Secretary of the Interior reports, requested further investigation into enrollment. These self-proclaimed citizens thought the commissioner overlooked the Canadian origins of some enrollees and their

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[95] For a slightly distant report, see National Endowment for the Humanities, "The Bottineau Pioneer. (Bottineau, N.D.) 1885-1895, February 21, 1889, Image 1," February 21, 1889, found at https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88076679/1889-02-21/ed-1/seq-1/, accessed 18 August 2022. For the actions of county officials and the internal correspondence of federal agents, see Roland Eugene Marmon, *Last Card Played: A History of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa and the Ten Cent Treaty of 1892*, unpublished PhD dissertation, 2009, 52-56.

[96] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Indian Affairs, *Papers Relative to An Agreement with the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians in North Dakota*, 56th Cong., 1st Session, 1900, S. Rep., serial 3878, 147, found at https://www.google.ca/books/edition/United_States_Congressional_Serial_Set/rv1GAQAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0, accessed 18 August 2022.

necessary exclusion. It was an issue considering the "expense entailed upon the Government in the administration of our Indian Affairs."[97]

In the early 1890s, some Rolette County residents produced other petitions. In the winter of 1891, the "taxpayers of the county of Rolette" appealed to their elected representatives in the state legislature. These petitions hoped state lawmakers might suspend the payment date for delinquent taxes until the year's end. "Our crops in Rolette county [sic] have been a partial or total failure for the past three years and our farmers are reduced to almost destitute circumstances," according to the 45 signatories, "and if collection is enforced would be left without means to live, and if interest and penalties accumulate will never be able to pay them."[98] In a different message, 30 signatories from Rolette County requested "some legislation" from the Board of County Commissioners. These petitioners aimed to provide seed grain to farmers in the area. According to the petitioners, local farmers apparently lacked the cash to purchase supplies from merchants and would thus "leave thousands of acres idle this year."[99] The petitions represented contemporary ideas of the American government. Gary Gerstle argues that nineteenth-century state governments remained quite powerful compared to the federal government. The ideas of liberal rule held that states operated for 'public interest' and the federal Bill of Rights hemmed in the central government's power. Because of authority over education, health care, capital and labour relations, and local governance, Gerstle concludes that individual states could and did legislate limits on how capitalist development shaped 'the people's welfare' and encode racism in the late nineteenth century.[100]

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[97] Ibid.

[98] North Dakota Legislative Assembly, *Journal of the House of the ... Session of the Legislative Assembly* (Bismarck: State Printer, 1891) 230-231.

[99] Ibid.

As Gerstle implies, the formal political and legal categories of the federal republic permitted the central government to circumvent the principles of American liberalism. After 1892, the "citizens of North Dakota" supported the United States' land acquisition and compensation for the Turtle Mountain band. The petitioners recommended the North Dakota Senators and House representatives ratify the agreement. These writers reasoned that "the amount agreed upon is a meager sum as compared with what the Government has paid for the relinquishment of other lands" and implicitly approved of the federal commissioners' criteria for enrollment and the use of a hand-picked committee to help in negotiations.[101] It contained 119 signatures. Some were merchants, professionals, bankers, and county officials. Others were farmers. The 39 'citizen' farmers shared some experiences: exposure to the public school system, the performance of the political rituals of voting and taxation, and attendance at the various Protestant churches in the area. In the early 1890s, most farmers had different material and socioeconomic circumstances—the household division and routines of farm labour, the threat of the climate to production, the dwindling exchange value for their agricultural commodities, and the financial debts accumulated for the acquisition of equipment—than the government functionaries, buyers and sellers of goods, services, and money. However, in the winter of 1891, the Turtle Mountain band demanded larger reservation boundaries. The reservation, according to them, should include the nearby forest because "these settlers are constantly destroying and ruining our timber by chopping it into cordwood and selling it to dealers and shippers to such an

[100] Gary Gerstle, *Liberty and Coercion: The Paradox of American Government from the Founding to the Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017) 2-4.

[101] U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Indian Affairs, *Papers Relative to An Agreement with the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians in North Dakota*, 56th Cong., 1st Session, 1900, S. Rep., serial 3878, 139, found at https://www.google.ca/books/edition/United_States_Congressional_Serial_Set/rv1GAQAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0, accessed 18 August 2022.

extent that the supply of hardwood timber…is now hardly sufficient for our future use."[102] Because a shared resource and commodity became competitive, the 'citizen' farmers could have seen the agreement conforming to their interests. Some might have coupled farms and woodlands, treating the forests as a shared resource for neighbours to harvest. Like the merchants, professionals, and county officials, many must have witnessed the American military occupation of the reservation in the winter of 1890 and the routines of the federal administrative bureaucracy. These forms of structural power were less likely to be experienced by themselves and were limited by the federal Bill of Rights. The federal commission in 1892 neglected to entertain an enlarged reservation. Instead, the agreement moulded removal differently. If Congress ratified and implemented the agreement, the Turtle Mountain community might be displaced because some enrolled population would have to take allotments elsewhere.

Federal enrollment and commission in the early 1890s reveal how sociopolitical processes and forces influenced the imagined community at Turtle Mountain. The federal commissioner referred to the 1892 agreement as a contract between the United States and the Turtle Mountain band. Their emphasis was on its transactional characteristics rather than diplomatic significance. The United States had ended treaty-making two decades earlier. The ideas of self-governance and citizenship, which justified the policy, might not have been shared by both parties in the negotiations. Rather than entirely rearrange social dynamics and undermine political life, the late 1880s and early 1890s unified and set the terms of opposition. For many Métis families, the mid-nineteenth century saw seasonal activities at Turtle Mountain. This facilitated social contact and kinship bonds with Plains Ojibwe hunters. The Métis and Plains Ojibwe had co-operated over generations. Still, Turtle Mountain became a space for their

[102] Ibid 111.

combined sociopolitical and economic reconstruction after the bison hunt ended, settlement expanded, and the American state developed. Plains Ojibwe and Métis formed councils, which became a space to visualize a collective beyond the immediate social confines of family and households. Attendees heard that the Métis were part of the political community of the Turtle Mountain band and that the federal government was violating the laws and customs of the Turtle Mountain band.

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Conclusion

From the late 1860s onward, the northern Great Plains was folded into the United States and Canada. This reflected socioeconomic and political processes. On the one hand, capitalist modes of production brought agricultural development and industrialized transportation into the global economy. On the other hand, the United States developed a government apparatus to shore up territorial claims near the boundary-line with the new nation of Canada. Before the transformation, when production, transportation, and exchange of furs and pelts flowed out of the area and dominated economic life therein, the Métis had been directly connected to the trade outposts and loosely related to the American territorial officers spread from the Upper Mississippi River Valley to the northwest. For some, rather than Canada and farms spread throughout Manitoba, the southeast corner of Turtle Mountain was the place to build houses, grow foods, and, dependent on age and generation, transition into the different stages of the family life course.

In the late nineteenth century, American federal authorities redefined the terms these Métis people could use to build their collective identity. Although Plains Ojibwe council leaders and councillors consistently restated their authority to imagine and determine their political

community's makeup, American officials thought the events of 1869 and 1870 in the Red River Valley, in addition to the events of 1885 in Northwest Territory of Canada, were necessary to comprehend Turtle Mountain. In 1869 and 1870, the Métis resorted to physical force to reshape Canadian expansion. They established an elected legislative political body in the name of 'the people of the Rupert's Land and the North-West.' These actions helped build the Canadian Province of Manitoba. It was, to a large degree, tried again in 1885 but ultimately failed because Canada resorted to military force. American officials knew Canada had formed commissions to extinguish the Métis' rights to Indian title. Federal officials at Turtle Mountain set the community membership to paper. They made residence, birthplace, and political status exclusionary criteria for their enrollment into an 'Indian tribe,' the Turtle Mountain band of Chippewas.

In doing so, Turtle Mountain Métis began reconstructing their political identities to make themselves legible to American authorities. They could not mobilize the provisional governments and the *Manitoba Act* like the Métis communities north of the border. Canadian settler colonization and industrialization reshaped political economies, cultural conflicts, and collective identities. The United States implicitly referenced the *Manitoba Act* and its rights and entitlements to raise suspicions and draw boundaries at Turtle Mountain, even as Métis people reconstituted their social worlds. The ideas reflected the economic isolation in the development of the State of North Dakota and the common unity of the Turtle Mountain band of Chippewas in opposition to the United States.

Chapter Three: Social Stratification and Remaking Métis National Identity in Early Twentieth-Century Manitoba, Canada

In the early twentieth century, the Dominion of Canada realized earlier ambitions of creating a transcontinental economy. The conditions of global capitalism unleashed a brief period of explosive settler colonization. They advanced industrialization further, which gave greater substance to the form of the national economy and national state. However, when a global conflict emerged, the Dominion came to the British Empire's defence. An accelerant as much as a change agent, Canada nonetheless felt disruptions in the aftermath of the Great War. The states of multiple nationalisms, the social questions of class and gender relations, and the economic inequalities of regions became politically and culturally potent in the time of supposed triumph for Canada and the Empire. When the world economy collapsed in the 1930s, creating conditions not experienced since the depression of the late nineteenth century, the queries evolved: who benefited from change and what could be done?

This chapter picks up where and when Chapter One left off. Historians of Canada point to significant political and cultural changes in the early twentieth century. Some show national identities and federal-provincial relations were reformed during the First World War and the Great Depression. Others notice that welfare policies and state intervention after the Second World War had earlier ideological and institutional origins. Even if western Canada looms in these interpretations, the historiographical omission of the Métis in the late nineteenth century means that the socioeconomic forces were narrow and had little to no influence over lived experiences and collective consciousness. Instead, historians often carry the idea of Manitoba Métis marginality Manitoba into the subsequent historical conjuncture. This chapter fills this absence, tracing the relationship between the social stratification of the Manitoba Métis and the

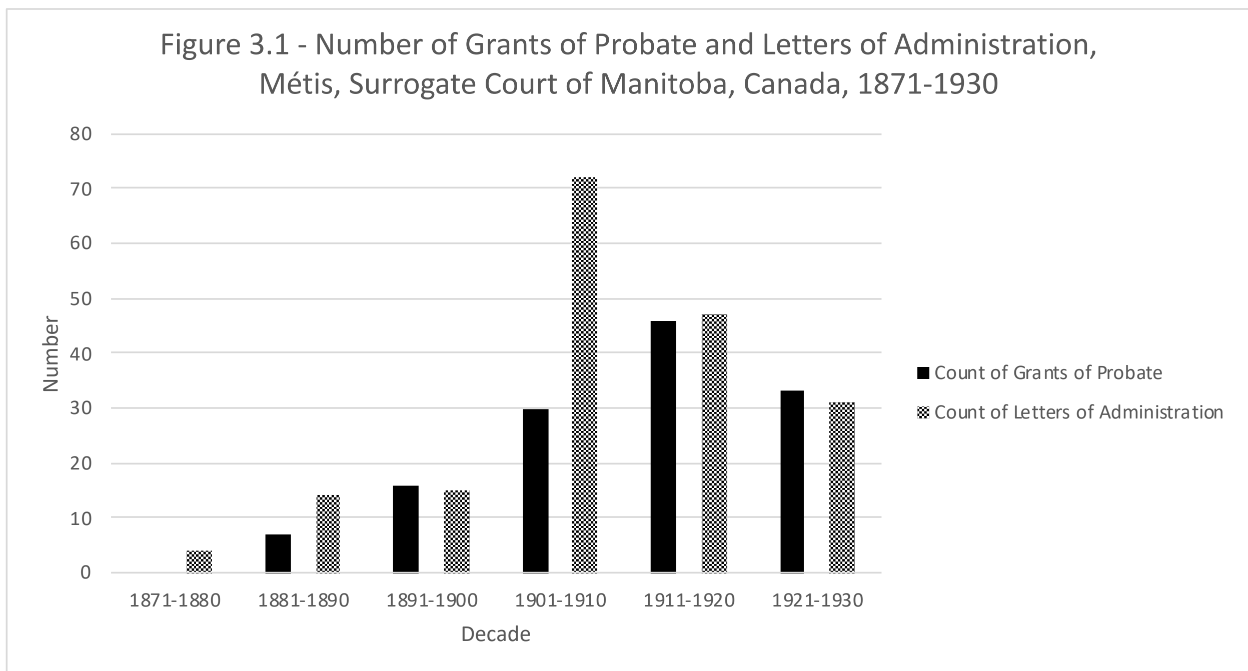
evolution of Métis nationalism in the early twentieth century. It uses 318 estate files to show how the broader economic changes influenced Métis social life from 1900 to 1930.

Estate files, like censuses, have their eccentricities. Someone who died without property rarely entered the legal process to create an estate inventory. Middle-aged and elderly property owners are thus overrepresented in the files. However, their estate inventories still allow us to gauge occupational diversity, wealth accumulation, and, as a result, social differentiation. Using these records, the chapter traces the dynamic between material conditions and cultural construction, untangling the evolution of Métis nationalism and its socioeconomic basis. It explores how a new generation brought the 1890s national project into the early twentieth century and reformed their ideas of collective identity based on their own historical experiences. The Métis nation, as an emerging Métis elite saw fit, was woven into professional and popular historians' interpretations of Canadian state formation. Still, events and literature were directed primarily toward Métis children and youth. The chapter ends in the mid-1930s with academics who considered historically and socially contingent poverty as a natural and inevitable product of the Métis transition from the mid-to-late nineteenth century. This interpretation helped establish a scholarly literature in which the Métis were racialized and erased from early twentieth-century western Canada.

Wealth Matters: Métis Decedents and Economic Inequalities in Manitoba

Examination of Manitoba Surrogate Court records provides a valuable barometer for evaluating land ownership among Métis families. In 1901, the respondents revealed the high degree to which household heads possessed the legal right to private property. After they died, an interested party applied to the province's Surrogate Court to receive a grant of probate or letters of administration. Probate was the certification process when a will had been made, and letters of

administration occurred when no will existed. The provincial government, which had included estates and succession in the legislation in the early 1870s, outlined the Court's structure, procedure, and purpose. Applicants submitted several documents, notably an inventory of the deceased's immovable and moveable assets. The estate file was primarily for the eyes and analysis of a provincial judge who released the legal orders for the estate's administration or execution. Judges examined the file in the context of extant legislation and what constituted a valid will. But this process was also meant to expose the deceased person—called a decedent—to public scrutiny and resolve their affairs, particularly debts owed to creditors and the distribution of assets to beneficiaries.



Source: Familysearch.org. The original documents are on microfilm at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba. The method to link records is described in the text. Individuals can be searched through the surname groups recorded in the 1901 Canadian census, used for Figure 1.1.

Between 1870 and 1930, 315 Métis men and women went through estate administration. Though the documents did not explicitly identify the deceased as Métis or not, the files can still be used to determine the deceased's identity, so long as they are combined with other records.

The estate files, for example, required personal and family information: the names, residences, and occupations of the deceased and applicant, sometimes the immediate relatives of the deceased, and so on. Other administrative processes recorded similar micro-data. For example, in the 1870s, federal commissioners created records for the administration of land provisions under the *Manitoba Act* and, depending on language, required respondents to self-identify as 'métis' or 'halfbreed.' The census and affidavits included some of the same personal and family information as the estate files. The records can then be linked together. Some decedents experienced the federal administration directly. Others, particularly in the early twentieth century, were their children. Before 1900, 101 Métis men and women could be identified through government records. After 1900, another 214 can be identified. In both periods, the application and compilation of the estate file reflected an understanding of the legal process required to allocate the deceased's property according to Manitoba's laws and customs, including knowledge of the executor's and administrator's role. In cases without a will, administrators were usually spouses and children. Immediate family members filed 145 of 173 applications for letters of administration.

Métis decedents from 1901 to 1930 were at similar life stages when they died. Most were in middle or old age. Applicants were not required to outline the decedent's age at the time of their death, but their age can also be discerned from other records. The combination of records helps us outline the average age at the time of the decedent's death and infer when they had transitioned into different stages of the individual and family life cycle. During this time, decedents were, on average, 55 years old at the time of death in each decade. Will writers, who were an average of 61 years old at the time of death, were thus usually older than decedents without wills. This probably reflected the knowledge of their life stage and how economic assets

influenced preparations for how spouses and children might adapt to the transitions in the family life cycle. Because decedents estimate age at death, the estate files theoretically covered a generation of Métis primarily born in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Their life course and family transitions across the 1870s to the 1890s were represented in social and economic information from the 1901 census.

Additionally, some decedents were young adults at the turn of the century. These descendants were then shaped by and drew upon rural agriculture and local communities. Métis families were remade near Winnipeg, southeast of Lake Manitoba, and Lake Dauphin. As such, the estate files spoke to individual transitions into middle age and old age across the early twentieth-century economic booms and busts.

Table 3.1 – Gender and Estate Files, Métis, Surrogate Court of Manitoba, Canada, 1871-1930

	Men		Women	
Decade	*Grants of Probate*	*Letters of Administration*	*Grants of Probate*	*Letters of Administration*
1871-1880	0	2	0	2
1881-1890	5	5	2	9
1891-1900	14	12	2	3
1901-1910	22	56	8	16
1911-1920	35	39	11	8
1921-1930	19	27	14	4
Total	95	141	37	42

Source: See Figure 3.1

Table 3.2 – Distribution of Occupations, Métis, Surrogate Court of Manitoba, Canada, 1871-1930

Economic Sector	*1871-1930*	*1881-1890*	*1891-1900*	*1901-1910*	*1911-1920*	*1921-1930*	*Grand Total*
Agriculture	2	12	19	28	40	25	126
Commerce		2	1				3
Industrial						2	2
Non-Agricultural Resource						1	1
Service				1		2	3
Skilled Trade		1			2		3
General Labour		1	1	5	1	4	12
Religious Vocation			1				1
Retired				2	3	2	7
Total	2	16	22	36	46	36	166

Source: See Figure 3.1

Indeed, western Canada changed significantly in the first decade of the twentieth century. Because cycles of settler colonization reduced land availability across the American West from the 1860s onwards, Canada finally experienced similar processes across the northern Great Plains west of Manitoba in the late 1890s and 1900s. In addition to land availability and transportation infrastructure, the world's economic conditions improved, and the Long Depression ended. On the one hand, agricultural and natural resource producers found American, British, and European industrialists and working classes to be ready markets for their commodities. On the other hand, Canadian manufacturers, particularly those in Ontario and Québec, benefited from federal tariffs and serviced western settlers' needs for farm machinery and consumer goods. From 1896 to 1911, two million immigrants added to the roughly five

million Canadian population. Unlike the 1870s and 1880s, more individuals actually stayed in Canada than left.[1] Manitoba grew from 255,211 individuals in 1901 to 461,394 in 1911. However, Saskatchewan and Alberta were prominent destinations for settlers, increasing from roughly 160,000 to 866,727.[2] Over that time, the Dominion Lands Branch received an average of 2,373 homestead entries in Manitoba, 17,479 entries in Saskatchewan, and 10,049 entries in Alberta.[3] Gordon Darroch observes that even though the agricultural expansion of the northern Great Plains and urban industrial expansion in eastern Canada were combined in this settlement process, regional characteristics shaped the structural experiences of families and households. In the Canadian Prairies, settlers formed nuclear and extended family-based households and transformed the environment near their rural farms.[4]

The decedents, however, remained embedded in the rural agricultural economy. Table 3.1 provides an overview of the deceased's economic sector. Their position was determined by the occupational title that the applicants reported in court documents. As can be discerned from the proportions, applicants did not always report an occupation for decedents, perhaps a function of a transition in the life course to retirement. Sometimes, the applicant clarified this: seven decedents

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[1] Marvin McInnis, "The Population of Canada in the Nineteenth Century," in *A Population History of North America* eds. Michael Robert Haines et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 371-432; and Marvin McInnis, "The Population of Canada in the Twentieth Century," in *A Population History of North America* eds. Michael Robert Haines et al (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 529-600.

[2] Table A2-14, "Historical Statistics of Canada: Section A: Population and Migration," *Statistics Canada*, found at https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-516-x/sectiona/4147436-eng.htm, accessed 15 January 2023.

[3] Table L34-41, "Historical Statistics of Canada: Section L: Lands and Forests," *Statistics Canada,* found at https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-516-x/sectionl/4147441-eng.htm, accessed 15 January 2023.

[4] Gordon Darroch, "Household Experiences in Canada's Early-Twentieth Century Transformation," in *The Dawn of Canada's Century: Hidden Histories*, edited by Gordon Darroch (Montréal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014) 165. For a look at the average acreage of land patents in the western Provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, see Table L14-29a, "Historical Statistics of Canada: Section L: Lands and Forests," *Statistics Canada*, found at https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-516-x/sectionl/4147441-eng.htm, accessed 15 January 2023.

had been retired at their death. But most decedents were identified as farmers, and some as labourers. This was held for the years before the turn of the century, from the 1900s to the 1920s. Their place of residence reported at the time of death reflected the pattern developed over the previous three decades. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Métis decedents were residents of rural environments (262 of the 315) near Winnipeg, in the Interlake region, and further west. This included villages in the countryside, where decedents had likely transitioned to as they aged (41 of 262). Overall, the occupations and residences reflected their more expansive social geography, with many working on farms and earning wages just before death.

The decedents were usually men. Their overrepresentation reflected provincial laws and social practices. Manitoba received the English common law in the 1870s. This included the principle that marriages brought moveable and immovable property owned by men and women before their union under the control and management of the husband. From the 1870s to the 1890s, provincial lawmakers reshaped the relationship of gender and property rights. Men occupied the provincial government because the provincial franchise was limited to adult men until 1916. Like other Canadian provinces, their legislative reforms gradually changed the 'bundle of rights' to property. Their actions included married women's rights to property. Legal reform primarily reflected paternalism more so than ideas of gender equality. Lawmakers thought that social changes threatened independent family economies. As such, married women should be protected if their husbands failed to support them. Reforms enabled married women to hold and use moveable and immovable property separate from their husbands, except for the transfers from husband to wife.[5] But, married women, even with that modification, were entitled

[5] *The Revised Statutes of Manitoba,* vol. 2 (Winnipeg: Queen's Printer for the Province of Manitoba, 1892) 1035-1036, found at https://www.google.ca/books/edition/The_Revised_Statutes_of_Manitoba/kPIZAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1, accessed 18 June 2020.

to their earnings only if judges issued a protective order when their husband was imprisoned, separated, or cruel.

Provincial lawmakers removed the necessity of a protective order soon after the initial reforms to married women's property rights.[6] By 1901, because gender and age shaped labour and money use in rural and farm households, married Métis women might not have been able to use the new legal environment. Their families usually contained a property owner, but married Métis men almost always held real estate rather than married women. From 1871 to 1930, Métis decedents were usually Métis men. This dynamic changed slightly from the 1900s to the 1920s when more Métis decedents existed. The disparity between Métis men and women persisted over time. Applicants, who were usually the deceased's adult children, identified their mother's social status as married women without similar occupation lives as men, even if their labour had been crucial to economic security.

Because of material circumstances, Métis decedents held immovable property as an asset. From the 1880s onward, applicants outlined the deceased's property in the Surrogate Court's standardized form. Tables 3.3 and 3.4 provide an overview of the decedent's property. The standardized form had distinct categories. Applicants identified: household furniture and goods; farm implements; stock in trade; horses, cattle, sheep, and pigs; book debts and promissory notes; money secured by mortgages; bank stock and other shares; life insurance; cash on hand and in banks; farm produce; and real estate. Nearly three-quarters of Métis decedents were reported to own real property, and most Métis decedents in each late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century decade did so. It was socially and economically significant: decedents

[6] *The Revised Statutes of Manitoba,* vol. 2 (Winnipeg: Queen's Printer for the Province of Manitoba, 1892) 1036-1037, found at https://www.google.ca/books/edition/The_Revised_Statutes_of_Manitoba/kPIZAAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1, accessed 18 June 2020.

mentioned this asset in wills, and interested parties applied to administer estates in other cases in much higher proportions than moveable property. Some had even acquired multiple properties. A few were fragmented in fractional interests.

But in many cases, the deceased owned one property. They were often elderly, rural people. Métis decedents kept possessing real property they farmed during middle age and brought it into old age. Many had worked these farm properties and resided with them with a family, expanding and contracting as they aged.

Table 3.3 - Property Ownership by Type, Grants of Probate, Métis, Manitoba, Canada, 1871-1930

	1871-1880		1881-1890		1891-1900		1901-1910		1911-1920		1921-1930	
Asset	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Furniture and Household Items	0	0	3	42.86	11	73.33	14	45.16	12	26.09	20	60.61
Farm Implements	0	0	2	28.57	4	26.67	12	38.71	15	32.61	13	39.39
Stock in Trade	0	0			1	6.67	1	3.23				
Horses	0	0	3	42.86	8	53.33	16	51.61	15	32.61	15	45.45
Cattle	0	0	2	28.57	9	9	21	67.74	17	36.96	11	33.33
Sheep and Pigs	0	0	0	0	1	6.67	4	12.90	2	4.35	3	9.10
Book debts and Promissory Notes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2.17	4	12.12
Moneys Secured by Mortgages	0	0	1	14.29	1	6.67	2	6.45	8	17.39	4	12.12
Life Insurance	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3.23	2	4.35	1	3.03
Bank Stocks and other Shares	0	0	0	0	1	6.67					2	6.10
Securities	0	0	0	0	1	6.67	1	3.23	2	4.35	4	12.12

	1871-1880		1881-1890		1891-1900		1901-1910		1911-1920		1921-1930	
Asset	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Cash on Hand	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3.23	2	4.35	4	12.12
Cash in Bank	0	0	0	0	1	6.67	2	6.45	7	15.22	9	27.27
Farm Produce	0	0	0	0	0		1	3.23	3	6.52	1	3.03
Real Estate	0	0	3	42.86	13	86.67	25	80.65	38	82.61	30	90.91
Other Property	0	0	1	14.29	2	13.33	7	22.58	6	13.04	7	21.21
Total Decedents	0	0	7		15		31		46		33	

Source: Grants of Probate. Familysearch.org. The original documents are on microfilm at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba. The method to link records is described in the text. Individuals can be searched through the surname groups recorded in the 1901 Canadian census, used for Figure 1.1.

Table 3.4 - Property Ownership by Type, Letters of Administration, Métis, Manitoba, Canada, 1871-1930

	1871-1880		1881-1890		1891-1900		1901-1910		1911-1920		1921-1930	
Asset	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Furniture and Household Items	0	0	1	7.14	1	6.67	2	2.78	5	10.64	12	38.71
Farm Implements	0	0	2	14.29	1	6.67	7	9.72	5	10.64	8	25.81
Stock in Trade	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3.23
Horses	0	0	2	14.29	1	6.67	10	13.89	7	14.89	9	29.03
Cattle	0	0	2	14.29	1	6.67	9	12.50	8	17.02	11	35.48
Sheep and Pigs	0	0	1	7.14	0	0	2	2.78	3	6.38	4	12.90
Book debts and Promissory Notes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	12.90
Moneys Secured by Mortgages	0	0	1	7.14	0	0	0	0	1	2.13	3	9.68
Life Insurance	0	0								0	1	3.23
Bank Stocks and other Shares	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	9.68
Securities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Cash on Hand	0	0	1	7.14	1	6.67	0	0	0	0	2	6.45

	1871-1880		1881-1890		1891-1900		1901-1910		1911-1920		1921-1930	
Asset	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Cash in Bank	0	0	1	7.14	0	0	1	1.39	3	6.38	4	12.90
Farm Produce	0	0	1	7.14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Real Estate	0	0	7	50	11	73.33	42	58.33	40	85.12	27	87.10
Other Property	1	25	3	21.43	3	20	24	33.33	4	8.51	4	12.90
Total Decedents	4		14		15		72		47		31	

Source: Surrogate Court of Manitoba. Familysearch.org. The original documents are on microfilm at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba. The method to link records is described in the text. Individuals can be searched through the surname groups recorded in the 1901 Canadian census, used for Figure 1.1.

Although the real property of Métis decedents was visible in this legal process, their technology and entry into specialized production for commodity markets were not. Farm and garden work near the time of their death necessitated the acquisition of specific tools to organize and realize the growth of crops and the management of animals. Mechanical equipment, for example, was designed and used to produce in-demand foodstuffs and other goods at greater scales and more efficiently. But some decedents were elderly, even retired. They could have seen their children form independent households, drawing back on their agricultural activities and disposing of the tools meant for the input of family labour. The individual and family life cycle might explain why so few property inventories listed specific farm implements, but the estate files do not provide information to support that precise conclusion.

Nonetheless, in the decades after 1900, one-third to two-fifths of estate inventories show decedents owned agricultural tools. Their equipment was rarely clarified. Vague overtures to "machinery" and "farm implements" were more common categories. Other more precise terms, such as ploughs, threshers, reapers, and tractors, were not named, limiting the ability to understand how mechanization might have changed the organization of labour. Significantly, ownership of horses was in similar proportions as implements, suggesting the continuing importance of horses for power and general transportation. Cattle were also common, potentially serving food, fertilizer, and income needs. However, the relative number of livestock decreased between 1900 and 1930 among probated decedents. For instance, 68 percent of probated decedents owned cattle in the first decade of the twentieth century, which fell to 37 percent in the 1910s and 33 percent for those in the 1920s. However, some decedents indicated household furniture and tools in similar proportions and specificity as agricultural equipment. In the 1920s, one young and two late-middle-aged women owned sewing machines as a sign of technological

adaptations and the industrial context. They might have learned how to sew by hand from their mothers and grandmothers, but these women must have used their machines to mend and make garments for themselves and their family members.

Many of the decedents were brought into the economic orbit of Winnipeg. Although some owned urban real estate, more resided outside the city before their deaths. Winnipeg became an industrial and commercial hub of western Canada. The city experienced a burst in population from 1901 to 1911: 42,540 to 136,035. The First World War slowed immigration, but the city continued to grow over the 1910s and 1920s. The pace was one of the fastest in North America. By 1931, Winnipeg had a population of 218,000.[7] The city developed a distinct urban social geography: administrative offices and financial institutions in the centre and manufacturing and railyards in the north and south ends. This process shaped residential segregation and, subsequently, ethnic and class consciousness.[8] Industrial workplaces created a wage-earning population, and the income source was the basis of household economies. Individual and family consumer needs were usually met by purchasing food and clothing in local markets and shops. Their economic conditions in the 1910s were tight, and the 'cost of living' became a divisive subject in capital-labour relations and government onlookers. Urban food demands might have been a source of income for some Métis decedents. Many resided nearby and could cart vegetables and dairy products into the city. The estate inventories, however, limit a view of what markets for farm commodities Métis decedents accessed. Two estate inventories, an elderly woman in the late 1910s and another in the early 1920s, included equity shares in a

[7] Alan F. Artibise, "Patterns of Population Growth and Ethnic Relationships in Winnipeg, 1874-1974," in *Histoire Sociale / Social History* 9, no. 18 (1976) 297-335, especially Table 1.

[8] Daniel Hiebert, "Class, Ethnicity and Residential Structure: The Social Geography of Winnipeg, 1901–1921," *Journal of Historical Geography* 17, no. 1 (1991): 56–86.

rural cheese manufacturer. Firms typically offered stock to raise cash necessary to purchase equipment and labour power. They might have been confident about the financial investment. Neither sought to convert the equity shares back into cash before their death.

Some decedents had certainly accumulated capital. Their estate inventories enumerated their form in cash and investments. The category indicates the outcomes of economic activity from the 1900s to 1920s. This interpretation assumes some money held under the terms "cash on hand" and "cash in bank" was derived from their earnings in markets for labour, agricultural products, and forestry goods, not gifts and inheritances. Importantly, their savings imply the deceased could save income after they met consumption needs and any debt repayment. When credit was unavailable at retailers, cash was the most common mechanism to acquire tools, clothing, and food not made in the household. Most decedents were middle-aged and elderly, so some might have accumulated cash over the life course. Their savings must have supported their retirement. More could have saved a little but used their cash to meet living expenses before their deaths.

Few Métis decedents kept savings in banks. Most witnessed severe financial upheavals: private banks grew in Winnipeg and the Town of St. Boniface in the 1870s, failed in the early 1880s after the end of an economic boom and convulsed again in the early 1890s.[9] Accumulation might have been more limited: a smaller share of decedents held cash in the bank or house during the late nineteenth century than in the early twentieth century. More decedents kept bank deposits after the 1900. It was still uncommon beyond a small minority, reaching under 10 percent of administered estates and 25 percent of probated estates in the 1920s. Their institutions

[9] R. T. Naylor, *History of Canadian Business* (Montréal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 2006) 174-175.

included local branches of the chartered banks, like the Royal Bank of Canada and the Banque de Hochelaga. Chartered banks had become a dominant financial intermediary.[10]

But some Métis decedents became lenders themselves. Their estate inventories show some used their cash to accumulate more money. Small lenders, like these decedents, were not historically unusual. Peter Baskerville observes that financial institutions—like banks and mortgage companies—were important intermediaries in providing capital to borrowers. Corporations, however, had yet to marginalize individuals and local contexts in credit markets completely.[11] Borrowers usually sought money lenders when family connections and personal relations were more limited. Métis lenders were less than 15 percent in administered and probated estates in the 1910s and 1920s. Their loan was secured through a mortgage against moveable or immovable assets. The debtor and loan value were reported consistently, but the estate inventories tell little to us about how the debtor used their loan. In the rural context, Métis lenders probably financed the debtor's material life—tools, building repairs, transportation, and so on—but they lacked the cash to do so outright. If borrowers failed to repay, Métis lenders must have known that legal proceedings were available to seize collateral assets. Their understanding is implicit in the mortgage because lenders could have merely allocated the cash without recourse to legal documentation. Lenders might have done so out of an economic

[10] For a study of Ontario estate inventories in the 1890s, see Livio Di Matteo and Angela Redish, "The Evolution of Financial Intermediation: Evidence from 19th-century Ontario Microdata," in *Canadian Journal of Economics/Revue Canadienne d'économique* 48, no. 3 (2015): 963–87. The federal government required chartered banks to meet certain capital requirements and procedures for the circulation of notes and specie. Depositors would have received small payments on the funds allocated to a bank account, which led the institution to circulate notes and lend money.

[11] Peter A. Baskerville, "Chattel Mortgages and Community in Perth County, Ontario," *Canadian Historical Review* 87, no. 4 (2006): 583–620.

strategy. Many decedents were adults when mortgage investments often carried higher interest rates and thus potential returns than ownership of Canadian government debt instruments.[12]

Others had more to invest and an eye to corporate enterprise. During the late 1880s and early 1890s, two older decedents, a male farmer west of Winnipeg and a male merchant in the Town of St. Boniface, owned equity shares and corporate bonds. One estate inventory included nearly $20,000 to fund the construction of the St. Boniface Hospital.[13] The other included 30 shares in the Bank of Montréal, two bonds in the Canadian Pacific Railway Company's land interests, consolidated stock in the New Brunswick Railway Company guaranteed by the C.P.R., and bonds issued in New Brunswick Railway Company.[14] Métis decedents did not replicate their investments, but many saved incomes and invested in different activities to grow their savings.

For some decedents, wealth was possible. Applicants to the Surrogate Court identified the deceased's property in the categories of estate inventories, but they also evaluated the "fair market value" in Canadian dollars. Their valuation provides a signal of the deceased's wealth. The figures can be compared to each other. However, these estate values have a significant drawback. The provincial government eventually introduced taxes on inheritance. Some applicants might have been inclined to provide a low estimate of the exchange value of immovable and moveable property. Their motivation was simple: lower succession duties. The implication is that the deceased could have been wealthier than the applicant wrote on the estate inventory. We might then consider the individual numbers in Figure 3.3 to be low estimates of a

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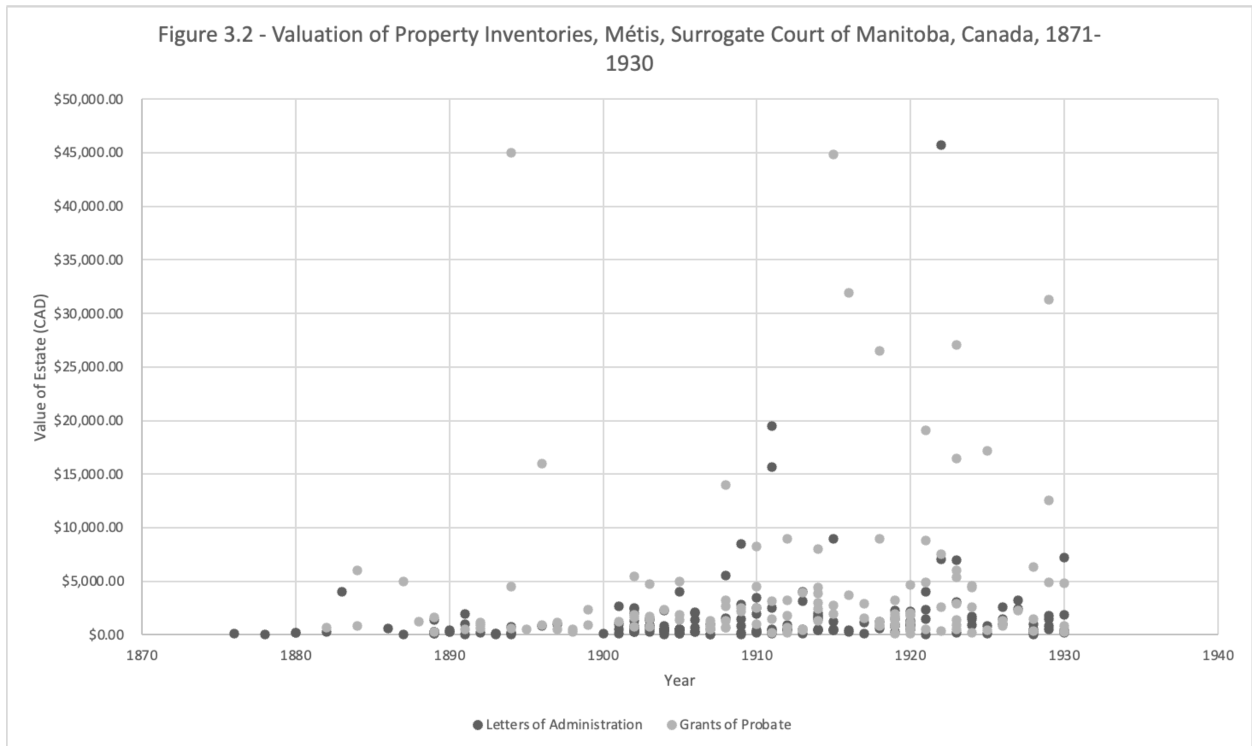
[12] Ranald C. Michie, "The Canadian Securities Market, 1850-1914," in *The Business History Review* 62, no. 1 (1988): 48-49.

[13] François Gingras, no. 1395, 1894, Surrogate Court of the Eastern Judicial District, Provincial Archives of Manitoba.

[14] Pascal Breland, no. 1792, 1897, Surrogate Court of the Eastern Judicial District, Provincial Archives of Manitoba.

decedent's wealth, but, nonetheless, an economic indicator for the testate and intestate.[5] The testate had higher values than the intestate. The latter had an average value of $1,554.49 compared to the figure of $4,358.29 for the former. These averages, even with the gradual devaluation of the currency, changed over time.

In the 1890s, the 17 intestate cases had an average value of $464.29, and the 16 testate cases had estates valued at $4,779.00. In the 1920s, the 31 intestate cases had an average value of $3,308.91, and the 33 testate had an average value of $6,090.98. The average value, however, masks disparities. In the 1890s, 16 testate cases had a cumulative total of $76,463.98. Two of them accounted for four-fifths of this figure. One testate case had more than half of the decade's cumulative total. In the 1920s, the 33 testate cases had similar disparities, even if a bit less concentrated. Their estate inventories had a cumulative total of $201,002.25. Six of them had estates valued over $10,000.00. Their cases accounted for a little under two-thirds of the cumulative total. At the same time, however, some Métis women seized the opportunities of the early twentieth century. In the 1910s and 1920s, testate women had higher average values of property than intestate women. Women's estate values compared favourably to their male counterparts, particularly in the 1920s. In probates, 14 women accounted for a cumulative total of $113,319.00, and 19 men had estates of a cumulative total of $87,682.87. Even though four women had estates over $10,000.00, two of these female decedents account for around half of the cumulative total.



Source: Familysearch.org. The original documents are on microfilm at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba. The method to link records is described in the text. Individuals can be searched through the surname groups recorded in the 1901 Canadian census, used for Figure 1.1.

Métis decedents mirrored inequalities in economic life between 1900 and 1930. In 1901, many Métis had formed families and farm households, owning private property but yielding an uneven pattern of wealth accumulation. It was similar to other Manitoba residents. Livio di Matteo examines rural and urban Manitoba estate inventories to understand the impact of government policy and the agricultural economy on wealth and inequality from 1870 to 1930. Manitoba decedents had high average wealth and inequality during the 1890s and 1900s but lower average wealth and less inequality during the 1910s and 1920s. Di Matteo attributes this dynamic to the Dominion subsidy for land and the high rates of farm ownership and agricultural production. These decedents spent little to acquire and maintain the 'bundle of rights' to property. Property ownership underlined wealth holding even as global commodity prices

fluctuated and the boom in agricultural income diminished slightly over the late 1910s and 1920s.[15] Métis decedents, even if many owed their property ownership to the *Manitoba Act*'s land provisions, had wealth patterns similar to those of others in Manitoba.

Some of those decedents, but not all, could do more than make ends meet. Their estate inventories revealed multiple properties, income savings, and cash investments into financial instruments. Most had modest wealth, which reflected rural real estate ownership. Indeed, their wealth was usually concentrated on this asset. They might have avoided accessing various capital sources or paid off loans as the life course unfolded. Few Métis decedents had debts at the time of death, and thus, economic burdens were necessary to meet to maintain their livelihood. Most then had the leverage of a material resource before death in the 1900s and 1910s. Even when the provincial government became concerned with economic welfare after the First World War, Métis decedents were isolated from provincial administrators' social observation and bureaucratic interventions.

In Manitoba, before the war, reformers wanted the provincial government to act in matters of child safety and economic deprivation. Nancy Christie observes urban middle-class professionals and maternal feminists gradually went beyond 'child welfare' to forms of income support. She demonstrates that reformers shaped new government policies in economic matters. Their anxieties over social questions of urban life, industrial capitalism, and the progress of Canada influenced advocacy for direct cash payments. Their motivations, as Christie shows, were not socially neutral. Reformers aimed to reproduce independent family economies and gender hierarchies through mothers' allowances in the 1920s before the programs to secure the

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[15] Livio Di Matteo, "A Land and Inequality in Canada: 1870-1930," in *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 60, no. 3 (2012): 309–34.

paid employment of married men in the 1940s.[16] Some Métis decedents had the economic autonomy to fall outside these early state interventions.

Notably, many Métis never appeared as a decedent in the Surrogate Court. Death was a requirement for this legal process, but property interests were another. Some Métis had become smallholders and rural wage labourers. Their ages might have been like the middle-aged and elderly Métis decedents or even the younger adult beneficiaries, executors, and administration. But they had neither property nor social and family connections to warrant estate administration. Their economic conditions were then quite different than others.

Indeed, Evelyn Peters, Matthew Stock, and Adrian Werner contend that impoverished Métis families and farm households near Winnipeg were increasingly urbanized from the 1900s to 1940s. Starting in the 1890s, some sold their properties and then established new dwellings on the southwest outskirts of the railway yards and factories. Their household economies relied on unskilled waged labour, but members faced regular unemployment.[17] In rural areas, from the 1910s to the 1930s, some Métis families west of Winnipeg, near the southeast of Lake Manitoba, and west of Lake Dauphin had differing experiences. Farm proprietors and rural waged labourers were gradually divided socially. As St-Onge shows, a hierarchy developed near Winnipeg. Métis agricultural workers became an "underclass" of villagers in a persistent struggle to make ends meet.[18] In St. Laurent in the Interlake area, Métis families had fished, trapped, and foraged more than farmed in the 1880s and 1890s. But prices were volatile. Their families' livelihoods became

[16] Nancy Christie, *Engendering the State: Family, Work, and Welfare in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

[17] Evelyn Peters, Matthew Stock, and Adrian Werner, *Rooster Town: The History of an Urban Métis Community, 1901–1961* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2018).

[18] Nicole St-Onge, "Memorials of Metis Women of Sait-Eustache, Manitoba," in *Oral History Forum d'histoire Orale*, 2000, found at http://www.oralhistoryforum.ca/index.php/ohf/article/view/119, accessed 21 April 2019.

precarious, facing constraints on cash savings in the 1910s.[19] As economic circumstances changed in the early twentieth century, wealth and stability were not necessarily universal experiences among the Manitoba Métis.

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Remembering a State for a Nation and Writing Métis History

Over the early twentieth century, the MNU evolved. In the late 1880s and 1890s, members held assemblies and participated in yearly collective gatherings. Individuals and families who otherwise lived separately and did not share everyday experiences came together. Some members began to form local MNU branches. Sometimes, the organizers rotated the annual event between the local branches. Assemblies held near Winnipeg—like St. Anne, St. Boniface, St. Norbert, St. Vital, and so on—in addition to the places around Lake Manitoba—such as St. Laurent. In 1910, the governing members revised the MNU constitution, clarifying the meaning of their activities. They emphasized the annual events, but governing members hoped to preserve "national traditions." The MNU aimed to foster a social environment and transmit ideas to children and youth. Members incorporated individual and team competitions, like equestrian exercises and baseball games, into the annual events.[20] Governing members might have known that lengthy speeches, even if necessary for communicating ideas, could only keep their audience's attention for so long.

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[19] In 1901, St. Laurent was one of the densest areas of households for Métis families, which included some individuals who had been involved in the formation of the MNU in the late-1880s. At the time of the federal census, this place had a large proportion of rural non-farm households, whose reported heads of household were listed as trappers, hunters, or fishermen in the occupation category. For a detailed historical study and discussion of identity, see Nicole St-Onge, *Saint-Laurent, Manitoba: Evolving Métis Identities, 1850-1914* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2004).

[20] Grand Pique-Nique, 14 July 1910, Pique-nique annuel de L'union nationale métisse, item 0449/1351/172, fonds 0449, Union nationale métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba, Centre du patrimoinie, Société historique de Saint-Boniface, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, found at https://archivesshsb.mb.ca/media/0449/PDF/0449-1351-172-C.pdf, accessed 15 June 2022.

The MNU could have directed their efforts because English-Canadian cultural workers failed to appreciate living Métis histories. Commentators omitted the Métis' role in 1890s language and school questions from the developing regional historiography. To take one example, in 1899, an anonymous historical writer suggested, in an article titled "The Half-Breed," the Métis should have spent the last decades of the nineteenth century building statutes instead of supposedly wandering the prairies. The writer stated:

> A new civilization, limited and transitional arose in the west, with special characteristics of dress and physique, and a new type of character. Like a passing cloud, it has rested awhile dropping a gentle shower, and soon to pass away. Will the historian a century hence find any traces of the lost race, and the ephemereal [sic] civilization? Will he search in vain for the ballads of the lodges, the love songs of the maidens and the war songs of the men? Will there be found hidden in an earthen temple a massive statue carved by the deft hand of a native Angelo? Who will read the tragic lines of the great poem penned with the hand and brain of a Metis Dante? Alas! the impress of the race is like the footprints of the buffalo, a passing event and nothing more. We cannot muse upon the story without a deep tinge of sadness. Life to these people has been the march of a caravan across the desert, hidden by a cloud of dust, and then passing out of sight and memory forever. What would the country have been had they never appeared, and what has been done as their work in the world? What was the special mission of this race, and what is the national lesson it has taught and bequeathed to the ages? Let historians note, and philosophers explain.[21]

In the 22 July 1899 issue, the author used this description of historical sources to decry the impending disappearance of a distinct people, 'the Métis race,' and how these dynamics of knowledge production posed a methodological problem for Canadians. To preface the conclusion, the writer clarified the issue: "The lives of their great men, the political, social and religious history of the race, their genealogy, traditions, and folklore, their institutions and civilization are unwritten."[22] The Métis, as the author understood, neither made history nor changed over time.

[21] "The Halfbreed," in *Manitoba Free Press,* 22 July 1899, found at https://newspaperarchive.com/winnipeg-free-press-jul-22-1899-p-7/, accessed 21 July 2021.

[22] Ibid.

The writer might have assumed Canada already had a rich 'tradition,' even though the subsequent decade featured important experiments in national myth and symbol making. H.V. Nelles points to a 1908 heritage festival in Québec City as a prominent case. Planners turned to pageants and spectacles, hoping for cohesion, if not the creation, of French- and English-Canadian identities. Industrialization and western expansion had led to social and regional divisions. This process fed multiple political conflicts. The Métis experienced and shaped them in 1869, 1870, and 1885. French-Canadian political and religious elites took the Métis as a common cause to expand French and Catholicism beyond Québec. In turn, the idea of provincial autonomy raised conflicts over federalism, and political and civil rights failed to protect their holders from Manitoba's elected legislature. The school questions did not disappear: the federal government reformed the NWTs into provinces in the mid-1900s. However, this process marginalized religious institutions and made English the language of instruction in their centralized public school systems.

Organizers planned to commemorate the tercentenary of Québec immediately after the federal government's Autonomy Bills created Saskatchewan and Alberta. Planners ostensibly meant to commemorate Samuel de Champlain and a series of fortifications built in 1608 at what became Québec City. However, the events included thousands of individuals in costumes performing and parading at the sites from the Seven Years' War and the War of 1812. For the organizers, "[history's] message from 1759-60," as Nelles observes, "could be the fusion of two peoples into one in the crucible of war." Planners imagined the 'two peoples' were then reforged in the counter-revolutionary warfare in the late 1770s and 1812. The 'two peoples' were finally unified by Confederation in 1867.[23] Governing authorities and religious elites of Ontario and

[23] H. V. Nelles, *The Art of Nation-Building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000) 79.

Québec went arm-to-arm with the British Crown, personified in the attendance of the Prince of Wales at the festivities. According to Nelles, the commemorative activities established the Canadian idea of cultural equilibrium. Planners communicated a dualistic national identity and historical project under the auspices of the Empire.

The MNU governing members had started their commemorations and saw more than 'two peoples' in Canada. In 1891, the MNU accepted the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste's (SSJB) donation of a monument. The SSJB redeveloped after the attempted 1837-38 Lower Canadian revolution, abandoning the Patriot cause in favour of the Catholic hierarchy.[24] Their members promoted French-Canadian nationalism in cultural activities and eventually mutual-aid programs. French-Canadian commemorations led to the development of a monument for Samuel de Champlain that positioned him as a significant precursor of the Québec government.[25] The SSJB also sought the protection of French and Catholicism in western Canada. Their donation to the MNU was a bust of Louis Riel. The MNU stationed the monument near the Roman Catholic cathedral in the Town of St. Boniface. However, the MNU eventually unveiled their monuments. In the fall of 1906, the MNU placed a granite cross in the parish of St. Norbert south of Winnipeg.[26]

The MNU commemorative festivities included a mass at St. Norbert, a procession to the site of the granite cross nearby, and rituals near the monument. An English-speaking reporter noted how the speeches of four MNU members interpreted the commemoration. According to

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[24] Ronald Rudin, *Founding Fathers: The Celebration of Champlain and Laval in the Streets of Québec, 1878-1908* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003) 81.

[25] Ibid 60-68.

[26] For a study based upon the perspective of members in the Roman Catholic hierarchy, see Jacinthe Duval, "The Catholic Church and the Formation of Metis Identity," in *Past Imperfect* 9 (2001) 65-87.

the journalist, speakers did not necessarily centre the Catholic church in their overview of Métis national identity and geo-political originality. For them, the monument represented an historical idea of the Métis: industrious bison hunters who constituted a progressive force and individuality before the railways in the late-nineteenth century and after Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, sieur de La Vérendrye brought the fur trade to the region of the Red River Valley in the early eighteenth century. The MNU had supposedly placed the monument where the Métis turned the Canadian surveyors away in 1869. The site was then a surveillance post for the Provisional Governments. The monument signified their actions for language and religion: "[community] of language and of faith was a precious bond between the French of the east and the natives of Manitoba, between those of the icy shores of Labrador and the placers [sic] of the Yukon."[27]

From the 1880s to the early 1900s, urban professionals and political elites reformed the University of Manitoba and the Manitoba Historical and Scientific Society. Anglophone writers and speakers had left eastern Canada in the 1870s and early 1880s. Their books, newspaper articles, and conferences could not easily transpose the myth-symbols of the Loyalists and the War of 1812 to Manitoba. Instead, memorialists saw the rumblings of the Dominion at the start of the Red River Colony in the 1810s. They assigned Lord Selkirk, his Scottish settlers, and the HBC central roles in sociopolitical development. Their interpretation departed from mid-nineteenth-century Canadian annexationists who saw how the North-West Company and the Métis foretold the continental expansion of eastern British North America to Rupert's Land.[28]

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[27] "Metis People Erect Monument," *Manitoba Free Press,* 25 October 1906, found at https://newspaperarchive.com/winnipeg-free-press-oct-25-1906-p-9/, accessed 9 July 2022.

[28] Doug Owram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 212-213.

Memorialists, like in commemorating the Battle of Seven Oaks, recast the Métis as a barrier to progress.[29]

In 1907, Jérôme took to the *Manitoba Free Press* to contest how George Bryce represented the Métis in his recently published *History of Manitoba.* Jérôme was an MNU founder and provincial legislator when Manitoba reformed official languages and education policies. He had been an avid writer, crafting a pamphlet to communicate Métis nationalism during the school crisis and encourage collective political action. But Jérôme was also an avid reader. Bryce, the head of the Manitoba Historical and Scientific Society and a retired University of Manitoba professor, had emphasized how the events of 1869-1870 were violent and irrational. He positioned Riel and the Métis as rebels.[30] Jérôme highlighted the opposite. Instead, he proposed the loyalty of the Métis: "the British flag or Union Jack was continually hoisted by order of Riel and the provisional government." He suggested that Métis historical behaviour differed from the ideas of "those who have always represented the Metis as bandits of the mountains who never recognized any authority."[31]

Jérôme took a more coherent political stance in the article, blending his interpretation into others at the MNU commemoration. In 1906, Jérôme challenged the idea that the Métis should not have formed provisional governments and could have waited to make their demands after Canada's westward expansion. He argued that recent Manitoba language and school politics showed what might have happened had the Métis done nothing when faced with top-down

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[29] Ibid 197, 212-213. For the development of Loyalists and the War of 1812 in the ideological superstructure of Ontario, see Cecilia Morgan, *Creating Colonial Pasts: History, Memory, and Commemoration in Southern Ontario, 1860-1980* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

[30] George Bryce, *A History of Manitoba: Its Resources and People* (Toronto: Canada History Company, 1906).

[31] "Riel Loyal to the Flag, Says Jerome," *Manitoba Free Press,* 25 April 1907, found at https://newspaperarchive.com/winnipeg-free-press-apr-25-1907-p-18/, accessed 21 June 2022.

political transformation. Jérôme argued the events of 1869-70 brought "our constitutional rights." He implicitly identified the late 1880s and 1890s events in a counterfactual proposition: "[after] we had negotiated and secured alleged guarantees of our rights by an act of the parliament of Canada, part of these rights have been thrown to the winds. What would it have been if we had no guarantee at all?"[32] He did not have a readymade answer. But the speakers at the MNU commemoration traced similar ideas. One speaker reportedly said the monument represented "how the Metis people affirmed with energy and courage their unshakable attachment to the principles of British liberty" and "history commenced to do justice to the handful of heroes who exposed their lives for the defence of civil liberties, for their own civil rights, and for the autonomy of the province."[33]

Jérôme made similar historical remarks in his toast to "Canada." He invoked ideas of British constitutionalism and mixed government. In his speech in 1906, he situated the 1869-70 events into colonial and imperial procedure from the 1840s to 1860s. In a sense, Jérôme historicized the Métis' claims to political and legal rights in Canada. His point of departure (and comparison) was French-Canadians. Jérôme noted "the remarkable facility the French Canadians have adapted themselves through all the reforms which they have passed—the constitution of 1775, that of 1791, that of 1841 and finally the present regime of Confederation." He stressed that the actions of the Métis could not be decoupled from the actions of the Dominion. According to Jérôme, Canada failed to consult them and recognize their Red and Assiniboine river lots after purchasing the HBC's legal claim to Rupert's Land and attempting to establish possession by a survey and political governance. Although he suggested the Métis recognized

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[32] Ibid.

[33] "Metis People Erect Monument," *Manitoba Free Press,* 25 October 1906, found at https://newspaperarchive.com/winnipeg-free-press-oct-25-1906-p-9/, accessed 9 July 2022.

"they had not the right to take up arms without the permission of the gracious Queen for whom they professed the utmost devotion," Jérôme provided a constitutional rationale for the provisional governments. He stated:

> But at the same time they knew that England conceded to all its colonies the right of self government and we were one of those colonies. Let me illustrate the feeling by a namely comparison. The Metis knew that the eldest daughter in a family has not the right, because she is the strongest, to lord it over her younger sisters, to possess herself of their belongings. In the same way, although Ontario and Québec, the Canada properly speaking, was our elder, it was no reason why she should take possession of the country without our consent. Yet it was taking the means to do so. The long distance from England, the slow means of communication, made an appeal for protection of the crown difficult, and placed us in a critical position. However, the enemy was at our doors, there was no time to lose and under the circumstances we believed ourselves justified to oppose even by main force the invasion of a settlement in which we had up to then been the sole rulers. We did not wish to become a part of the Dominion until our primordial rights were recognized.[34]

For Jérôme, setting Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to the margins, the Métis blockade of a Canadian-appointed lieutenant governor upended territorial governance. It influenced the new division of powers in federalism. Their motivations and actions thus echoed mid-nineteenth-century British North America. The Métis developed an elected provincial legislature and sought a 'responsible' executive, ensuring repressive laws could be limited by rights and property would ground political participation. Confederation, as Jérôme implied, was made up of more than two nations.

Jérôme's late nineteenth-century experiences shaped his historical ideas. In the 1850s and 1860s, Métis political life, according to Adam Gaudry, still drew from the bison hunt and "the people who owned themselves" selectively engaged the HBC government, notably the court and unelected council, at the Red River Colony. The Métis and HBC officers might not have shared

[34] "Martin Jerome on the Metis," *Manitoba Free Press,* March 23, 1907, found at https://newspaperarchive.com/winnipeg-free-press-mar-23-1907-p-7/, accessed 7 April 2020.

these ideas. The HBC managerial class had their corporate routines and looked favourably to the British Empire and its oversight of Rupert's Land.[35]

The company officers and their families had distinct historical experiences and identities. Krista Barclay argues the company and fur trade led them to identify as "Hudson's Bay folk." The company officers positioned the identity into the British imperial community.[36] Métis adults positioned themselves similarly to HBC officers to meet objectives in an overall strategy in particular situations. However, they also expressed different identities and challenges when social context was demanded in their highly seasonal, mobile, and multi-lingual economic organization.

In his speech, Jérôme was silent on the fluidity of his youth. However, his choices as a young adult set the foundation for his later political concepts. He attended the College of St. Boniface. He had worked in the federal administrative bureaucracy and served in elected municipal and provincial offices for Manitoba. In doing so, his concept of the Métis nation became more closely aligned with the liberal ideas of the British Empire and the Canadian state. The Métis, according to Jérôme, were neither violent rebels nor arbitrary actors. He made legal-rational processes and gradual reform of mixed government in British colonies central to his interpretation of the events of 1869 and 1870. Jérôme, notably, did not sour on whether electoral politics and Canadian federalism could realize the interests of the Métis nation, even as his experience of legislative power and legal rights might have given him sound reason to do so. His speech started from the premise that Canada was a democracy. He stressed that the Métis had

[35] Adam Gaudry, *Kaa-tipeyimishoyaahk – "We are those who own ourselves": A Political History of Métis Self-determination in the North-West, 1830-1870* (PhD Dissertation: University of Victoria, 2014).

[36] Krista Barclay, *"Far asunder there are those to whom my name is music": Nineteenth-Century Hudson's Bay Company Families in the British Imperial World* (PhD Dissertation: University of Manitoba, 2019).

been united when confronted by numerical superiority, and their collective had privileged national interests instead of partisanship to realize their goals.

In the spring of 1908, a Métis writer distributed a textual tract about "La Cause Métisse-Canadienne-Francaise." The *Manitoba Free Press* labelled this tract the "Manifesto of the Metis."[37] The writer was part of the same generation as Jérôme. He shared some familial and social characteristics. In 1901, the writer was a married middle-aged man and household head. He was a smallholder and teacher with a nuclear family and five school-attending children. The author saw Jérôme as a defender of the "national cause" and Métis aims were "tout different que celui de toutes les autres nations de ce pays." He saw "national cause" regularly represented by Jérôme's political speeches and publications. Jérôme, in doing so, supported the French language in Manitoba schools and critiqued the cultural representation of the Métis. As such, the author surmised that Jérôme succeeded the leadership of Louis Riel: "Nous l'avons vu lui aussi de nos jours, lutter contre les grands et les autorités actuels, pour nous défender et faire valoir nos droits, comme Riel le faisait autrefois."[38]

Other Métis followed Jérôme into provincial politics. Joseph Hamelin was part of the same generation as the school inspector Roger Goulet. Goulet went through the Manitoba school system and witnessed the development of the MNU, eventually, at the turn of the century, receiving an appointment to inspect bilingual schools. Hamelin seized different opportunities. Born in 1873 near the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, Hamelin's parents relocated their household to an area near Lake Dauphin in the early 1880s. By 1901, his parents, Firmin

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[37] "Manifesto of the Metis," *Manitoba Free Press*, 29 April 1908, found at https://newspaperarchive.com/winnipeg-tribune-apr-29-1908-p-1/, accessed 15 June 2022.

[38] La Cause, 15 March 1908, Charles Sauve, item 001/26/820, fonds 001, Collection générale de la Société historique de Saint-Boniface, Centre du patrimoinie, Société historique de Saint-Boniface, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, found at https://archivesshsb.mb.ca/list?q=charles+sauve&p=1&ps=20, access 15 June 2022.

Hamelin and Clémance Breland, worked a farm and maintained a sizeable eight-room wood house for two unmarried young sons and one daughter and an unmarried adult Métis male employee. Joseph could have attended the available denominational schools in the 1880s and had formed an independent household close to his parents sometime in the 1890s. In 1901, he owned and operated a hardware store. Hamelin ran for several political offices. He regularly won elected offices in the Municipality of Ste. Rose du Lac in the 1900s and went on to represent the area in the Manitoba assembly from 1914 to 1927.[39]

Another elected legislator was Pierre Dumas. Born in 1875 along the Pembina River east of Turtle Mountain and south of the international border, Dumas' parents had relocated their household from the Red and Assiniboine Rivers before Dumas' birth. Given the timing of their move, they might have attempted to maintain socioeconomic seasonality and mobility, which had been increasingly under threat over the past decade. Dumas left his parents household in the 1890s and resided in the Town of St. Boniface in 1901. Like Hamelin, Dumas departed from the regular farm work his parents had taken up. Against the backdrop of urbanization, he pursued contracts in the construction trade and employed workers for his building outfit. In the late 1900s, he was briefly the leader of the MNU. Dumas represented the Town of St. Boniface in the Assembly from 1915 to 1917.[40]

However, Manitoba lawmakers reformed the language and public schools that Hamelin and Dumas sought to maintain. The politics of wartime influenced centralization. In the 1870s and early 1880s, Manitoba experienced rapid settlement based partly on the migration of

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[39] Gordon Goldsborough, "Joseph Hamelin (1873-1947)," November 26, 2019, found at https://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/hamelin_j.shtml, accessed on 4 April 2024.

[40] Gordon Goldsborough, "Pierre Dumas (1875-1950)," in *Memorable Manitobans,* last modified June 10, 2018, found at https://mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/dumas_jp.shtml, accessed on 4 April 2024.

English-speaking Protestant populations of Ontario and the Maritimes. By 1901, roughly two-thirds of the population across the Prairies could point to the Dominion as their place of birth. From the late 1890s to 1911, this percentage declined to one-half. Although Britain remained an essential source of settlers, the points of departure now increasingly included Eastern Europe.[41] The patterns of mass settlement not only influenced farm development and urban labour markets but also the linguistic composition of the provincial schools.[42] From the late 1890s to the early 1910s, a small proportion of Manitoba's local school boards hired bilingual teachers. Their oral and written instruction thus unfolded in two different languages, one of which was usually English. In 1915, roughly 1200 public schools operated solely in English and 276 public schools included lessons in Ukrainian, German, or French, which tended to cluster in the southeast, Interlake region, and west of Lake Manitoba.[43] Manitoba lawmakers directed more significant attention to them during the total war.

In 1914, the federal government introduced the *War Measures Act.* The law suspended civil liberties and legal rights for an 'emergency' and enabled the Dominion government to wield coercive power, resulting in media censorship, economic management, and mass incarceration. In particular, Canada sought control of 'enemy aliens.' Some recent settlers from Central and

[41] For the different economic and cultural rationales for British migration to Canada and the United States in the late-nineteenth century, see, Alan G. Green, Mary MacKinnon, and Chris Minns, "Dominion or Republic? Migrants to North America from the United Kingdom, 1870–1910," in *The Economic History Review* 55, no. 4 (November 2002): 666–96. For the role of Winnipeg as a node of movement into different areas in western Canada, see A. Ross McCormack, "Networks among British Immigrants and Accommodation to Canadian Society: Winnipeg, 1900-1914," in *Histoire Social/Social History* vol. 27 no. 34 (November 1984): 357-74.

[42] For a case studies, albeit showing different angles of and groups within the sociopolitical and economic process mentioned in the previous sentence, see Royden Loewen, *Family, Church, and Market: A Mennonite Community in the Old and the New Worlds, 1850–1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993); and Frances Swyripa, *Wedded to the Cause: Ukrainian-Canadian Women and Ethnic Identity, 1891-1991* (University of Toronto Press, 1993).

[43] John Lehr and Brian McGregor, "The Geography of Bilingual Schools in Manitoba," in *Manitoba History*, found at https://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/61/bilingualschools.shtml, accessed 15 January 2023.

Eastern Europe were interned because they were the subjects of empires now at war with Britain and perceived as a threat to Canada. Propagandists, though, arbitrarily questioned the loyalty of all populations of a similar origin, even if they had become British subjects. In Manitoba, newspapers and politicians raised suspicions about bilingual teachers. Ukrainian-speaking school instructors became a perceived menace to sociopolitical cohesion and supposedly taught their pupils anti-British ideas.[44] The Department of Education filed a statistical report to the provincial legislature to contend that few bilingual teachers actually used English in the classroom and that few pupils understood the language.[45] In 1916, the provincial government passed the *Thornton Act.* Lawmakers made the public school system secular and required teachers to use English as the language of instruction. Their legislation also ended voluntary school participation and compelled 5-16-year-olds to attend.

Hamelin and Dumas must have known the implication of public school reform: the legislation meant bilingual teachers could no longer use French in classrooms. Métis children and youth would then learn to read and write only in English.[46] Hamelin and Dumas expressed their discontent as part of the MNU. An MNU resolution in 1916 affirmed the Métis national commitment to the Province within Confederation and referenced the *British North America Act* and the *Manitoba Act*.[47] The interests, according to the resolution, were French in political life

[44] John Herd Thompson and Frances Swyripa, *Loyalties in Conflict: Ukrainians in Canada During the Great War* (Edmonton: CIUS Press, 1983) 50-51.

[45] For the full report, see "Startling Lack of English Shown By Enquiry into Bilingual Schools," Manitoba Free Press, 21 January 1916.

[46] "Debate on Bilingual Question Resumed," in Manitoba Free Press, 26 February 1916.

[47] Page 59-60 in Procès-verbaux, 1909-1923, Dossier, item 0285/1332/015, fonds 0285, Union nationale métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba, Centre du patrimoinie, Société historique de Saint-Boniface, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, found at https://archivesshsb.mb.ca/media/0285/0285-1332-016-B.pdf, accessed 18 August 2022.

and public schools. The rights of 'minorities' and principles of equality, according to the MNU, protected them further.[48]

Hamelin and Dumas had little support in the legislature because, significantly, they did not have demographics on their side. Québec experienced rural depopulation, but Manitoba was less desirable than other destinations. French-speaking Canadian peasants sought urban waged labour in Montréal, the Canadian industrial metropolis if they could not meet the cost of a new farm. Others went to New England mill towns for the same reason. Both places could be reached by the railways at minimal expense. Neither had the capital requirements and environmental unknowns of western agriculture. As a result, by 1931, francophones made up only 8 percent of the 463,550 Canadian-born population in Manitoba. Most early twentieth-century Manitoba lawmakers then had few francophone residents in their constituencies. Hamelin and Dumas represented some areas where francophones lived, but the two politicians could not undermine the legislature's abolition of bilingual teaching.

Guillaume Charette might have brought their concerns to the federal government, but wartime politics undermined his run for elected office in 1917. Born in 1884 and raised on a rural farm southeast of Winnipeg, Charette was younger than Goulet, Hamelin, and Dumas. He was part of the MNU's target audience. Charette became a lawyer in the 1900s. However, he volunteered for the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) when Canada entered the First World War. He served as an officer and, after an injury, returned to Manitoba. Charette then earned the Liberal Party's nomination for a contested Manitoba seat in the House of Commons.[49] The federal Liberals had argued for the rights of 'minorities' against majoritarian rule during the

[48] Ibid.

[49] "Sergt. Charette Chosen Candidate," Manitoba Free Press, 19 October 1917, found at https://newspaperarchive.com/winnipeg-free-press-oct-19-1917-p-3/, accessed on 4 April 2024.

1890s schools question. Their victory in the 1896 election led to the Dominion-Manitoba compromise on language and religion in public education. However, the Liberals lost power in 1911, and Manitoba's public school reform failed to raise the same level of public debate as before. The Conservatives and anglophone Liberals had formed a wartime coalition government, and their central political issue in the 1917 federal election was conscription.[50] The *Military Service Act* sought to raise the CEF numbers, and francophone populations were a particular concern because ruling policymakers and allied propagandists thought French Canadians had not sufficiently volunteered for the war effort if compared to English-speaking populations. The 'rump' Liberals opposed compelled military service, but Charette could not raise their influence in Parliament. The Conservative coalition used conscription as a national wedge to dominate the 1917 election, and the political division reduced the Liberals to a base in Québec.

French-Canadian elites also opposed the conscription issue, and their dissent continued to narrow French-Canadian nationalism to Québec. Their outlook on the 'two peoples' had been forming for a while. French-Canadians had taken up western expansion to a minimal extent. Recent provincial politics lessened the lustre of the Métis victories and struggle for French and Catholicism in western Canada. Conservative and upper-middle-class francophone Québeckers and Catholic religious authorities, Gérard Bouchard points out, saw a nation under political oppression and now threatened by industrialization and urbanization.[51] Confederation, according to their ideas, ensured national subordination. Federalism merely reproduced the British colonial

[50] Patrice Dutil and David MacKenzie, *Embattled Nation: Canada's Wartime Election of 1917* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2017).

[51] Gérard Bouchard, "The Small Nation with a Big Dream: Québec National Myths (Eighteenth-Twentieth Centuries)," in *National Myths: Constructed Pasts, Contested Presents*, ed. Gérard Bouchard (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2013) 7-13.

rule of Canada East and Lower Canada.[52] The *Military Service Act* added another historical example. These issues reinforced Québec elites' growing view of collective victimization. But Québec, at the very least, had a large francophone population. Notably, the provincial government and legal system still operated in French and even maintained French civil law. The conservative upper middle class took themselves to be guardians of those national institutions and interests. Catholic authorities ensured education and services reinforced French-Canadian social cohesion. This nationalist vision dialled into the notion of cultural survival.[53] The nation became increasingly linked to language, religion, and family farms in rural Québec, taking on an almost timeless quality. According to some of the ideas, New France had beget the nation. A naturalizing discourse cast French-Canadians as insular and homogenous since French settlers arrived centuries earlier.

In the 1910s, the MNU advocated for the importance of the French language because a new generation had become more involved in associational life and reformed its constitution. The ledgers provide several clues because the records included the names and residences of these reformers. Thirteen of 20 reformers can be located in the 1901 federal census. Reformers were men. Most were property-owners and kept rural farm households. Some were contemporaries of Jérôme. But most were not. Reformers were middle-aged, with an average age of 45 years old. Like Roger Goulet and Guillaume Charette, their childhood and youth coincided with the late nineteenth century. All reformers, notably, were literate. Their new MNU constitution made the freedom and independence of youth a primary objective and emphasized the importance of classical, commercial, and professional education to do so.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

However, the framers narrowed the membership criteria. The MNU continued to use the term "Métis Canadien-français" and used age, religion, and family background to determine admission. Unlike the MNU founders, their criteria required members to speak French. The founders were not as explicit, even if they used French in operations. In a sense, under the cultural umbrella of French, the members directed the association to encourage the schooling of Métis youth so that they might choose an economic future and even become socially mobile.

Jérôme disputed the membership criteria. He said the requirements would be exclusionary for a "un grand nombre de Métis." His reason was not necessarily the reformers' failure to potentially admit English-speakers. Instead, Jérôme suggested the new membership criteria excluded Métis who learned and spoke a different language. He termed it "la langue sauvage."[54] The implication is that the social activities of the previous four decades failed to produce language shift and unilingualism for some middle-aged and young Métis individuals. Some thus learned and used Michif, Cree, and Anishinaabemowin more so than French. Jérôme must have had some knowledge of Métis linguistic diversity to know this. He argued that knowledge and routine use of French reflected social privilege. Jérôme implicitly communicated that "advantages" available to the MNU governing members were not shared among the Métis, who now faced exclusion from the association.[55] These MNU reformers effectively narrowed who could steer the national institution to a subset of the population. They turned French into an

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[54] Jérôme used kinship as a metaphor quite frequently and in different contexts, as his earlier description of Métis and British colonial history illustrates. Because the topic is membership criteria, Jérôme was referring to Métis who were 18-years-old or more in 1910. That middle-aged adults and elderly Métis displayed a high degree of endogamy suggests that Jérôme might not have been literal with his use of the term "mother." *Souvenirs d'Autrefois par Martin Jérôme,* 33-35, University of Calgary Digital Collections, found at https://digitalcollections.ucalgary.ca/CS.aspx?VP3=DamView&VBID=2R3BXZAJ6699M&PN=63&DocRID=2R3BF1ON924DW&FR_=1&W=1440&H=766, accessed 18 June 2020.

[55] Ibid.

essential characteristic of their national identity, including more formal relationships with the SSJB in Manitoba.

Over the late 1910s and 1920s, however, the Dominion's triumph in the Great War reforged Canadian nationalism. Rather than the costs of mass violence and suspension of civil liberties, literature, art, and monuments minimized human devastation on the frontlines and sociopolitical turbulence on the homefront. Like elsewhere in Canada, memorialists displayed armaments in urban areas to celebrate veterans and their patriotic cause.[56] Some cultural workers had a simple observation: Britain won the war, and Canada was British. But their point had a certain subtext, sometimes merely the text. As such, the industrial national-state and imperial community's economic power and administrative capacities won the Great War. The victory was a win for liberal democracy against militaristic despotism. The 1926 Balfour Declaration and the 1931 Statute of Westminster reinforced this idea.

However, critics and their radical ideas also developed after the war.[57] Based upon the economic aftermath, the Great War continued volatile business cycles and global instability. The capitalist relations of factory production and agricultural markets led trade unionists and farmers to form progressive political movements in the late 1910s and 1920s. Their concerns gained further credence during the Great Depression. Progressive electoral politics and social scientific research argued for a family wage, agricultural exchanges and transportation, and banks to be brought under more significant central state management.[58] But their ideas still left much

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[56] Jonathan F. Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011) 145.

[57] For a specific look at the opposition to "martial nationalism," see Ian McKay and Jamie Swift, *The Vimy Trap: Or, How We Learned To Stop Worrying and Love the Great War* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2017).

[58] Micheal Horn, *The League for Social Reconstruction: Intellectual Origins of the Democratic Left in Canada, 1930-1942* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980) and Ian McKay, *Reasoning Otherwise: Leftists and the People's Enlightenment in Canada, 1890-1920* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2008).

unquestioned. Adele Perry suggests, for one example, that the ideas of whiteness narrowed English-speaking working-class understanding of social structure and economic inequality in the month-long general strike in Winnipeg in the late spring of 1919. Their social questions failed to consider the Métis and Plains Ojibwe in a program for economic change, thereby obscuring a half-century of land expropriation.[59]

The MNU, however, focused on commemoration after the Great War. In 1920, governing members organized an event celebrating Manitoba's entry into Confederation. The provincial government opened a new legislative building to mark the occasion. The HBC, a major department store, planned events to celebrate the date and the company's founding in 1670.[60] The MNU event included speeches, while guest speakers provided insights into the early 1870s.[61] Charette had become more involved in the MNU by this point. He told an English-speaking reporter that the historical studies were revisionist and "showed the Metis nation to great advantage and [were] likely to change…many erroneous notions entertained by people who did not study the Manitoba history of the last 50 years at first hand."[62] Subsequently, the MNU commissioned a plaque for their monument south of Winnipeg to interpret its historical meaning for potential onlookers. After an internal debate over the textual inscription, their 1923 plaque read:

[59] Adele Perry, "In the Water: Race, Empire, and the Winnipeg General Strike," in *For a Better World: The Winnipeg General Strike and the Workers' Revolt,* eds.James Naylor et al. (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2022) 39-60.

[60] For department stores and mass consumerism, see Donica Belisle, *Retail Nation: Department Stores and the Making of Modern Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011).

[61] Page 86-90, Procès-verbaux, 1909-1923, Dossier, item 0285/1332/015, fonds 0285, Union nationale métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba, Centre du patrimoinie, Société historique de Saint-Boniface, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, found at https://archivesshsb.mb.ca/media/0285/0285-1332-016-C.pdf, accessed 18 April 2020.

[62] "Union Metisse Recall History of Early Days," in *Manitoba Free Press*, 13 July 1920, found at https://newspaperarchive.com/ca/mb/winnipeg/winnipeg-free-press/1920/jul-13-p-14/, accessed 18 April 2020.

> Ici, le 1er novembre 1869, grâce à l'intervention opportune et énergique des Métis, during rebrousser [chemin] les représentants envoyés par le Gouvernment canadien pour prendre possession de la Province avant qui le transfer ne [fiet] effectué. Ce [fiet] cet acte qui assura à l'Ouest ses libertés.[63]

Their interpreters would have been aware of Métis servicemen in the CEF. The plaque saw physical defence and the use of force in 1869 tied to specific outcomes commonly cited in post-Great War nationalism. In 1930, the MNU made historical research an objective of the association. Their petition to the provincial government to garner legal status as a charitable association identified two interconnected interests: "[to] gather up material and historical documents and to write a complete History of the Métis people and of Western Canada."[64]

In 1930, these charity petitioners differed from earlier MNU constitutional reformers. Goulet and Charette were among them, and the two fixed their names to the application. Nine other members did the same: six farmers, a gardener, a labourer, and an estates officer, all living south and southeast of the city. Most petitioners, though not all, were middle-aged, between 40-44 years old and 60-64 years old. Their petition outlined the objectives of the association and thus expressed an awareness of economic deprivation. Signatories stated that a purpose was "[mutual] protection by means of contributions, subscriptions, donations or otherwise against all causalities caused by disease, inevitable accident or death, with the view of helping the afflicted or the widows, orphans, relations or dependents of deceased members."[65] Some petitioners, like many Métis in the same generation, experienced the death of parents, aunts, and uncles. In 1922,

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[63] Page 112-113, Procès-verbaux, 1909-1923, Dossier, item 0285/1332/015, fonds 0285, Union nationale métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba, Centre du patrimoinie, Société historique de Saint-Boniface, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, found at https://archivesshsb.mb.ca/media/0285/0285-1332-016-D.pdf, accessed 18 May 2020.

[64] Petition for Incorporation of L'union nationale metisse St. Joseph du Manitoba, April 1930, Dossier, item 0449, fonds 0449, Union nationale métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba, Centre du patrimoinie, Société historique de Saint-Boniface, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, found at https://archivesshsb.mb.ca/media/0449/PDF/0449-1351-170-A.pdf, accessed 15 June 2020.

[65] Ibid.

for example, Charette lost his father, 69-year-old William. A farmer south of Winnipeg at the time of death died intestate, and administration revealed a diverse property inventory. He owned household goods and furniture valued at $500.00. He had shares in the Carey Elevator Company valued at $100.00. He kept farm implements valued at $3,500.00. He had $16,290.00 secured by mortgages and owed to him. But Charette was also landed: he owned seven properties, totalling nearly 1150 acres valued at $23,336.00.[66] In the Surrogate Court, his sons, including Guillaume, renounced their interest because they recalled that William Charette desired his property go to 62-year-old Sarah, his widow and their mother. She must have drawn on the estate for support into widowhood and old age. In 1929, when she passed away, her estate was a combination of mortgage investments, bank shares, securities, cash, and real estate valued at $12,576.12. The Charettes were unusually wealthy. Applicants for charitable status in Manitoba pointed to $300.00 held by the MNU for use in economic aid.

However, up to that point, their efforts centred on historical research and written publications more than mutual aid benefits. In the late 1900s, the MNU developed an Historical Committee. The committee collected surviving documents from the late 1860s and 1870s, particularly Louis Riel's writings. Governing members eventually hired a journalist, August-Henri de Trémaudan, to write texts based on their archival collection and his independent research into available documents. Governing members knew Trémaudan from his activities in the 1910s. He had been a vocal advocate for the French-language. Born in Québec in the early 1870s to parents who immigrated to Canada from France, Trémaudan moved around and into and out of liberal professions multiple times. He stayed in St. Boniface and became an editor and newspaper publisher. Trémaudan used his platform to oppose public education reforms in

[66] William Charette, no. 1551, 1922, Surrogate Court of the St. Boniface Judicial District, Provincial Archives of Manitoba.

1916.[67] He brought these themes into a historical lecture for the MNU, seeing the origins of the language and school question in the mid-nineteenth-century conflicts between liberal Métis and an autocratic HBC. The MNU must have liked what they heard. Trémaudan lectured at the commemoration of 1870 in 1920.

The Historical Committee aimed for their publications to reach a middle-class Canadian audience that is French- and English-speaking. The Historical Committee compiled the text of Trémaudan's talk and another into a pamphlet, *Riel et la naissance du Manitoba*. According to the English-language reporter, Charette claimed that previous studies of Métis history lacked "such reliable sources."[68] Their frame device was an idealized portrait of Métis life before Canadian expansion and the "relative freedom" experienced by the Métis since 1870. The Historical Committee stated:

> Pourtant, nous ne pouvions célébrer sans déchoir dans notre amour de la tradition nationale et religieuse. L'érection de la Rivière Rouge et de L'Ouest en province et partie integrante du Canada, étant la fin du régime de liberté absolue dont nous avions joui jusque là, nous n'avions pas à nous féliciter de cet évènement, surtout en songeant aux outrages qu'ont subis depuis 50 ans la parole donnée en 1870 et la langue française. D'un autre côté notre loyauté nous défendait de rester indifférent devant l'enthousiasme général, c'est pourquoi, nous nous sommes contentés de commémorer seulement.[69]

Their historical committee, archival selection, and textual publications joined what Donald Wright shows to be a precursor to the professionalization of history in Canadian universities. Trémaudan bridged the MNU and English scholarly publishing, peer review, professorships, and

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[67] "Auguste-Henri de Trémaudan," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, found at http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/tremaudan_auguste_henri_de_15F.html, accessed 15 June 2022.

[68] "Union Metisse Recall History of Early Days," in *Manitoba Free Press*, 13 July 1920, found at https://newspaperarchive.com/ca/mb/winnipeg/winnipeg-free-press/1920/jul-13-p-14/, accessed 18 April 2020.

[69] *Riel et La Naissance du Manitoba* (Winnipeg: L'union nationale metissé Saint-Joseph du Manitoba, 1921) 5, found at http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/bibliography/610/5.html, accessed 4 July 2021.

departments that necessitated professionalization in the 1920s and 1930s.[70] The *Canadian Historical Review* (*CHR*) was part of the process. University of Toronto professors edited and published this historical journal. Its audience was based at universities in Ontario and Québec. In articles, reviews, and research comments, writers untangled whether social sciences or arts were the foundation for historical analysis and the integrity of written records for doing so. But their output, as Marlene Shore argues, pointedly challenged hegemonic myths, expressed divergent opinions on the nation, and approached factors—like constitutionalism, political economy, geography, and locality—as prime historical movers.[71] Trémaudan published multiple articles in the *CHR* in the 1920s. One was an English version of his 1920 MNU lecture.[72] Trémaudan drew on written sources to centre the Métis in the conflict between the Fenian Brotherhood and Canada in the late 1860s and early 1870s. The Fenian Brotherhood was made up of Irish Republicans in the United States. Their members had attacked British North American sites in the hope of liberating Ireland from British colonial rule. The Fenian Raids influenced Confederation because the constitutional framers thought the armed incursions revealed inadequate measures for collective defence. Rather than violent and disloyal, during the postwar collapse of multiple empires, Trémauden argued the Métis defended Manitoba from Fenian attacks and thus reinforced Canadian territorial borders.

The MNU returned to the political and legal history of the provisional governments. Charette penned an English-language pamphlet on the events of 1869 and 1870 to commemorate

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[70] Donald A. Wright, *The Professionalization of History in English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

[71] Marlene Shore, "'Remember the Future': The Canadian Historical Review and the Discipline of History, 1920–95," in *Canadian Historical Review* 76, no. 3 (1995): 411-423.

[72] A.H. de Trémaudan, "Louis Riel and the Fenian Raid of 1871," in *Canadian Historical Review* vol. 4 no. 1 (1923) 132-144.

sixty years of Manitoba. He drew on Riel's documents and first-hand observers' oral accounts to write the "Metis version." Max Hamon shows the written archive of Louis Riel to be multi-dimensional, contingent upon his age, and generated across North America. According to Hamon, Riel demonstrated the mobilities afforded to the middle class in the mid-to-late nineteenth-century British Empire and, at times, open to the possibility of Métis life in the American Republic.[73] Charette, like Jérôme, narrowed to the Red River Colony, prioritizing proceduralism to emphasize the provisional governments' deliberative and representative processes. However, rather than the rights of British colonies to self-government, Charette emphasized how the 1869 HBC Deed of Surrender and the end of the Royal Charter of the Company created a jurisdictional vacuum in Rupert's Land. Charette drew on the work of a French-speaking jurist in Manitoba to report that "[those] representatives formed a government of necessity to meet the situation."[74] The provisional governments, for Charette, combatted the rise of Canadian annexationists in the Red River Colony during the 1860s and halted the top-down political transformation at the hands of Canada. For Charette, English and Protestant settlers from Canada West brought tensions to a place where hostilities of "racial, religious, and language difference" were unknown since "the colony seems to have been more of a brotherhood than a multi-ethnical settlement." [75] He reported that "[the] Scotch were thrifty and arduous tillers of the soil while the Metis were hunters and plainsmen, though fervently attached to their hearths along the streams where they had bought a strip of land measured out after the French

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[73] M. Max Hamon, *The Audacity of His Enterprise: Louis Riel and the Métis Nation That Canada Never Was, 1840-1875* (Montréal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020).

[74] Guillaume Charette, *Manitoba jubilee: Account of events which brought the formation of the province: Short Sketch* ([Winnipeg?]: Métis Historical Society, 1930) 9.

[75] Ibid 2.

custom of old Quebec."[76] Their use of French, English, or Gaelic in the household, as Charette saw, differentiated the two groups of "Half Breeds." They lived "peacefully and happily under the paternal government of the Company through the Council of Assiniboia." But the Métis quickly seized appointments to the unelected council in the 1850s.[77] He concluded that the Dominion and Imperial Government recognized the provisional government's political legitimacy. Individuals of a society, according to Charette, had the right to establish a government when a ruling authority ceased operations and the protection of "life and property" was necessary.[78] In addition, Charette pointed out the Métis were British subjects. In the late 1930s, the MNU added an English inscription to the monument and elaborated on some of Charette's ideas. Memorialists, according to MNU ledgers, cycled through several possible meanings, including "liberties and property rights" for the "western settlers" and "representative government" in western Canada.[79]

However, Canadian historians have become more oriented toward economic analysis. In the 1920s, American philanthropists created financial support for socially and politically important studies. Scholars had spurned training at central Canadian institutions, turning to their American counterparts. Some academics earned funding to probe Canadian settlement patterns. Their ambit, besides influencing policymakers, was grander. The theoretical premise was that a series of commodities—like furs, fish, timber, and wheat—could historically explain the political

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[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid 1.

[78] Ibid 6 and 10.

[79] Monument La Barrière, Union nationale métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba, Centre du patrimoinie, Société historique de Saint-Boniface, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, found at https://archivesshsb.mb.ca/viewer?file=%2Fmedia%2F0449%2FPDF%2F0449-1351-167-A.pdf#page=1&search=la%20barriere&phrase=false, accessed 15 June 2020.

economy of the Dominion.[80] In other words, 'staples' made Canada more than 'two peoples' could ever do. Their theoretical premise focused on developing resource endowments, export dominance, transportation linkages, regional divisions, and centralized authority. In the early 1930s, the Frontiers of Settlement series published several case studies based on quantitative research, with farms and wheat production in western Canada being among the most important among them.

George Stanley studied this process differently and turned his attention to the political events of 1869 and 1870 differently. Stanley was born in Calgary in 1907 and served in cadets during childhood and youth. He attended the University of Alberta in the late 1920s and earned a bachelor's degree in history before attending Oxford University as a recipient of a Rhodes scholarship. Instead, Stanley centred race in his historical study of Canadian settlement. Some English-speaking intellectual elites, as Daniel Meister observes, came to draw on scientific techniques and purported a "vertical, racial mosaic" in Canada. The 'white races' became synonymous with Europe and excluded the diminishing 'Indian races' in North America.[81] Stanley looked to the "birth of western Canada" in the political events of 1869-70 and 1885, publishing his doctoral research as a monograph in 1936. According to Stanley, rather than reading subsequent religious, linguistic, and national conflicts into historical events, the Métis needed to be understood as a "problem of the frontier." He thus drew on American historiography and defined the problem as the "clash between primitive and civilized peoples." According to Stanley, the clash could be seen in how "the penetration of white settlement into territories inhabited by native peoples [had] led to friction and wars" in North America, South

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[80] Wright, *The Professionalization of History in English-Canada*, 134-136.

[81] Daniel R. Meister, *The Racial Mosaic: A Pre-History of Canadian Multiculturalism* (Montréal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 2021) 51, 108, and 170.

Africa, and New Zealand. The 'rebellions' were the Canadian example. Stanley argued, "[by] character and upbringing the half-breeds, no less than the Indians, were unfitted to compete with the whites in the competitive individualism of white civilization, or to share with them the duties and responsibilities of citizenship."[82] To show the "clash of civilizations," he drew primarily on the written observations of HBC officials, Canadian policymakers, and religious missionaries in public archives. His key point was that the Métis migrated from Manitoba to the NWTs supposedly en masse in the 1870s and early 1880s. The Dominion and transcontinental railway, according to Stanley, ensured "white dominance" during the repression of the provisional government in 1885. He explained, "[henceforth] the history of the Canadian West was to be that of the white man, not that of the red man or the bois brulé."[83] Stanley narrowed a complex sociopolitical and cultural formation into a timeless monolith, whose actions could be taken as a 'rebellion' over which the liberal democratic state and the industrial national economy would conquer.

The MNU published their historical monograph the same year as Stanley's book. However, the two publications shared little in their actual content. Trémauden had been hired to write a book on Métis history more than a decade earlier, but he died after moving to Los Angeles, California. He left a lengthy manuscript, and MNU governing members edited it for publication.[84] In 1936, under Trémauden's authorship, the Historical Committee released

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[82] George F. G. Stanley, *The Birth of Western Canada: A History of the Riel Rebellions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) vii.

[83] Ibid viii.

[84] Gerhard Ens and Joe Sawchuck explore the distinctions between the original manuscript and final copy of this work. See, Gerhard J. Ens and Joe Sawchuk, *From New Peoples to New Nations: Aspects of Metis History and Identity from the Eighteenth to the Twenty-First Centuries* (Toronto ; Buffalo ; London: University of Toronto Press, 2015) 113-132.

Histoire de la Nation Métisse dans l'Ouest Canadien. This communicated a linear narrative of the Métis nation, starting in the beginnings of French colonization of the St. Lawrence River Valley in the early seventeenth century and ending in the events of 1869-70 and 1885. In a sense, Métis behaviour in 1869-70 and 1885 needed to be understood in terms of nation-building: an egalitarian social order, who shared a common ancestry and common language, emerged from the North American fur trade and became plains hunters and riverine horticulturalists before they wrestled the state capacities of a British settler colony in the Red River Valley from the HBC. In their characterization, the Métis eventually garnered an elected parliamentary system and rights to language and religion.

In doing so, the Historical Committee attempted to provide Métis parents a written text for Métis adolescents and young adults. Their text would not have been prioritized in the unilingual public school system, helping bridge the social divide between Métis youth and an aging generation. In the early 1930s, the MNU celebrated elderly Métis, who were men and women in their sixties and seventies, at their annual event at Louis Riel Park in St. Anne.[85] Their advertisement about the book emphasized its jargon-free prose and stated: "[nous] voulions pénétrer la jeune generation du vrai caractère des événements qui se sont déroulés dans notre pays, lui prouver que les personnages qui ont été traités de bandits et de criminels, sont en réalité ceux qui par leur héroïsme, leurs sacrifice et leur dévouement, ont fondé l'Ouest canadien."[86] The MNU book launch, according to an English-speaking reporter, took place at the former house of Louis Riel in St. Vital. Association members greeted several invited guests:

[85] "Many Old Timers Attend Picnic at Riel Park Sunday" in *Winnipeg Free Press,* 10 July 1933, found at https://newspaperarchive.com/winnipeg-free-press-jul-10-1933-p-4/, accessed 15 June 2022.

[86] August de Trémaudan, *Histoire de la nation métisse dans l'Ouest canadien* (Montréal : Editions Levesque, 1936) 20.

a provincial government minister, Roman Catholic clergyman, St. Boniface city councillor, a representative of the St. Boniface working-men's association, the provincial librarian, and assortment of liberal professionals and local civil servants.[87]

The historical monograph linked a more extended history to more recent struggles of the Métis nation in Manitoba. Their experiences were shaped by relations with and differences from the dominant social group of English-Canadians. This brought the sociopolitical and cultural formation of the Métis into the elections, legislative acts, and judicial cases of Manitoba in the late 1880s and 1890s. The MNU framework nonetheless identified a material base for social reproduction. Economies were contrasted to capitalist agriculture and specialized production:

> Les Métis ne se sentaient guère inclinés vers la grande culture. Aussi, à quelques rares exceptions près, vit-on peu d'entre eux suivre l'exemple des nouveaux arrivés qui, tentés par la facilité du défrichement de la fertilité extraordinaire de sol, se lançaient dans l'exploitation de vastes fermes. Ils aimèrent mieux continuer à s'occuper d'élevage ou de culture maraîchère aux abords des villes, fournissant aux citadins, le lait, le beurre, les œufs, la viande, les légumes, etc.
>
> La préférence que les Métis ont pour l'élevage leur fait rechercher les districts où le terrain est accidenté et parsemé de bouquets de bois et de petits étangs, là où les bêtes à cornes et les autres animaux domestiques peuvent trouver plus facilement leur subsistance. Asses de terrain arable pour les besoins généraux de l'exploitation agricole leur suffit. Il est aujourd'hui reconnu que cette culture mixte est de beaucoup la plus sûre et, depuis quelques années, un fort mouvement s'est fait dans tout l'Ouest canadien pour ramener toutes les exploitations, même les plus vastes, à ce systéme universellement reconnu comme le plus stable.[88]

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[87] "Publication of History of Metis celebrated by Small Group on River Bank" in *Winnipeg Free Press,* 6 June 1936, found at https://newspaperarchive.com/winnipeg-tribune-jun-06-1936-p-5/, accessed 15 June 2022.

[88] Translation: "The Métis felt little inclination towards large-scale farming. So, with a few rare exceptions, few of them followed the example of the new arrivals who, tempted by the ease of clearing the extraordinary fertility of the soil, set out to run vast farms. They preferred to continue raising livestock or growing vegetables on the outskirts of towns, supplying city dwellers with milk, butter, eggs, meat, vegetables and more.

The Métis's preference for livestock farming leads them to seek out districts where the terrain is hilly and dotted with clumps of woods and small ponds, where horned cattle and other domestic animals can more easily find sustenance. Arable land for general farming needs is enough for them. It is now recognized that this mixed farming system is by far the safest, and in recent years there has been a strong movement throughout Western Canada to return all farms, even the largest, to this system, universally recognized as the most stable." Found in de Trémaudan, *Histoire de la nation métisse dans l'Ouest canadien*, 385-386.

The "settlements" of Métis could be found across Manitoba and western Canada in every occupational group of the economy. However, according to the author, their cultural representation was minimal because of their broad similarity to other French-speaking populations.[89] The MNU, as the conclusion went, was crucial: "[lors] de ces reunions on constate que la nation métisse n'est pas morte, que ses racines sont, au contrairie tou-jours bien vivaces."[90]

The MNU had an audience for the book. The association kept subscriber lists. Their document recorded only residences and names. The purchasers cannot necessarily be identified as Métis. For example, institutions in urban Manitoba, like the post-secondary schools and hospitals in St. Boniface and the provincial library in Winnipeg, purchased copies. However, many subscribers lived in areas where Métis usually resided. This included the rural areas southeast and south of Winnipeg and near Lake Dauphin.[91] Subscribers also had common Métis surnames. Métis subscribers put their cash toward a 500-page historical monograph during the Great Depression. Subscribers must have been, at the very least, interested, if not receptive to the ideas and could have been exposed to them at MNU events. They might have shared similar experiences to MNU leaders and Historical Committee members, like growing up in Manitoba, learning to read in French, witnessing the economic security of their parents, and feeling intergenerational transfers through the administration and execution of estates. The book's conclusion even celebrated Métis men in their CEF service and the defence of "la patrie"

[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid 387.

[91] Publication "Histoire de la nation métisse," Dossier, item 0449/1345/029, fonds 0449, La Société historique métisse, Centre du patrimoinie, Société historique de Saint-Boniface, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, found at https://archivesshsb.mb.ca/viewer?file=%2Fmedia%2F0449%2FPDF%2F0449-1345-029-C.pdf#page=1, accessed 18 August 2022.

decades earlier.[92] Their purchase exposed them to a useable past. It situated the lived history of a previous generation into a centuries-long timescale and showed progressive transitions in economic and political life. Importantly, it centred the Métis in forming a multi-national and liberal democratic state.

Marcel Giraud visited northwest North America in the late-1930s and approached the history of the Métis from a different angle. Giraud was born in the south of France in 1900 and spent much of the 1920s and early 1930s at universities, earning history degrees before starting doctoral research in the late 1930s.[93] Several professional historians in France developed a historical theory and method in the journal Annales d'histoire économique et sociale and applied it to medieval and early modern French studies. The *Annales* historians, however, were less attuned to colonialism and empire. Their stance expounded historical relativism.[94] Rather than legitimate the present by reference to the past, their approach respected the distinction between the two.[95] This premise centred on a dynamic between thought and action. Scholars historicized how individuals made their lives, drawing attention to the temporally specific material and conceptual options available.[96] To do so, historians required collecting and critiquing surviving information.[97] Historians could then reconstruct periods based on its mass accumulation and assessment. Giraud studied when this method and theory became more coherent in French

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[92] Ibid 338.

[93] Vaughan B. Baker, "Marcel Giraud, 1900-1994: A Memorial and a Reminiscence," in *Louisiana History: the Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* vol. 35, no. 3 (1994) 355.

[94] Robert C. H. Sweeny, "Time and Human Agency: A Re-assessment of the Annales Legacy," in *Left History* vol. 1 no. 2 (1993) 63-83.

[95] Ibid 66-67.

[96] Ibid 71-72.

[97] Ibid 74.

historical research before changes in theoretical and methodological premises in the late 1940s and 1950s.

Even if he went to the archives, Giraud relied on novel theories of race to explain historical matters. He visited the rural areas immediately southeast and south of Winnipeg and St. Boniface, where some Métis families had lived, as well as those in urban areas and even some in central Saskatchewan and northern Alberta.[98] In 1935 and 1936, aware of the limited sample size and impressionistic character of his observational method, Giraud noted small farms, examined reports of relief payments to the urban unemployed, and summarized incarceration figures from Winnipeg. In his book, published in 1944, Giraud ostensibly explained Métis impoverishment. He called the process the "disintegration of the Métis group." He based the assessment upon perceived distinctions between the Métis of the Red River and the Métis of Saskatchewan, drawing the differences from the HBC and Roman Catholic archives. He surmised that the 1820s to the 1870s were crucial. As Giraud argued, the Métis became divided into discrete political-economic classes at that time. The elite failed to ameliorate the separation of groups between the Red River Colony and the western plains. But, despite the overture to socioeconomic change, Giraud pointed to an increasingly hegemonic conception of race to explain late nineteenth-century historical experiences.

His theoretical framework imported ideas of race sociology and 'problems' of 'race mixture' to reconceptualize the Métis. The ideas came from the social interpretation of natural science doctrine and became academically institutionalized in the United States, Canada, Britain, and Europe over the early twentieth century. Some social scientists then posited a hierarchical theory of difference, cast in biological terms and evolutionary concepts of historical

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[98] Marcel Giraud, "Foreword," in *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1985).

development. Writers constructed racial groups, like ‘Indians’ and ‘white people,’ to be natural entities. These groups were occupants in separate stages in human evolution, with ways of thought and living evident in discrete or siloed populations. For Giraud, rather than deal with the ideas of a nation and state formation, the Métis were merely a mixture of distinct races. According to him, their social and economic status in western Canada could be explained by how the group inherited mentalities and practices Giraud implicitly assigned to the monolithic and unchanging category of ‘Indians.’ He referenced what the Métis supposedly lacked in comparison to the category of ‘white’ or ‘Anglo-Saxon’: work discipline, respect for authority, individual ambition, educational achievement, and so on. Rather than historically contingent, he understood the Métis in the Great Depression reflected the timeless character of their beliefs and practices.[99]

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Conclusion: The Métis of Western Canada

In 1936, the MNU Historical Committee released their historical monograph. It was a long-term project and followed decades of events, commemorations, and pamphlets. The book put the imagined political community into a textual format, periodized linearly, and anchored to a delimited geographic space. Their effort was posed in opposition to the English-speaking Canadian myth-symbol of Métis ‘rebellion.’ MNU leaders saw the Métis as a nation, and some framed them as a distinct race, which descended from the marriages of ‘Indian women’ and ‘white men’ more than a century earlier. The MNU, importantly, saw the present in the past.

[99] Marcel Giraud, *Le Métis Canadien: Son role dans l’histoire des provinces de L’Ouest,* vol. 1 and 2 (St. Boniface: Les Editions du Ble, 1984) and Marcel Giraud, *The Métis in the Canadian West,* vol. 1 and 2, translated by George Woodcock (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1986). See Giraud, *The Métis in the Canadian West*, vol. 2, 469-524. For a more in-depth analysis of race in Giraud’s work, see Frank Tough, “Race, Personality, and History: A Review of Marcel Giraud’s The Metis in the Canadian West,” in *Native Studies Review* 5, no. 2 (1989): 55-93.

Governing members grew up in the specific social context of the 1870s to the 1890s when Métis nationalism in Manitoba and the politics of schools and language became enmeshed.

The Métis nationalist elite experienced modest wealth and professional independence during growing economic inequality. None witnessed the 1820s to 1860s directly, but most dealt with a dominant social group of English-Canadians. This generational shift in the nationalist elite came to learn and understand the events of 1869, 1870, and 1885 from the collection of written records saved by Louis Riel and what older Métis transmitted to them orally. Their experiences left much out of their increasingly written historical narrative: the seasonality and mobility of labour and production, the crucial roles of women and youth, the prevalence of linguistic heterogeneity, and the unequal accumulation of wealth. The historical vision thus fashioned national identity in light of their personal experiences: the Métis had always been loyal to the British Crown, controlled a nascent state apparatus and economic structure in a British colony of settlement in the region, used French throughout social and political life before Canada, brought important rights and liberties, and eventually defended the Canadian border from republican agitators. In doing so, the MNU partly obscured how recent social inequalities of class and gender developed over time. In contrast, the Métis elite expressed a liberal concept of national history. Their viewpoint held the modern Canadian state and industrial capitalist economy to be important institutions for collective interests and identity. In a 1930 petition, the applicants stated that an MNU objective was "to advance the colonization and settlement of the Province, by assisting and directing immigrants to locate lots for settlement."[100]

[100] Petition for Incorporation of L'union nationale metisse St. Joseph du Manitoba, April 1930, Dossier, item 0449, fonds 0449, Union nationale métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba, Centre du patrimoinie, Société historique de Saint-Boniface, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, found at https://archivesshsb.mb.ca/media/0449/PDF/0449-1351-170-A.pdf, accessed 15 June 2020.

In the 1930s, the MNU attempted to bridge the social and geographic divide between Manitoba and elsewhere. Their association had minimal connections to the Métis in Saskatchewan, even though the origins of the MNU were in Batoche in 1885 and transplanted to Manitoba in 1887. The Métis in Saskatchewan had developed a national union. An interprovincial association followed suit. In 1931, the President of the MNU in Manitoba reported on their activities: "resserrement des liens qui nous unissent à nos frères de l'Ouest et presentation d'une bannière-souvenir à l'Union Nationale de la Saskatchewan."[101] The MNU gradually incorporated the places and histories west of Manitoba in commemorations. This included the land question in Saskatchewan and the federal registration of Batoche as a site of historical significance to Canada. In 1936, the Historical Committee had 73 subscribers in Saskatchewan.[102] The Historical Committee reached a Métis audience beyond the borders of Manitoba in western Canada. Their subscription list included some interested buyers in the United States. The MNU was inactive, and the historical monograph listed no current "settlements of the Métis" south of the Canadian border. At the very least, one purchaser resided in the town of Belcourt in North Dakota, the site of the Turtle Mountain reservation.

[101] Page 1 in Procès-verbaux, 1931-1938, Dossier, item 0285/1332/015, fonds 0285, Union nationale métisse Saint-Joseph du Manitoba, Centre du patrimoinie, Société historique de Saint-Boniface, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, found at https://archivesshsb.mb.ca/viewer?file=%2Fmedia%2F0285%2F0285-1333-018-A.pdf#page=1, accessed 18 August 2022.

[102] Publication "Histoire de la nation métisse," Dossier, item 0449/1345/029, fonds 0449, La Société historique métisse, Centre du patrimoinie, Société historique de Saint-Boniface, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, found at https://archivesshsb.mb.ca/viewer?file=%2Fmedia%2F0449%2FPDF%2F0449-1345-029-C.pdf#page=1, accessed 18 August 2022.

Chapter Four: Remaking Turtle Mountain Identity and Early Twentieth-Century American Governance

This chapter follows the contours established in Chapter Two into the early twentieth century. The historical writing on the United States, like that for Canada, assigns importance to this conjuncture, seeing a 'search for order' after the combination of urbanization and industrialization and the forces of colonialism and imperialism on a global scale.[1] The 'search' sometimes led to the central state's gradual reformation. Local and state governments had patchwork responses, and the federal government eventually coordinated a country-wide intervention into the unequal and insecure market economy and the capitalist system. In the Great Depression, federal lawmakers and the President cited the idea of national citizenship. They advocated for 'positive' rights to a living income, proper shelter, adequate health care, and education. Their social programs for old-age security, employment insurance, and urban housing represented these concepts, but policy development still reflected federal acquiescence to regional interests and pronounced racism.[2]

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[1] Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1967) and Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2011) are the "classics" for the period. For the late-nineteenth century, see Richard White, *The Republic for Which it Stands: The United States during Reconstruction and the Gilded Age, 1865-1896* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017). The literature has taken a wide variety of topics in social reform, some emphasizing different concerns, focusing on specific actors, and taking synthetic approaches. For labour movements, see Leon Fink, *The Long Gilded Age: American Capitalism and the Lessons of a New World Order* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014). For gender and reform, see Elisabeth Perry, "Men Are from the Gilded Age, Women Are from the Progressive Era," in *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* vol. 1 (2002) 25-48; Noralee Frankel and Nancy S. Dye, *Gender, Class, Race, and Reform in the Progressive Era* (Louisville: University Press of Kentucky, 2021). For broad synthesis, see Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010). For globalizing progressivism, see Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000); Alfred W. McCoy and Francisco A. Scarano, *Colonial Crucible: Empire in the Making of the Modern American State* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009); Marilyn Lake, *Progressive New World: How Settler Colonialism and Transpacific Exchange Shaped American Reform* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019); Ian Tyrrell, *Reforming the World: The Creation of America's Moral Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

[2] For the high-politics version of the New Deal, see Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The Coming of the New Deal, 1933-1935* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2003). For the examination of racism and the New Deal, see Ira Katznelson, *Fear Itself: The New Deal and the Origins of Our Time* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2013)

Ironically, historians have increasingly pointed out that 'activist' welfare policies and programs were less novel than we might think. Congress and now the Bureau of Indian Affairs had been 'activist' for more than a generation, albeit geared toward a managerial resolution of 'the Indian Problem' and thus working toward the assimilation of Indigenous peoples. Political domination led to multi-pronged efforts to curtail the heavy-handed role of the central state in Indigenous families' social and economic life. Indigenous advocates demanded political autonomy when federal intervention became the hegemonic concept in labour markets, financial systems, and infrastructure development.[3] Our knowledge of American state centralization and decentralization then shows progressive politics and reform to be neither monolithic nor linear. Oddly, however, both processes have come to rest partly on similar analytical grounds. The reformation of American governance reflected how forces of professionalization, the emergence of public intellectuals, and knowledge-producing research institutions influenced policy development and administration. Although rarely explicit, the actors and processes speak to liberal theories of modernization, which see a formally educated and linguistically homogenous middle class undermining the autocratic aspects of republican political structures and seeking out collective protections from American popular rule.

This chapter offers a different vantage point, albeit attuned to the dynamic between these macro-level influences and the micro-level of local circumstances. The chapter focuses on Turtle Mountain after the socioeconomic and political changes of the late nineteenth century and shows

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and Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: An Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006). For a broad overview of how racism of the New Deal spurred social movements over the following decades, Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," in *The Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (2005): 1233–63.

[3] Graham D. Taylor, *The New Deal and American Indian Tribalism: The Administration of the Indian Reorganization Act, 1934-45* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980). Taylor takes a mostly top-down look at this process.

the evolution of practices and actions from the 1900s to the 1930s. The chapter examines how residents embedded federal-imposed legal institutions into community structures and processes built over the previous generation. I contend Turtle Mountain's efforts for, and concepts of, self-government and collective identity reflected the broader influence of American laws and politics brought to the reservation.

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Going to the Turtle Mountain Court of Indian Offenses

The 1880s saw Congress and the Supreme Court reshape the relationship of criminal law and common law courts to federal Indian policy. The legal system had gradually incorporated Indigenous nations east of the Mississippi River. Before 1871, the federal government had signed treaties with numerous Indigenous nations across the American West. However, the treaties made Indigenous people exempt from criminal laws if the transgressions were committed on reservations. While state criminal laws were in force, Congress introduced the *Major Crimes Act* (1885) to extend federal criminal jurisdiction to reservations. The law primarily covered acts of interpersonal violence between 'Indians.' Federal police and district courts would enforce the code and hear cases. Early defendants, however, contested the constitutionality of the law. Legal arguments emphasized the sovereign status of 'Indian tribes,' but the Supreme Court centred their dependency and ruled Congress had absolute authority in the matter.[4]

In doing so, the Indian Rights Association (IRA) became important to the policy landscape. Their members, for the most part, were white, educated professionals and wealthy

[4] For the offense under federal criminal jurisdiction, *An Act Making Appropriations for the Current and Contingent Expenses of the Indian Department, and for fulfilling Treaty Stipulations with Various Indian Tribes, for the Year Ending June 13th, 1886, and for other Purposes*, Public Law 385, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 23 (1885) 385, found at https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/ll/llsl//llsl-c48/llsl-c48.pdf, accessed 18 August 2022. For a detailed discussion of the relationship of this process to earlier judicial stances and federal policies, see Sidney L. Harring, *Crow Dog's Case: American Indian Sovereignty, Tribal Law, and United States Law in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

elite. The IRA wanted to influence policy because its members thought Indigenous communities could and should be reformed. Legislation and administration would deploy the federal government to undermine historical political systems and rearrange 'tribal' social structures. One reform was federal criminal law. Another was common-law courts on reservations. The IRA lobbied Congress to introduce them. According to the IRA, these courts should bring the State and Territorial criminal law under their jurisdiction and encourage enrollees to bring civil proceedings in their own names.[5] The IRA thought the legislation and imposition of legal uniformity was part of the process whereby "[Indians] individually and separately could pass into the great body of American citizens."[6]

In the late 1880s and 1890s, field officers worked from a handbook requiring reservations to hold "tribunals" and employ judges and police.[7] The "tribunals" were also called the Court of Indian Offenses. Officials were to select judges for the Court, who would hear cases and pass judgements. Judges were to be drawn "from among the members of the tribe persons of intelligence and good moral character and integrity" and who were "honest" and "upright."[8]

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[5] Committee on Legal Matters, *An Act to Provide for the Establishment of Courts of Criminal Jurisdiction upon Indian Reservations, to Define Their Powers and the Offenses of Which They May Take Cognizance, to Affix Penalties to the Commission of Such Offenses, and for Other Purposes* (Philadelphia: Office Indian Rights Association, 1884).

[6] Indian Rights Association, *Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the Indian Rights Association, Inc* (Philadelphia: Office of the Indian Rights Association, 1885) 18.

[7] The Regulations of the Indian Office excluded the Indian Territory and the Cherokee, Chicasaw, Coctaw, Creek, and Seminoles from the imposition of Court of Indian Offenses. U.S. Department of the Interior, *Regulations of the Indian Department: with an Appendix Containing the Forms Used* (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1894) 105, found at https://llmc-com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/docDisplay5.aspx?set=46199&volume=0001&part=001, accessed 18 August 2022.

[8] U.S. Department of the Interior, *Regulations of the Indian Department: with an Appendix Containing the Forms Used* (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1894) 105 and 108, found at https://llmc-com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/docDisplay5.aspx?set=46199&volume=0001&part=001, accessed 18 August 2022. Originally, the Office of Indian Affairs required that the three highest ranking officers of the reservation police also sit as judges at the sessions of the court, unless the field official determined that they were not fit for duty and instead selected judges from among the wider population of the local Indian agency. See, U.S. Department of the Interior, *Regulations of the Indian Department: with an Appendix Containing the Forms Used* (Washington D.C.:

There were to be three judges who served for one year unless appointed again after their initial term. The judges depended on the assistance of reservation police officers. The departmental regulations conceived of reservation police as an arm of the court, which made the threat of physical force visible and consistent. Field officials, who nominated and appointed judges, also controlled the staffing of reservation police. The Department required that reservation police officers be members of the tribe, have some community influence, be physically strong, have good horsemanship, and be able to shoot a gun well.[9] They had several duties: patrolling, reporting the movement and use of federally-controlled resources, and arresting individuals for a select number of crimes.[10] They also had the authority to compel witnesses to attend the court and enforce court rulings and penalties, though the field officials could potentially circumscribe their power. [11]

The court's jurisdiction was both specific and broad. On the one hand, the court was the original jurisdiction for the Code of Indian Offenses.[12] The code listed ceremonies, relationships, and practices—property destruction, feasts, dances, bride price, plural marriage, and the existence of alternative health-care practitioners—that officials viewed as antithetical to the

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GPO, 1884) 88, found at https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000005837298&view=1up&seq=182&skin=2021, accessed 18 August 2022.

[9] U.S. Department of the Interior, *Regulations of the Indian Department* (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1904) 45 and 54, found at https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hl28k7&view=1up&seq=5&skin=2021, accessed 18 August 2022.

[10] U.S. Department of the Interior, *Regulations of the Indian Department: with an Appendix Containing the Forms Used* (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1884) 108-109, found at https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000005837298&view=1up&seq=182&skin=2021 Accessed 18 August 2022.

[11] U.S. Department of the Interior, *Regulations of the Indian Department: with an Appendix Containing the Forms Used* (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1894) 105-106, found at https://llmc-com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/docDisplay5.aspx?set=46199&volume=0001&part=001, accessed 18 August 2022.

[12] Ibid 105.

expansion of acceptable behavioural norms.[13] The subject matter of the Code of Indian Offenses has led some scholars to refer to the code as the Civilization Regulations.[14] On the other hand, the OIA regulations extended the jurisdiction of the Court of Indian Offenses to the minor criminal offenses under the State or Territorial laws where the court was held and "civil suits where Indians [were] parties to," with the requirement that "[the] civil jurisdiction of [the Court of Indian Offenses] shall be the same as that of a justice of the peace in the State or Territory where such a court is located."[15] Police, according to the departmental regulations, made arrests if the "offense charged constitutes a crime or misdemeanor for which a person can be lawfully detained," determined the reasonableness of the charge, and subsequently brought the detainee before the Indian agent, who could deal the case "as he may direct." This included the option for a trial before the judges in the Court of Indian Offenses and their determination and penalization of offenses.[16]

In 1888, based upon a case in Oregon, a federal district court judge interpreted the intention and purpose of the Court and Code of Indian Offenses. Their opinion, echoing some of the paternalistic ideas and terms of legislators, administrators, and humanitarian reformers of the time, stated:

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[13] Ibid 105-108. The subject matter of the Code of Indian Offenses has garnered the most in-depth examination of historical and recent analysis, who have focused on the American constitutionality of how the code limited religious freedom and the policing of dances, feasts, and gift-giving. For a southwestern United States case study, Tisa Joy Wenger, *We Have a Religion: The 1920s Pueblo Indian Dance Controversy and American Religious Freedom* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2009).

[14] Michael D. McNally, *Defend the Sacred: Native American Religious Freedom Beyond the First Amendment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020) 40.

[15] U.S. Department of the Interior, *Regulations of the Indian Department: with an Appendix Containing the Forms Used* (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1894) 107-108, found at https://llmc-com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/docDisplay5.aspx?set=46199&volume=0001&part=001, accessed 18 August 2022.

[16] Ibid 57.

> These "courts of Indian offenses" are not the constitutional courts provided for in section 1, art. 3, Const., which Congress only has the power to "ordain and establish," but mere educational and disciplinary instrumentalities, by which the government of the United States is endeavoring to improve and elevate the condition of these dependent tribes to whom it sustains the relation of guardian. In fact, the reservation itself is in the nature of a school, and the Indians are gathered these, under the charge of an agent, for the purposes of acquiring the habits, ideas, and aspirations which distinguish the civilized from the uncivilized man.[17]

From the early 1880s to the early 1930s, the Courts became fixtures on reservations and, at one point, operated across one-third of the country's agencies.[18]

Turtle Mountain had both judges and police officers who fit into the federal employment criteria. From 1897 to 1911, three judges were hired yearly, earning similar amounts, $7.00 to $10.00 monthly. Judges had different responsibilities and routines, earning less than police officers. In 1907, judges earned $7.00 per month, while officers earned $20.00.[19] Judges and police shared similar ages, marital status, relationship to local kin network, and gender. Married, middle-aged and elderly men were the norm. Many were old in relation to most men and came from the larger kin groups.[20] Judges had neither received American university or college training nor worked in the Anglo-American legal profession. In 1897, the annual report stated: "[the judges] are men of age and experience, and representative men among the people."[21] If hearing cases, passing judgements, and ordering penalties paid little, enrolled men might have sought out

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[17] *United States v. Clapox*, 35 F. 575 (D. Or. 1888)

[18] Vine Deloria Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle, *American Indians, American Justice* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983) 115.

[19] Record of Employees, 1895-1913, 1-20; Record of Employees, 1883-1913; Fort Totten Agency, 1903-1947; Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75; National Archives at Kansas City, Missouri.

[20] These kin groupings were: Azure, Belgarde, Davis, and Wilkie.

[21] U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of Farmer in Charge of Turtle Mountain Chippewa,* by E.W. Brenner (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1900) 213, found at https://images.library.wisc.edu/History/EFacs/CommRep/AnnRep1900p1/reference/history.annrep1900p1.i0019.pdf , accessed 18 August 2022.

social and legal influence. The field officer could have been concerned about exacerbating divisions if appointments leaned too heavily toward one side of the different opinions in the councils, committees, and commissions of the early 1890s. Instead, judges included men who had been structurally opposed to each other in those years. Bottineau, who remained a legal advocate until his death, wrote a lengthy political tract for one judge, who he positioned as the inheritor of an older form of authority for the people at Turtle Mountain.

Judges regularly convened the Court in the late 1890s and 1900s. The OIA required two sessions of the Court of Indian Offenses each month.[22] The agricultural instructor at Turtle Mountain acted as a court clerk. Figure 4.1 presents an overview of court sessions from 1896 to 1911.[23] During these years, the court held two sittings per month in six years—1888-1899, 1902-1904, and 1908—and either skipped one to two months or held one session in a month in the other years of that period. While hearings, judgements, and orders were included in most instances, the meetings were not necessarily contingent upon the population of a court docket: 66 sessions of the court from 1896 to 1911—for an average of around five per year—took place despite no prosecutions and could have included other business.

Richotte suggests that the judges might have had less influence in their sessions and, instead, the field officers wielded more power, according to their reports in the early 1910s.[24]

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[22] U.S. Department of the Interior, *Regulations of the Indian Department: with an Appendix Containing the Forms Used* (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1894) 105, found at https://llmc-com.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/docDisplay5.aspx?set=46199&volume=0001&part=001, accessed 18 August 2022.

[23] All figures are drawn from a digital reconstruction of the ledgers. For the primary source that the digital reconstruction represents, Records of the Court of Indian Offenses, 1896-1930; Turtle Mountain Agency, 1910-1947; Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75; National Archives at Kansas City, Missouri, United States.

[24] Keith Richotte Jr, *Claiming Turtle Mountain's Constitution: The History, Legacy, and Future of a Tribal Nation's Founding Documents* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press Books, 2017) 101.

However, the court records from 1896 to 1911 show that field officials likely had less presence in the courtroom than suggested in the annual reports to their administrative superiors in the central administrative bureaucracy. The field official produced a report at one time of the year and relied on memory and available documents to summarize preceding events. In contrast, the court clerk composed the ledgers during the court hearing.

The court clerk did not receive an OIA standard for documenting the sessions and used a bound book of blank pages from 1896 to 1911 until the standardized ledger in the late 1910s and 1920s.[25] The clerk's records provide clues to who attended the court sessions. They typically used a specific terminology—usually, "all members present" and "all judges present"—to describe attendance. For some sessions, the clerk made it a point to note a judge's absence. On a few occasions, the clerk made it a point to note when agency officials replaced the judges at the court sessions.[26] Their documentary habits and routines imply that both circumstances were unusual and required a note. In contrast, the field officer presided more irregularly than judges at the court from 1896 to 1911.[27] Field officials might have been minimally involved in the court sessions, but they had the authority to shape the arrests, detention, and charges under the code of offences.[28]

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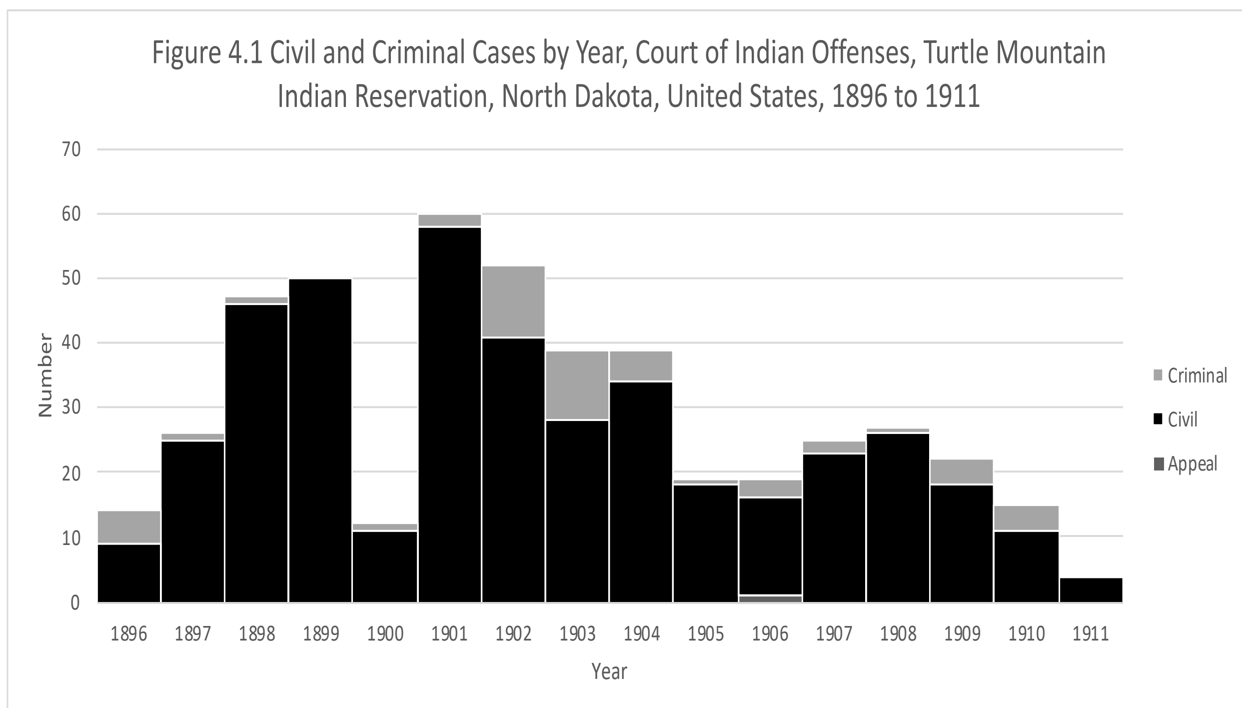
[25]A 1926 circular document sent by the federal bureaucracy to the local agencies across the country points to earlier efforts of Congress and the Office of Indian Affairs to require field officials create standardized information about detentions on Indian reservations and the operations of the Court of Indian Offenses for the archival holdings of the local agency. Circular no. 2176 Record of Confinement of Indians, etc., and Indian Court Docket, January 14, 1926; Records of the Court of Indian Offenses, 1896-1930; Turtle Mountain Agency, 1910-1947; Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75; National Archives at Kansas City, Missouri, United States.

[26] Clerks' failure to document the presence of judges or other officials was limited to 17 court sessions.

[27] The Regulations of the Indian Office in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth permitted, but did not require, the presence of field officials on the Court of Indian Offenses.

[28] The Office of Indian Affairs, as per the departmental regulations at the turn-of-the-twentieth century, did not preclude field officials from the administration of summary justice, that is, the hearing, determination, and



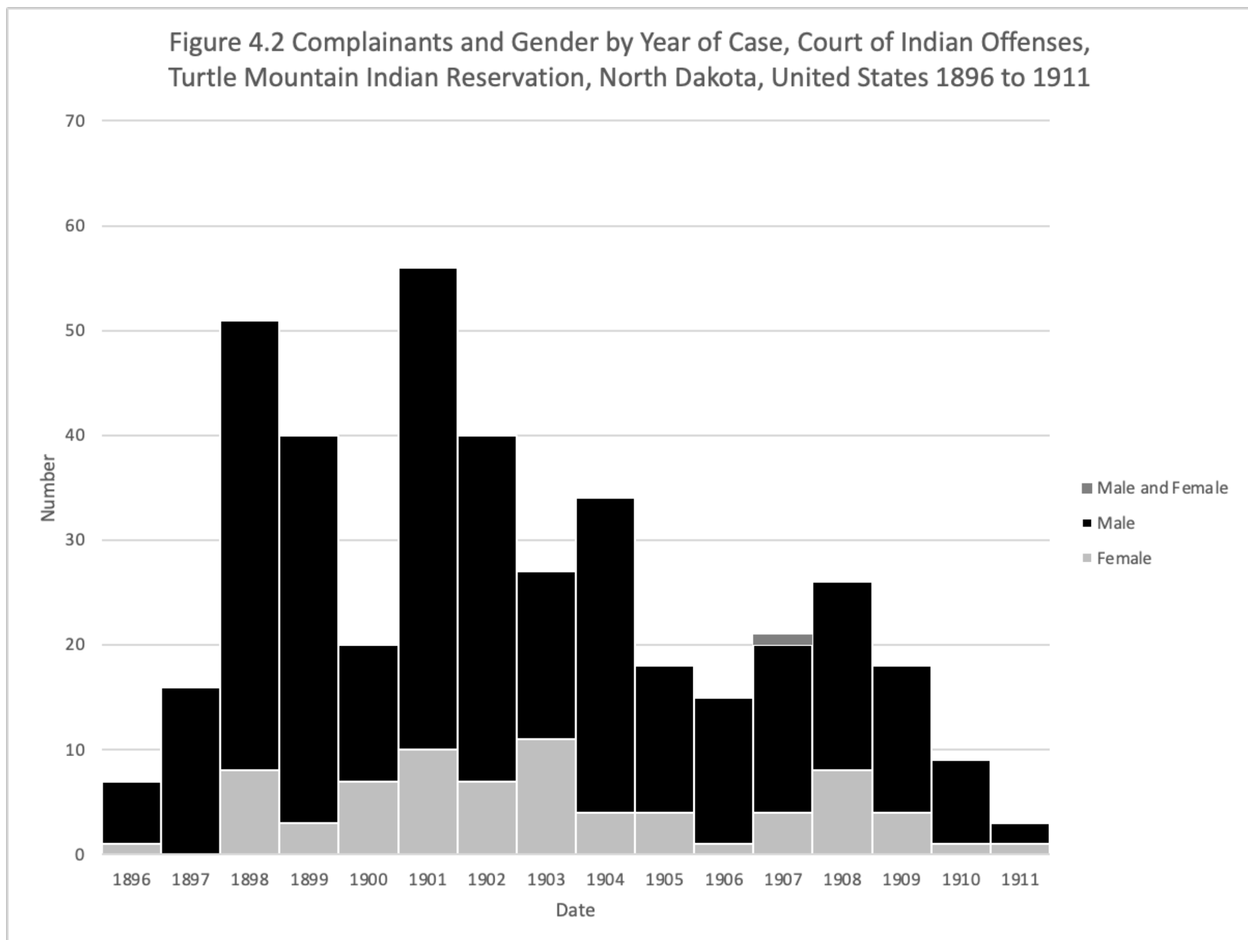
Source: Records of the Court of Indian Offenses, 1896-1930; Turtle Mountain Agency, 1910-1947; Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75; National Archives at Kansas City, Missouri, United States. Citation is based upon NARA guidelines for the citation of unpublished records.

From 1896 to 1911, Turtle Mountain members to their interpersonal conflicts to the court. We can know this dynamic because the court clerk usually recorded the nature of the case. Figure 4.1 divides the trials into criminal and civil proceedings. Civil matters accounted for 75 percent of cases in these court sessions. In these cases, plaintiffs brought disputes with a defendant to the judges. In contrast, in criminal matters, reservation police brought offenders accused of violating state and federal laws. Criminal matters were a minority of the individual

penalization of minor criminal offenses without the recourse to the formalities of a court proceeding. Some records of the local agency at Turtle Mountain Indian reservation in the early-twentieth century, namely the register of the guard house, suggest the actions of the field officer in this way. As we shall see, the guard house was used for the detention of arrested and convicted people. A set of records point to failure of some cases to make the docket of the sessions for the Court of Indian Offenses. For the surviving record, Guard House Register, 1906-1913; Turtle Mountain Agency, 1910-1947; Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75; National Archives at Kansas City, Missouri, United States.

trials: roughly 10 percent of total cases from 1896 to 1911 and around 20 to 25 percent in only a few specific years.

The court clerk noted fewer individual trials per year over time. While 30 to 60 cases were the norm from 1898 to 1904, the number dropped to 30 or less from 1905 to 1911.[29] Plaintiffs' choices to pursue a court case implied that enrollees and residents might have turned their conflicts and disputes to familiar and known community authorities. Because of the sessions and cases, their engagement made the court socially and legally crucial at Turtle Mountain over time.



Source: See Figure 4.1.

[29] It is worth noting that the record for the court did not extend across the entirety of 1911.

Figure 4.2 analyzes complainants' gender and civil matters from 1896 to 1911. Men and women plaintiffs were similar in a few years, but men accounted for around 75 percent or more cases in other years. Defendants were brought to the court for alleged wrongdoing. Figure 4.3 shows a similar gender imbalance for defendants. Men were defendants in more than 80 percent of civil cases each year. In a sense, over the late 1890s and 1900s, men turned to Court authorities to remedy their disputes with men, and women did the same on a few occasions. Offenders bore similarities to civil plaintiffs and defendants. Figure 4.4 outlines the gender of the suspected offenders. Like civil cases, the defendants were not exclusively women or men. However, like civil matters at court sessions, men were usually defendants, whether as a whole or in each year.

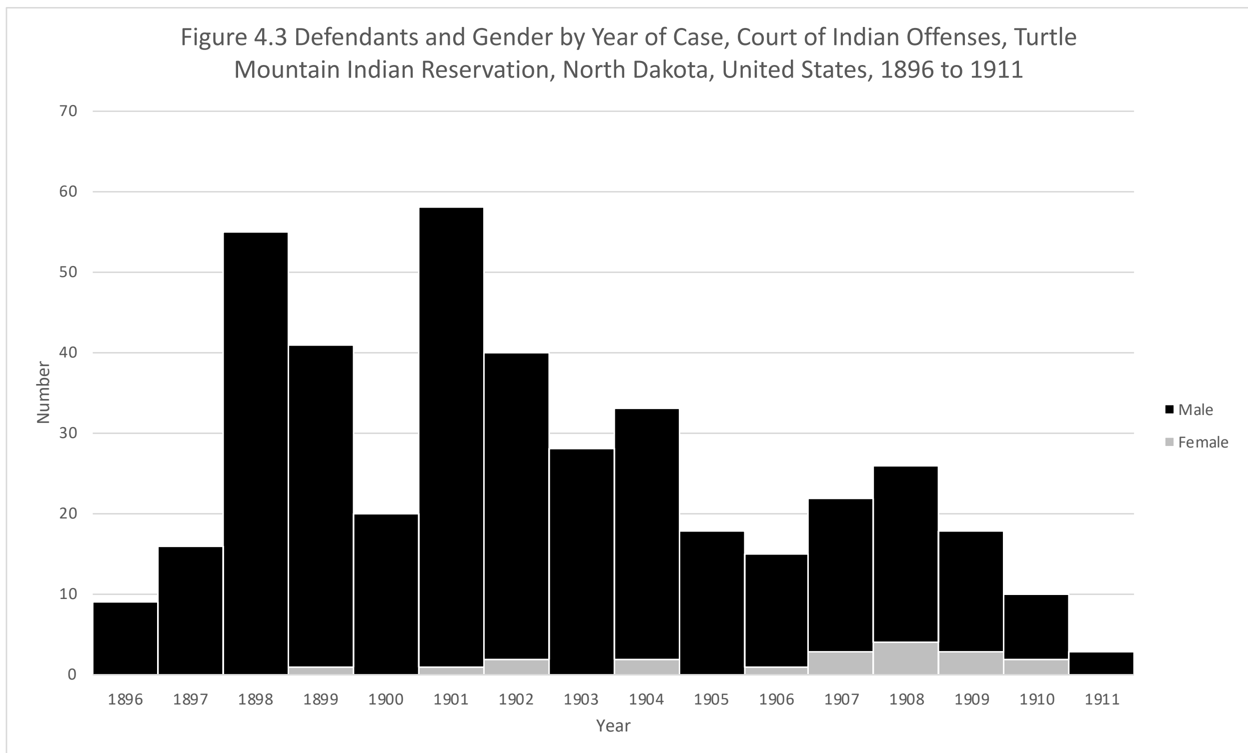


Figure 4.3 Defendants and Gender by Year of Case, Court of Indian Offenses, Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation, North Dakota, United States, 1896 to 1911

Source: See Figure 4.1

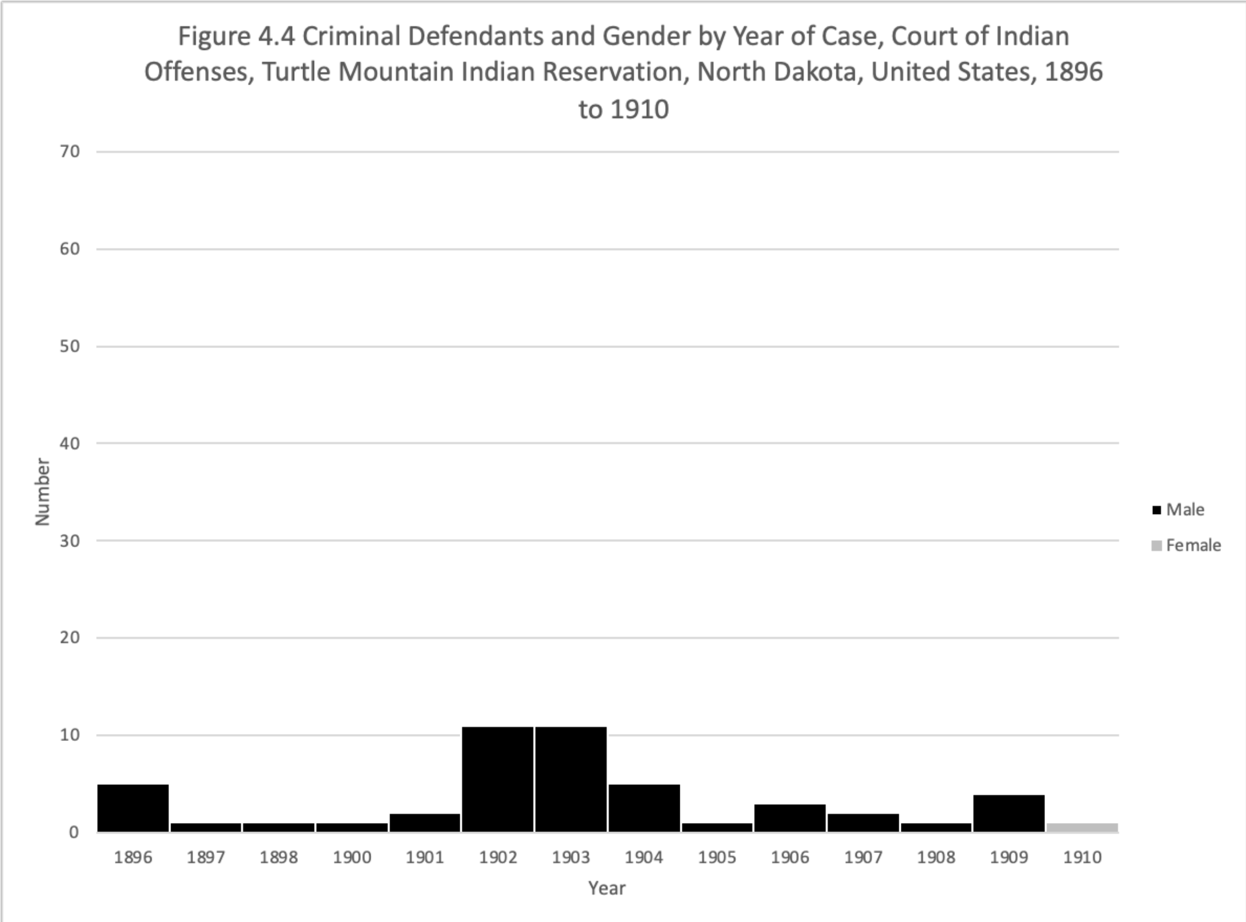


Figure 4.4 Criminal Defendants and Gender by Year of Case, Court of Indian Offenses, Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation, North Dakota, United States, 1896 to 1910

Source: See Figure 4.1

The civil matters can be grouped into categories to show the material basis of a plaintiff's case. The court clerk was not required to classify the subject matter. But their entries were pretty consistent. The court clerk pointed to cases that included but were not limited to, estates, property damage, wage disputes, and family welfare. More specifically, plaintiffs usually turned to the court for issues in their exchanges and resource access: around 36 percent of civil matters were related to exchanges and a little less than 20 percent of civil cases were related to material resources and land tenure. For the former, plaintiffs sought the collection of debts, resolution of trades, and the retrieval of unpaid wages. In the latter cases, plaintiffs sought the access, use, and management of herbage and grazing land.

The criminal matters can be grouped similarly. The court clerks used terms for issues that included but were not limited to disorder, morality, violence, theft, break and enter, transportation, and so forth. Suspected offenders were usually charged with one kind of offense, but sometimes two. Disorder dominated the criminal cases, making up 52 percent of single-offense cases. Only instances of moral violations and physical violence comprised 10 percent of these kinds of cases. Disorder and physical violence were usually combined when a suspected offender received multiple charges. Disorder reflected various 'transgressive' behaviours, usually drinking alcohol and violating other norms of public conduct, like disturbing the peace and resisting law enforcement.

Nonetheless, rather than crime, interpersonal disputes dominated the Turtle Mountain court in the late 1890s and 1900s. Plaintiffs and defendants usually came before the judges on material issues. In these cases, the men's complaints emerged from the economic tensions about the availability, access, and use of pastures and herbage. Male complainants used working animals for transportation, traction power, and livestock's dairy, meat, and fertilizer. In turn, the horses and oxen necessitated their use of pastures—relatively open areas where grasses and herbage dominated—to maintain farm animals. They set up their households and faced land scarcity over the 1880s and 1890s.

Fourteen men and four women brought cases against different men over access to common lands. The court clerk wrote that their disputes were concerning "meadows." Forty-two cases—almost entirely brought by men against other men—might have been similar, but the court clerk wrote their disputes concerning "hay." For specific examples, a male plaintiff turned to the court twice in the early 1900s over his access to farm resources. The defendants infringed

on his pastures because of the "building house near his hay meadows." The plaintiff won the case, and the judges required the defendant to stop construction.

Plaintiffs and defendants had disputes over the exchange of farm animals. From the late 1890s to the 1900s, plaintiffs brought 43 farm animal cases. The court clerk identified working animals in them. Trading farm animals was likely common but rarely written down, leading to disputes that came before the court. In several cases, plaintiffs suspected the provider knowingly gave them an unhealthy horse. But most cases involved non-payment. For example, a male plaintiff on 1 June 1899 brought two complaints against two different men. The plaintiff had sold a cow to one defendant and a horse to the other. Neither buyer had paid the balance. Disputes over terms were likely common. The court clerk usually called these cases "horse deal" or "dispute over horse trade."

Enrollees and residents sought to recoup cash from more than "horse deals." Some sold working animals to others, but their farm goods and forest products could also be exchanged in nearby towns. As discussed in Chapter Two, the agricultural instructor implied that the reservation farms were not uniform. Some households produced more crops than others and might have needed more labour to harvest marketable commodities. Reservation residents met their demands. Indeed, court cases indicate a reservation labour market for seasonal farm and lumber work. In a few sessions, the court clerk wrote that the plaintiff sought to "recover pay." Waged labourers thus complained about their employers. From 1897 to 1909, the Turtle Mountain court had 29 unpaid wage trials. Neither an active plaintiff nor a typical defendant underlined the wage disputes: 27 men complained of unpaid wages against 28 different employers.

Indeed, unpaid debts were an ordinary complaint. Creditors and debtors made up 68 cases from 1897 to 1911. Fifty-seven different complainants sought out debtors in these cases. Like the animal trades, plaintiffs had not received payments. Complaints in under half of the cases had sought a specific quantity of cash. Five cases were for sums greater than $10.00; another six concerned debts between $5.01 and $10.00; five cases were for sums between $2.51 to $5.00; 12 cases were for debts between $1.00 and $2.50; and two cases were for sums less than $1.00. Smaller sums were still significant.

The court's decisions had social consequences. For example, their choices for 39 of 44 cases—typically conflicts over hay, wood, and crops—favoured complainants and leaned toward cash payments to resolve the dispute resolution. However, judges did not completely marginalize in-kind payments. For instance, at two different sessions in the spring of 1897, judges ruled that one defendant pay the complainant in hay and another pay him $12.00 in cash. Decisions in ten other cases required cash transfers. Five different cases required transfers of hay. Judges considered the material circumstances of the defendant to determine whether penalties would be cash or in-kind payments. Decisions implicitly acknowledged defendants might face new constraints. For example, in a horse trade at the 16 April 1897 court session mentioned earlier, the judges directed that, rather than immediate payment, the defendant would pay $20.00 to the plaintiff "after threshing in the fall" when cash was on hand. Decisions might have been considered when defendants were cash-poor and, as a result, sometimes established schedules for in-kind payments. For instance, at the 1 November 1902 and 17 January 1903 sessions, the judges ruled against a male defendant when two men claimed unpaid debts of 50 cents and $8.00. Judges must have been aware of the defendant's situation because they ordered him to provide two cords of wood weekly until his $8.00 debt was repaid.

Judges looked kindly on men who had been hired on an ad-hoc basis. Plaintiffs had support when they sought out unpaid wages. Employers could not say the same. Judges ruled for employees in nearly two-thirds of wage recovery cases brought to the court from 1897 to 1911. Employees had completed specific tasks: constructing buildings, threshing grain, hauling resources, and so forth. Judges usually required that employers pay cash to the plaintiff. Only in one case—over freighting grain—did the judges order cordwood payments. Judgements usually required cash transfer on a schedule. Judges never allowed for long delays and instalments, directing some defendants to pay within a week and others in two or three weeks.

The Turtle Mountain experience contradicts Vine Deloria and Clifford Lytle's assertion that these courts become socially and legally significant forums only where allottees required a forum to resolve disputes and socio-spatial divisions had undermined historical forms of community justice.[30] The court had started and operated at Turtle Mountain before and during the allotment process in the late 1900s and 1910s. Clerks sat in the room and recorded proceedings, even if the participant's statements failed to reach the ledger. The central administrative bureaucracy established the American government's jurisdiction, and the local agency hired the judges and police officers. A small number of married men from the reservation filled these positions. These judges gathered on an almost monthly basis.[31] Judges examined structural relationships—buyer and seller, creditor and debtor, employer and employee, and police and suspected offender—of men and women who lived and laboured in the same

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[30] Vine Deloria Jr and Clifford M. Lytle, *American Indians, American Justice* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983) 113-115.

[31] However, the annual report of the federally-employed farmer at the turn-of-the-century pointed to the relationship of residence and jurisdiction of federal laws and courts for cases of murder. For example, U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Report of Farmer in Charge of Turtle Mountain Chippewa,* by E.W. Brenner (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1900) 312, found at https://images.library.wisc.edu/History/EFacs/CommRep/AnnRep1900p1/reference/history.annrep1900p1.i0019.pdf , accessed 18 August 2022.

geographic space as them. Their actions when disputes came to the court proceedings from 1896 to 1911 were one reason for complainants to turn to institutions in the first place, as judges demarcated the boundaries of land use and access, ordered debtors to repay money, and make in-kind payment, and directed employers pay wages. The court proceedings and case composition formed a highly homosocial sphere outside the households. Men in different positions delineated socioeconomic norms of private matters and public order, and men in positions of judicial power made their determinations. The court reflected and reinforced Turtle Mountain's sociopolitical reformation from the late 1890s to 1911.

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Disorder and Policing at Turtle Mountain

Congress reformed Turtle Mountain in the early 1900s. In 1892, the United States established an agreement to formally extinguish the Turtle Mountain band's claim to land in north-central North Dakota. Congress ratified the agreement in 1904 and empowered a special commission to subdivide the Turtle Mountain reservation into private plots.[32] As described in more detail in Chapter Two, allotment—established by Congress' *General Allotment Act* (1887) and reformed in the following years—was a multi-step process to privatize reservation land and make unallotted land alienable.[33] The ratified agreement required surveyors to map Turtle Mountain so enrolled members could select homesteads. If reservation land became scarce,

[32] Land Allotment Applications, Selection Lists, and Related Correspondence, 1904-1911; Turtle Mountain Agency, 1910-1947; Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75; National Archives at Kansas City, Missouri, United States.

[33] *An Act to Provide for the Allotment of Lands in Severalty to Indians on the various Reservations, and to Extend the Protection of the Laws of the United States and the Territories over the Indians, and for Other Purposes*, Public Law 49-105, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 24 (1887) 388-391, found at https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/ll/llsl//llsl-c49/llsl-c49.pdf, accessed 18 August 2022.

enrollees could select "any vacant land belonging to the United States without charge."[34] In the 1910s and 1920s, Turtle Mountain allotment led to important geographic divisions: some remained on the reservation, and others left to homesteads in northwestern North Dakota and northeastern Montana.[35]

During this period, the Turtle Mountain court met less frequently, and individual trials became oriented toward criminal cases. In some years, like 1920, the court was inactive. In other years, like 1917, 1918, 1922, and 1923, the court had only a handful of sessions. In the mid-1920s, the court sessions were more consistent, and proceedings in 1924-1926 were held at least once per month. Figure 4.5 shows the number of cases per year. The court never matched the frequency and scale of its initial years, declining over time but only sometimes. For example, the court had between 30 and 60 cases from 1897 to 1904, but the court still had under 30 cases in the peaks of 1915, 1924, and 1926. However, like the 1900s, judges oversaw a small number of cases. The court clerk mentioned the field officer's presence at a few sessions.[36] Judges, though, heard civil cases less than before. Figure 4.5 shows the type of case at the court. Civil matters were rare and comprised high percentages in 1916 and 1919. Instead, from 1914 to 1926, criminal cases dominated the court. In the 'peak' years of 1915, 1924, and 1926, criminal trials

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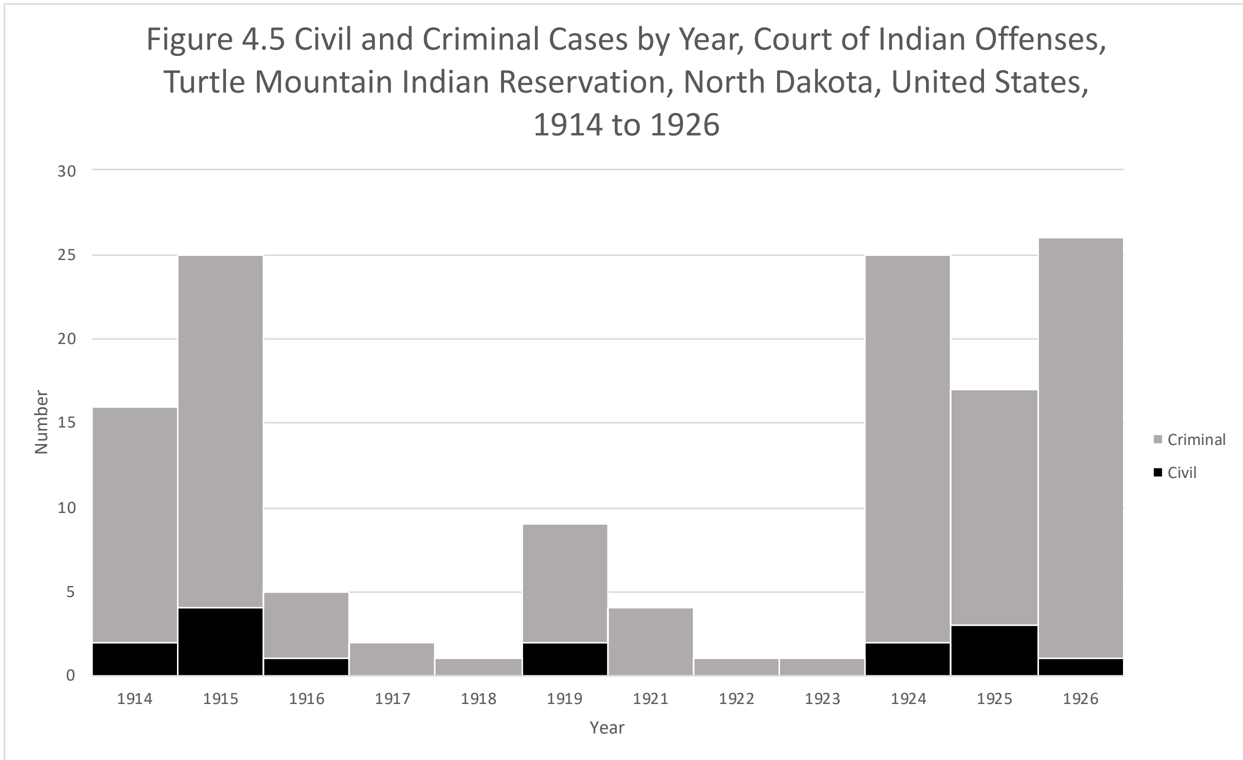
[34] See Article III and Article VI of "Agreement with the Turtle Mountain band amended and ratified." *An Act Making Appropriations for the Current and Contingent Expenses of the Indian Department, and for Fulfilling Treaty Stipulations with various Indian Tribes, for the Year Ending June 13th, 1905, and for other Purposes*, Public Law 1402, *U.S. Statutes at Large* 33 (1904) 194-196, found at https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/ll/llsl//llsl-c58/llsl-c58.pdf, accessed 18 August 2022.

[35] This dynamic was captured in the registers and plat maps developed by the local agency in the 1910s, which covered locations outside of Turtle Mountain Indian reservation where individuals selected allotments of territory that the American federal state had turned into the public domain of the country. Land Allotment registers, 1909-1917; Turtle Mountain Agency, 1910-1947; Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75; National Archives at Kansas City, Missouri, United States.

[36] Ibid.

were roughly 80 to 95 percent of the cases. The court became a controlling site if an inconsistent one.



Source: See Figure 4.1.

Still, reservation police officers had been active until the 1910s, and offenders felt the same regulations before and after allotment. In the late 1890s and 1900s, criminal cases were rare and less common than civil matters. Defendants had been charged with disorder offences. In these matters, the court clerk had listed their charge. It usually spoke to alcohol possession or consumption, as well as personal conduct. The State of North Dakota had prohibited the production, circulation, and consumption of alcohol. The OIA also included prohibition in the Code of Indian Offenses. Reservation police officers directed attention to 'drunkenness' and individual or collective, real or perceived, threats to social order. For instance, at the session on 3 May 1903, four men were before the court on charges of "being drunk at a wedding and causing

a disturbance." The court heard 21 similar cases for disorder between from 1896 to 1911. Disorder offenses accounted for around 40 percent of cases from 1914 to 1926. These disorder offenses nearly doubled the number that came to the docket from 1897 to 1911. Most charges—a little over 75 percent—were for alcohol-related offenses and men were usually disorder offenders for drinking, drunkenness, and disorderly conduct. Their names usually appeared once and only a couple of men appeared multiple times for the same offense.

Violent offenses were a bit more complicated. No cases at the court included interpersonal violence that resulted in death. Defendants—in 23 cases from 1897 to 1909—were usually accused of assault, battery, and fighting. This meant the defendant willfully caused bodily injury. Three cases—two in 1902 and one in 1909—reveal that the reservation police officers might not have been well-regarded authorities: defendants had apparently acted violently toward a member of the reservation police. But most offenders were 'disorderly' to the court. Twelve married women complained of being abused. Women might have used the court because reservation police and judges curbed informal means to enforce social norms. The court clerk, however, did not provide enough clues to come to that conclusion and whether the group of men had been engaging in 'rough music.'

Two kinds of sentences were imposed: fines and imprisonment. Judges leaned toward monetary penalties when they applied punishments to disorder and forestry offenses from 1897 to 1911. Fines were contingent on the nature of the infraction. For example, judges issued cash penalties between $0.75 and $5.00 for felling trees without permission, with the average fine at around $2.50. In contrast, judges directed $5.00 to $10.00 penalties for the possession of alcohol on the reservation. These monetary penalties must have been significant to the convicted offender: the cases of unpaid wages in the late 1890s and 1900s suggest these punishments were

roughly similar to wages garnered for farm work. But judges usually ordered men to be confined when offenders were committed for disorder, violence, theft, property damage and reputation. Judges must have known that imprisonment was similar to the cash penalties because detention meant an inability to earn an income. Sentences were between one night and 60 days. Judges usually imprisoned offenders in the guardhouse.[37] Built in 1889, the guardhouse was a small log structure with one door and two windows.[38] The size of the interior—294 square feet and height of eight feet—was less than the other buildings the agency had on the reservation.

Judges used the guardhouse sparingly when married women complained about intimate partner violence. But, even if sympathetic ruling for married women, judges seemed to have a paternalistic attitude of male duty and female reliance. Their punishments must have considered the household's economic security and the family's social stability. For example, judges imprisoned married men in only four of eleven intimate partner violence cases in the late 1890s and 1900s. Sentences lasted under two weeks, between two and four weeks, and between one to two months. Judges leaned toward monetary penalties and even mediation, operating under the assumption that medium-to-long-term separations required socioeconomic support—likely from the local kin network—to protect independent adult women. Judges hoped punishments would deter the defendant. That was probably the case because judges turned to family dissolution and physical separation on one occasion. In the 1 May 1902 session, the judges ruled "[the] woman

[37] Clerks typically identified the place of imprisonment. The terminology was "agency jail", "guard house", and "GH." The building registers—constructed by the field officer for the agency and specified reservations—indicated the presence of two guardhouses, one at Turtle Mountain and the other at Devil's Lake.

[38] Statement giving the Number and Description of Buildings Belonging to the United States, and used for the benefit of the Indian Service, on Turtle Mountain Reservation, belonging to the Devils Lake Agency, in the State of North Dakota. April 29, 1904; Turtle Mountain Agency, 1910-1947; Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75; National Archives at Kansas City, Missouri, United States.

to have a home of her own." The order was unusual because sentences typically operated under the implicit understanding that women relied on men for economic support.

In the 1910s and 1920s, the justices sentenced disorder cases in their way. Judges convicted and sentenced most alcohol-related offenders. In two exceptional cases, the judges asked the field officer to determine a sentence because they could not agree on the length. But, even so, the judges had central guidance for sentences and penalties. The Code of Indian Offenses enumerated the punishment—"imprisonment for not less than thirty days nor more than ninety days, or by withholding of Government rations therefrom, at the discretion of the court and approval of the agent."[39] However, judges followed the code inconsistently. Fines ranged between $20.00 and $30.00. Imprisonment ranged from under two weeks, two weeks to under a month, one to two months, and greater time. Judges sentenced many of these men to more than two months of detention and imprisoned fewer men to one-to-two-month imprisonments. Judges typically applied lengthier sentences—like 90-day terms of imprisonment—to the modest number of recidivists and groups arrested for the same disorder offense on the same date.

Judges often used "hard labor" to punish offenders. These sentences, often for 'drunkenness,' were in addition to imprisonment. Many male offenders had to do unpaid tasks for the local agency, like the freight and infrastructure work. For instance, a man had to serve 30 days in the guardhouse and perform farm work. A different man had to serve a similar term and haul 15 cords of wood. Another man had to perform 30 days of road work.

In the 1910s and 1920s, judges knew imprisonment disrupted how farm households organized labour and divided roles for men, women, and children. Judges recognized these

[39] U.S. Department of the Interior, *Regulations of the Indian Department: with an Appendix Containing the Forms Used* (Washington D.C.: GPO, 1884) 108-109, found at https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000005837298&view=1up&seq=182&skin=2021, accessed 18 August 2022.

sentences might curtail seasonal labour. Judges, however, did so on only a few occasions. For example, judges for the 5 and 14 May 1924 delayed two male offenders' sentences by ten days so they could manage their vegetable gardens. For another example, the judges on 15 September 1924 delayed a male offender's three-month imprisonment until after he completed seasonal threshing.

However, the court contended with allotment's legal consequences over the 1910s and 1920s. Allotment was a multi-stage process. Allottees received letters patent as a final step to fee-simple property ownership. Sometimes, allotees used their status as 'patent-in-fee Indians' to avoid the court if brought as criminal defendants. On 15 January 1926, the judges acknowledged the court might be the correct jurisdiction to try three men for 'drunken' conduct. These officials asked whether one defendant "[wanted] to be tried before this court." Although this defendant agreed to a trial, the others did not. One dissenter refused: "being a Pat in Fee he wants to be tried by the white court." Another dissenter made a similar point. For the latter case, the clerk wrote, "Defendant unwilling to be tried by the Court of Indian Offenses." The judges transferred these allottees' cases to North Dakotan authorities.

Judges had to consider jurisdictional issues in several criminal cases. The court operated alongside the State Courts of North Dakota and the Federal District Court of the United States. The Turtle Mountain court presided over the Code of Indian Offenses. The docket, for example, included "bootlegging." In a study of the Red Lake reservation in Minnesota, Brenda Child observes that some married Ojibwe women illegally sold alcohol to make ends meet in the 1920s.[40] Federal officials at Red Lake were not pleased by the practice.[41] Turtle Mountain was

[40] Brenda J. Child, *My Grandfather's Knocking Sticks: Ojibwe Family Life and Labor on the Reservation* ePub (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2014) 35-36.

[41] Ibid.

somewhat similar. Reservation police officers charged men at Turtle Mountain for manufacturing and circulating moonshine. In the 25 June 1924 session, for example, judges transferred a defendant who allegedly manufactured and sold alcohol to "wards of the state." Allotment resulted in multiple legal statuses, but one remained 'ward' to a federal 'guardian,' even as Congress granted 'Indians' citizenship in 1924. The judges, however, might have known the federal government's country-wide alcohol prohibition. The judges noted that "the charge was above [their] jurisdiction." The judges sent the case to the Federal District Court, though the judges were not always so deferential. The judges had similar cases—one male defendant had "a still," and another was "Making Moonshine"—less than a week later. Rather than send the cases elsewhere, judges presided over both.

Indeed, judges sometimes rationalized the courts' jurisdiction. Judges, for example, referenced the territorial origins of cases. For instance, on 30 November 1925, the judges considered a Code of Indian Offenses case. A reservation police officer charged a man with holding a dance and allowing alcohol consumption. The judges were initially unsure whether the court could hold a trial. The issue was the defendant's legal status and the location of his dance. The court would not have had jurisdiction if the event was held on fee-simple land. However, the judges determined the court could hold a trial because the dance occurred on an allotment. The judges used the same reasoning at the 11 June 1926 session. The reservation police charged a man with stealing long-barrel firearms. The defendant had supposedly committed the offense on "trust land." Allotment should have resulted in widespread fee-simple ownership, but a typical result was a 'patchwork' of private property and land held in 'trust.' The "trust land" was not under state jurisdiction. The judges thus determined the court had jurisdiction over territory still considered to be held in 'trust' by the federal government.

Turtle Mountain's Court of Indian Offenses filled two ledgers over nearly three decades, and many cases and social dynamics shaped those documents. Notably, the Court was not necessarily a space where federal bureaucrats exercised power over the enrollees and residents. In the late 1890s and 1900s, some plaintiffs thought the institution could help resolve social conflicts. These claims concerned land use and access, credit and debt, and wage labour. In turn, judges ruled on civil disputes on their own, considering the context of the case. But, just as important, the Turtle Mountain court was not timeless. Rather than a productive force, allotment changed the court. It spoke to what James Sparrow, William Novak, and Stephen Sawyer call the "institutionalization of power *in* and *through* the state" and "distinctive modality of rule" in the United States, but differently than the burgeoning early-twentieth-century 'regulatory' national government.[42] The court had few civil disputes in the late 1910s and early 1920s. Although the decline corresponded to Turtle Mountain's land privatization and displacement, it also coincided with the life-cycle transitions of a generation who had attended state-run schools and learned American middle-class norms and values.[43] The implication is that reservation residents became more aware of the American legal structure of private ownership, credit-debt dynamics, and waged labour, knowing the Turtle Mountain court could not help with interpersonal conflicts. Instead, the court centred on public order. In turn, reservation police and judges became more visible, if not active, regulators of social behaviour and even violence previously left to family networks and neighbourly associations. These charges, imprisonments, hard labour, and cash penalties aimed to compel norms, situating men within familial obligations of women and

[42] James T. Sparrow, William J. Novak, and Stephen W. Sawyer, "Introduction" in *Boundaries of the State in US History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015) 6.

[43] See the generational dynamic of writing ability in Chapter Two.

children's economic protection. In a sense, the political economy at Turtle Mountain and the Court of Indian Offenses shaped one another over time.

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"The time has come when we are united on a practical program…": Turtle Mountain and Self-Government

Some Turtle Mountain members thought about American laws more broadly than the reservation court, using collective action to influence the contemporary policy landscape. One was Marie Louise Baldwin. Born in the early 1860s at Pembina, Baldwin worked as a clerk with her father, Turtle Mountain attorney John Bottineau, during the 1890s. Eventually, she became a BIA employee and resided in Washington, D.C., in the 1900s. She was a founder of the Society of American Indians (SAI), an Indigenous-led national reform organization. Although many were liberal professionals and acquired higher education, the founders were also enrolled members of different federal agencies and thus legally 'Indians.' The SAI, as Thomas Maroukis observes, then knew the multiple and contradictory legal status directly and usually experienced the reservation system personally. Their members sought to contest a central principle of late-nineteenth-century federal Indian policy: Indigenous polities and the American Republic were mutually exclusive, and the collective characteristics of the former had to be dissolved for individuals to be incorporated into the latter.[44] Indeed, the SAI lobbied the United States to grant 'Indians' citizenship and thus protection from state and local governments. However, members also requested the federal government to do more to enable political autonomy in "tribal life." Their efforts targeted the Congress, the federal judiciary, and the central bureaucracy. The SAI

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[44] Thomas Constantine Maroukis, *We Are Not a Vanishing People: The Society of American Indians, 1911–1923* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2021) 6. For specific intellectuals, see Lucy Maddox, *Citizen Indians: Native American Intellectuals, Race, and Reform* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

wanted legislation to bring various laws on 'Indians' into a more uniform federal code.[45] Members aimed for the Court of Claims to be opened to treaty disputes.[46] The SAI desired greater administrative decentralization and advocated for field officers to be accountable to the reservation populations rather than the central bureaucracy. Baldwin's participation, according to according to Cathleen Cahill, reflected the cosmopolitanism of the association. Cahill argues Bottineau undermined the simple 'Indian' and 'modern' binary, drawing on her professional status and expertise to advocate for political reform and Indigenous women in the United States.[47]

Although the SAI represented Turtle Mountain, the reservation produced several political and legal advocates. Petitioners sent the IRA letters to disapprove of federal administrators. The IRA had been marginally aware of Turtle Mountain. IRA officials had read late nineteenth-century OIA reports and became concerned about the reservation's economic conditions. These middle-class reformers and professionals jumped to action, contacting the agricultural instructor about the standard of living and collecting charitable donations for material welfare. Notably, over the 1900s, the IRA became disillusioned with the direction of federal Indian affairs because allotment failed to meet their vision of individualism and economic prosperity for reservation populations. The result, as they saw, was the opposite. The IRA partially blamed local administrators. Indian agents, according to them, had demonstrated too much self-interest and absent-mindedness in their duties.

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[45] Maroukis, *We Are Not a Vanishing People,* 60.

[46] Ibid 6.

[47] Cathleen D. Cahill, "Marie Louise Bottineau Baldwin: Indigenizing the Federal Indian Service," in *Studies in American Indian Literature* 25, no. 2 (2013) 65-86.

As a result, Turtle Mountain members had a receptive audience when they demanded action to hold the field officer accountable and address outstanding land issues. In the 1910s, the IRA undertook cross-country tours and visited reservations. One member visited Turtle Mountain. According to the visitor's reports and correspondence, some residents expressed their contempt for the field officer. The field officer dismissed regular staff without rationale, and, more importantly, no mechanism existed to hold them responsible for transgressions. A decade earlier, one married couple had lost their adolescent daughter after she returned from boarding school, and the field officer refused to shed light on the invasive medical procedure she experienced. The field officer, according to the subtext of complaints, was unaccountable. Although the IRA asked the United States to send a special commissioner to investigate the local agency, the federal government failed to change its administrative structure. Instead, a new field officer joined the reservation. For another example, Turtle Mountain allottees told the IRA about their struggles. The field officers had cancelled some allotment entries and thus halted the acquisition of private property because of the allottee's birthdate. These allottees, however, noted the 1902 Act of Congress overlooked age as a criterion, failing to properly when public domain allotments could no longer be taken.[48] Administration, according to the subtext of complaints, was arbitrary. In 1913, the IRA annual report stated, "a full history of Turtle Mountain Indians…would be a sad commentary of the guardianship of the Government."[49]

[48] Incoming Correspondence. Sept 1916. MS The Indian Rights Association, 1882-1986: Series 1. Correspondence 1864-1989 Box 69, Folder 5. Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Indigenous peoples of North America.; and Administrative Files: Washington Agency Reports. February 1, 1917 to December 1918. MS The Indian Rights Association, 1882-1986: Series 2, Organizational Records, 1881—1989 Box 188, Folder 4. Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

[49] Annual Reports, 1913—1915. MS The Indian Rights Association, 1882-1986: Series 3, Printed Matter: IRA Publications Box 193, Folder 3. Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Turtle Mountain advocates thought litigation could help the situation if the federal government remained unresponsive to community interests. One avenue was the federal Court of Claims. Congress established this institution after the Civil War. Litigants brought cases against the United States government for its wrongdoing. Congress expanded the court's subject matter jurisdiction in the late 1880s. Litigants could then seek damages if governments seized private property under the constitutional power of "eminent domain."[50] Similarly, the SAI looked at the Court of Claims to contest expropriation and the federal government's failure to follow treaty terms. However, American law treated 'Indian tribes' as pre-constitutional and distinct collectives and thus without the same access to the court as the rights-bearing individual citizens. As such, the SAI lobbied Congress to settle the matter of Indigenous nations' legal standing. Turtle Mountain had also sought a lawsuit for greater compensation than provided in the 1902 Act of Congress. Turtle Mountain advocates essentially continued John Bottineau's efforts after he passed away in 1911. Bottineau had told IRA and the United States that the Turtle Mountain community referred to the legislation as the "Ten-Cent Treaty." This was because the federal government had set compensation at ten cents per acre, making the terms less than earlier treaties for nearby communities. In 1925, a former Turtle Mountain judge requested the IRA advocates for federal legislation to open the Court of Claims to the Turtle Mountain lawsuit.[51]

The lawsuit helped form community expectations. Turtle Mountain advocates knew to behave accordingly and guarded their reputations. One instance made the Court of Indian Offenses in the 1920s. In 1924, two elderly men had a dispute over slander. This type of case

[50] For an overview of federal powers and the judiciary in the immediate post-Civil War era, see Laura F. Edwards, *A Legal History of the Civil War and Reconstruction: A Nation of Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). For the Constitution and expropriation, see Richard A. Epstein, *Takings: Private Property and the Power of Eminent Domain* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985).

[51] Incoming Correspondence. February 1–14, 1925. MS The Indian Rights Association, 1882-1986: Series 1, Correspondence, 1864—1989. Box 90. Folder 3. Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

was not unique: early plaintiffs brought cases of false spoken statements and reputational damage in the late 1890s and 1900s. Judges knew defendants valued community perceptions because resolutions included public apologies. But, in 1924, the two elderly men came into a conflict during a group effort to collect cash for a lobbying trip in Washington D.C.[52] The defendant, according to the plaintiff, had stated that he "[used] money belonging to the Tribe for his own use."[53] The plaintiff might have wanted community members to consider his 'good' character because his activism subordinated self-interest to common objectives and collective welfare. When the plaintiff turned to the court, he requested that the defendant "be brot [sic] before the Court (Indian) and made to prove that I did use the money for myself."[54] The judges dismissed the case after the defendant and six witnesses testified, but the plaintiff remained committed to the federal lawsuit.[55] In 1932, he presented an oral history of the events of the 1890s to a crowd on the reservation and emphasized the importance of the Court of Claims.[56]

Although the IRA helped organize the proceedings, the Turtle Mountain Cooperative Association primarily held the 1932 event.[57] Turtle Mountain community members founded the Cooperative Association in the 1910s. North Dakota had several co-operatives. By the late

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[52] Exhibit A, 1924; Police and Indian Court Record, 1914-1926; Records of the Court of Indian Offenses, 1896-1930; Turtle Mountain Agency, 1910-1947; Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75; National Archives at Kansas City, Missouri.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Exhibit B, 1924; Police and Indian Court Record, 1914-1926; Records of the Court of Indian Offenses, 1896-1930; Turtle Mountain Agency, 1910-1947; Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75; National Archives at Kansas City, Missouri.

[56] For a broad overview of the court, United States Court of Claims, *Jurisdiction of the United States Court of Claims* (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1970).

[57] "Indians Organize to Present Claim" in *Turtle Mountain Star,* 13 October 1932, found at http://tur.stparchive.com/Archive/TUR/TUR09291932P08.php?tags=chippewa|history|1932, accessed 14 July 2022.

1910s, federal laws and administrative bureaucracies, backed by judicial sanction, reformed buying, selling, and moving goods, regulated labouring conditions and employment in various industries. Elizabeth Sanders observes that federal government reform and intervention in commodity markets reflected the regional experiences of farm households. From the 1880s to 1900s, agriculture underwrote national economic expansion, but commodities, like wheat in the north-central region, remained susceptible to global market downturns. Farmers' vulnerability to price fluctuations and reliance on transportation networks led some to form co-operatives for collective marketing. Others formed co-operatives to purchase tools and supplies collectively. In either case, cooperative associations brought a collective solution to an individualized market economic system and served to educate members politically.[58] The Cooperative Association at Turtle Mountain was formed as late as 1913. The association, however, developed out of the reservation context, even if its purpose bore similarities to cooperatives elsewhere in North Dakota.[59] The Cooperative Association was oriented toward consumer demands. The Turtle Mountain cooperative facilitated the purchase and distribution of hardware, coal, and groceries for members. Members probably purchased a share in the association. Shareholders might have had an equal influence on the association's decision.

In 1932, Turtle Mountain Cooperative members reshaped its governing structure and directed its purpose toward political advocacy. The cooperative association, which had roughly 900 members, established an elected executive and elected district representatives. The residents of specific areas of the reservation selected district representatives. The district representatives

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[58] Elizabeth Sanders, *Roots of Reform: Farmers, Workers, and the American State, 1877-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

[59] Department of Labour, *Directory of Consumers' Cooperatives in the United States* (Washington D.C.: C.P.O., 1913) 119, found at https://www.google.ca/books/edition/Bulletin_of_the_United_States_Bureau_of/8q-2PjmvkHYC?hl=en&gbpv=1, accessed 4 July 2022.

chose a President and Secretary. District representatives shared some characteristics as middle-aged married men. Their childhood and youth overlapped with the transition to reservation residence and adulthood in the early twentieth century. In 1924, Congress enacted legislation for non-citizen 'Indians' born within the territorial limits of the United States to become American citizens. Federal lawmakers then authorized the Department of the Interior to distribute citizenship certificates to them.

The reorganized Cooperative Association aimed to influence Turtle Mountain's political and legal consciousness. The Cooperative President, for example, told an English-speaking reporter that the association's objective was: "for the mutual betterment, to educate the residents of the reservation in citizenship and to bring them to a fuller realization of their responsibilities as voters and citizens."[60] But association members and officials might have thought their interests had not been heard in the North Dakota legislature and Congress. The Cooperative Association, according to the same reporter, planned for state and federal electoral candidates to speak to reservation voters and constituents."

However, the Turtle Mountain Cooperative Association lobbied the federal government in the policy reform process. Although the SAI had ceased operations, the IRA continued. 'Indian' reformers now pressured federal legislators and civil servants, drawing on new avenues to address the so-called 'Indian problem.' The national elite had gradually directed their wealth to philanthropic activities. Foundations researched socioeconomic questions and reformed working-class and racialized populations. Social scientists had received some funds to study the reservation system. Their field research was compiled into a report submitted to the Department of the Interior in the late 1920s. The report pointed to impoverishment and drew attention to

[60] "Organization is Formed on Indian Reservation," in *Turtle Mountain Star*, found at http://tur.stparchive.com/Archive/TUR/TUR06021932P01.php., accessed 23 June 2022

different life chances for 'Indian' and 'non-Indian' American populations. The root causes, according to the report, were structural, not the individual choices of Indigenous people. Allotment had caused massive land loss across the country, resulting in many legal statuses. According to the report, the central state created dependency rather than independence. The report then provided a few 'solutions.' Some, like greater employment standards and economic planning, were administrative reforms. Others, like larger budgets and treaty settlements, were financial reforms. Neither, however, departed entirely from older policies.[61] These recommendations aimed to create greater government efficiency to undo the historical condition of 'Indian dependency.' The independence of Indigenous peoples could lead to the system's eventual end.

In this context, Turtle Mountain pursued greater autonomy. These political reforms, specifically constitutionalism, reflected the community's historical concerns. In the early 1930s, the Cooperative Association President reached out to the IRA to draw their attention to problems with the local bureaucracy. According to the correspondence, federal administrators remained unresponsive, so reservation residents could do little to influence their decisions over employment at the schools and hospitals. However, in 1932, roughly 200 Turtle Mountain residents met to hear about the written constitution proposed by the field officer. According to a reporter, the field officer stated that Congress could pass a jurisdiction act to open the federal Court of Claims to the Turtle Mountain lawsuit because the constitution would create an American legal entity. The attendees eventually approved the constitution after the Cooperative Association President altered the text. In the end, the constitution created an Advisory Committee. The chair, vice-chair, and treasurer would be elected and serve for two years. The

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[61] Lewis Meriam, *The Problem of Indian Administration: Report of a Survey Made at the Request of Hubert Work, Secretary of the Interior* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1928)

Advisory Committee "assisted" the field officer in the "social, financial, and industrial welfare, and the best interest of the tribe," and all voters could attend these meetings. The constitution used the agency codes and criteria for political participation. According to the constitution, voters had to be the enrolled members of the Turtle Mountain band.[62]

In the immediate aftermath of reforms, the Cooperative Association and Advisory Committee had economic and material concerns. In 1933, two Senators surveyed reservations. During the Great Depression, the northern and southern Great Plains were hit particularly hard by the financial collapse and urban industrial downturn. Farmers saw a downswing in prices for agricultural goods, and high debt levels exposed some to foreclosures. Farms suffered unforeseen droughts and dust storms, damaged crops, and undermined livestock management. Some farm families abandoned the countryside altogether. However, if the northern and southern Great Plains were hit hard, reservations had significant disadvantages because their political economies developed differently. The Senators travelled to Turtle Mountain to interview federal administrators and residents. The field officer drew attention to the precarity of the Turtle Mountain population, pointing out that some enrolled members were effectively landless. In these cases, allottees had received land patents but sold the properties to make ends meet or forfeited them to the county because of unpaid taxes. The landless subpopulation faced further constraints because only some nearby farms required waged labour. In their testimonies, Advisory Committee councillors were a bit more critical. Reservation residents, according to the councillors, needed more agricultural machinery to be successful farmers, and few allottees in

[62] For a reproduction of the constitution, see David E. Wilkins, *Documents of Native American Political Development: 1500s to 1933* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 497-501.

the public domain outside of Turtle Mountain even had the capital to start a farm.[63] The Advisory Committee also pointed out that the 'trust' land on the reservation had become overcrowded. These allotments, as the councillors implied, had accommodated the landless population.

The Cooperative Association and Advisory Council took steps to remake the reservation political economy. In the mid-1930s, these officials established a coherent program, fitting their ideas into the terms the IRA, Congress, and the OIA might expect. Petitioners knew Indigenous 'dependency' remained a primary policy concern. In 1933, the Turtle Mountain petitioners drew lobbyists, legislators, and civil servants' attention to their goal: "[the] time has come when we are united on a practical program whereby we are to become [economically] independent, self-respecting citizens of our country."[64] In 1934, the Cooperative Association and the Advisory Committee's former executive called the project a "Self-government program." Some elements of the "practical program" were material concerns and market-based solutions. Reservation residents and enrolled members could receive log houses with cement foundations, access micro-loans to purchase farm supplies and receive employment training to enter the skilled trades. Other elements were popular governing institutions. An elected council would have equal authority to the field officer and even control the selection of this administrator.[65] The former

[63] Senate Report, *Survey of the Conditions of the Indians in the United* States (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1934) 16389-16454, found at https://www.google.ca/books/edition/Survey_of_Conditions_of_the_Indians_in_t/pc1EAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0, accessed 15 July 2022.

[64] Incoming Correspondence. December, 1933; n.d. MS The Indian Rights Association, 1882-1986: Series 1, Correspondence, 1864-1989 Box 114, Folder 2.

[65] Incoming Correspondence. Jan. 1934. MS The Indian Rights Association, 1882-1986: Series 1, Correspondence, 1864–
1989 Box 114, Folder 3. Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Indigenous Peoples of North America, found at link.gale.com/
apps/doc/ADJVGM515776619/INDP?u=yorku_main&sid=bookmark-INDP&xid=53d2e4ad&pg=121, accessed 14 July 2022.

Advisory Committee President claimed the program would "bring the people's self-respect and elevate their status on the Reservation" and "the nature of the work of the advisory council and the work of the association is to work for its rehabilitation on the reservation and to work out ways and means of promoting more co-operation among the Indians themselves in their own problems."[66]

Turtle Mountain found their interests were shared elsewhere in the United States. In 1934, the Advisory Council and Cooperative Association sent officials to the Great Plains Congress. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs established the Great Plains Congress as a consultation forum. The Commissioner had begun to pressure federal legislators to reform Indian policy. Congress was increasingly acquiescent to reformist demands. William Novak observes that American voters demanded a more activist federal government. These demands reflected experiences of regulatory regimes and market interventions. The shared concept of 'economic democracy' and national citizenship then underlined the central state's employment insurance, old-age security, energy administration, and so on.[67] The 'New Deal' brought a modern social welfare state. The activist government agenda changed popular ideas of rights-bearing individualized citizens to a more positive than a negative concept. However, the Commissioner undertook consultations in the Great Plains Congress to restructure the relationship between the federal government and Indigenous nations. The consultations focused on how to constrain the former's management of the latter, centring on the concept of self-government. The reservation

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[66] Robert Bruce, Jan. 26, 1934. Incoming Correspondence. January 16–31, 1933. MS The Indian Rights Association, 1882-1986. Series 1, Correspondence, 1864—1989 Box 111, Folder 3; and Incoming Correspondence. February 16—28, 1933. MS The Indian Rights Association, 1882-1986. Series 1, Correspondence, 1864-1989. Box 111. Folder 5. Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

[67] William J. Novak, *New Democracy: The Creation of the Modern American State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2022).

system, according to the reports, failed. Federal policy and administration had then been a force in this process. From the transcribed sessions, Turtle Mountain officials said very little—about two oral statements—at the consultations. But, along with the Commissioner's thoughts on proposals, they heard 22 delegates from reservations—ranging from Standing Rock to Omaha to Crow—provide their interpretations of the *Indian Reorganization Act*. These oral statements threaded perspectives on treaty-making and bureaucratic administration to the allotment process and mass land loss so that they heard experiences like theirs and others at Turtle Mountain.[68]

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<u>Conclusion: The Turtle Mountain band of Chippewa Indians</u>

In the early 1930s, reservation reformers embraced a written constitution for the Turtle Mountain band of Chippewa Indians. These actions centred on reservation, tribal enrollment, and a concept of self-government, going so far as to reject a new constitution under the *Indian Reorganization Act* through a popular vote. Members anchored political autonomy to the material welfare of the community. Congress had opened the Court of Claims to Turtle Mountain, but their lawsuit could not go forward because the President vetoed the jurisdiction act. As a result, Turtle Mountain would not find an arbitrator for the 1902 Act of Congress until federal lawmakers established the Indian Claims Commission in 1946.

Turtle Mountain reforms to collective identity and governance reflected socio-historical experiences. In the late nineteenth century, the Plains Ojibwa and Métis had shared interests and united under the concept of the Turtle Mountain people to negotiate with the American state. Neither was entirely opposed to the industrial capitalist economy. Still, the United States could finance their adaptation to agricultural production and compensate them for mass land seizure in

[68] *The Indian Reorganization Act: Congresses and Bills,* ed. Vine Deloria (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002) 77.

northern North Dakota. These objectives, however, faced significant constraints: settler colonization induced economic isolation quickly, and a paternalistic federal government met demands slowly. In the first decade of the twentieth century, reservation residents used an imposed common law court to navigate their economic marginalization. The new public venue became a social site where the landed and landless, creditor and debtor, employer and employee, and men and women established and contested everyday rules and norms of accountability and power. Over the next two decades, residents experienced the federal government concretely, and allotment led to significant displacement. Turtle Mountain reformers grew into middle adulthood and old age during new property regimes, multiple legal statuses, and irresponsible federal bureaucrats. A goal was to restore a more cooperative socioeconomic life. The constitution established democratic politics for a clear voting membership and whose representatives exercised greater control over administration. In the early 1930s, unlike the mass demands on lawmakers and civil servants, which centred concepts of national citizenship to bring a modern American state into markets and welfare, the Turtle Mountain people sought a state of their own.

Conclusion

My research explored the history of settler colonization and identity formation in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, specifically focusing on Métis communities in northwest North America. By adopting a social-historical perspective, my study contrasted family strategies and community building during the uneven Canadian and American expansion. I argued that the region's different political and legal statuses significantly influenced the livelihoods and collective consciousness of an Indigenous nation after the fur trade.

My dissertation critically evaluates historical constructs of nation, race, class, and indigeneity. I evaded reification, exploring how Métis individuals and communities conceived and mobilized categories to make sense of their social, economic, and political realities. Global capitalism and imperialism in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century northwest North America led to intimate exchanges, initiating social and cultural formation. The descendants of these intimate exchanges formed distinctive material and symbolic cultures, establishing themselves as a unique group in the early-to-mid-nineteenth century. I examined Métis communities in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century when industrial capitalist economies and national states expanded westward across the continent, and a border became a physical and imaginary division between them.

My methodology employed a critical approach to archives and quantitative analysis. In Chapter One and Chapter Two, my focus was on a similar record of different nation-states in the same region. This analysis revealed how age cohorts adapted to the decline of their economic base and the rise of commercial agriculture, railway networks, and nearby industrial towns and cities. The cross-sectional examination of early twentieth-century census schedules showed historical changes and continuities in family strategies and household economies, shifting from

seasonal mobility and bison hunts to local networks and farm communities. In Chapters Three and Four, I examined different legal records in Canada and the United States, showing how distinct political and legal statuses and industrial capitalist economies influenced socioeconomic practices. I uncovered pronounced socioeconomic differences in the early twentieth century through a longitudinal analysis of different court records. Each chapter ended with the fragmentary documentation of political life and cultural production. This revealed how collective identity reformation reflected distinct sociopolitical experiences of industrial capitalist transformation and nation-state formation in northern North America.

My focus on social and economic histories illuminated the basis for collective identity formation. The chapters explored the traffic of ideas and how attitudes and beliefs became instrumental in power negotiations. Sociopolitical actors articulated distinct collective identities, drawing upon various ideological strains of liberalism and constitutionalism. Their efforts reflected lived settler colonialism and lived capitalism, where power structures impinged upon livelihoods over generations. The late nineteenth century saw social divisions as the Métis adapted to life after the fur trade. The rise of different central authorities and disaggregated governments led Métis communities to claim a national identity in Canada in a way that Métis communities in the United States could not. There, Métis families claimed membership as part of the Turtle Mountain band in the United States. The early twentieth century saw these identity categories continue, with newer generations claiming different forms of self-government and rights. These ideas and communication sought to empower these communities, advocating for unified responses to changing economic pressures and external discourses. Future research, with an eye to gender and broader socioeconomic analysis, would further illuminate the legitimacy

and awareness of these ideas and categories, particularly between men and women and among the proletarianized.

Future research could also link my study to the late twentieth-century and early twenty-first-century social and political histories. One avenue would be the evolution of Métis nationalism. After the Great Depression and the Second World War, many liberal democratic nation-states, like Canada and the United States, developed welfare provisions and redistributive policies to stabilize capitalist economies and neutralize appeals to more radical transformation. In the mid-twentieth century, Canadian provincial and federal governments increasingly saw the Métis as a distinct 'problem.' Academics and civil servants then implemented top-down remedies to rural and urban Métis poverty and disadvantage. This context led to the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF). The MMF could be considered part of contemporary Indigenous peoples' sociopolitical movements, like the National Congress of American Indians in the United States and the National Brotherhood of Indians in Canada. After more than a century of dispossession and paternalistic governance, these organizations sought the recognition of collective rights to land and political independence. The movements referenced the earlier treaty-making processes and used increasingly global concepts, like human rights and Indigenous rights, to pursue litigation and legislative petitions against nation-states. The MMF pursued at least two objectives. Unlike earlier efforts around education rights, one goal was litigation for land administered by the federal government under the *Manitoba Act*. Another was legal rights based upon the status of the Métis as an 'aboriginal people.' The latter led to Canadian constitutional reform to incorporate 'aboriginal rights' in 1982.

However, Métis national identities gradually drew on Turtle Mountain, if not politically and legally than culturally. Turtle Mountain evaded federal termination of their government and

reservation and finally won more significant compensation for land seizure. Turtle Mountain eventually pursued employment programs, higher education, linguistic revitalization, and codification of Michif in the 1970s and 1980s. After the economic slowdown of the late 1970s, liberal democratic countries became less dedicated to redistributive policies and social welfare provisions. The central states gradually retreated as a regulator of deindustrializing market economies. In this evolving context, political claims increasingly harnessed cultural identities to articulate rights and carve out space within increasingly unequal economies. In the 1990s and 2000s, Métis nationalism came to the centre of Michif to emphasize cultural distinctiveness despite the historical commitments of early twentieth-century Manitoba Métis nationalists to the French. The MMF has sought greater self-governance and control over, for example, employment programs, family services, and education.

In any case, the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries witnessed a new version of Métis nationalism. In Canada, the Métis came to be called 'the forgotten people.' The implication is that the Métis were once known in Canada, but the same cannot necessarily be said for the United States. Neither were natural outcomes. Both were social consequences of historical processes.

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