
Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository

8-16-2022 1:00 PM

War and Wilderness: Intersections With Patriotism and Masculinity in Canadian Second World War Alternative Service Work

Rosemary Giles, *The University of Western Ontario*

Supervisor: MacEachern, Alan, *The University of Western Ontario*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in History

© Rosemary Giles 2022

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd>



Part of the [Canadian History Commons](#), [History of Gender Commons](#), [Military History Commons](#), and the [Other History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Giles, Rosemary, "War and Wilderness: Intersections With Patriotism and Masculinity in Canadian Second World War Alternative Service Work" (2022). *Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository*. 8839.
<https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/8839>

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Scholarship@Western. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository by an authorized administrator of Scholarship@Western. For more information, please contact wlsadmin@uwo.ca.

1.1 Abstract

This thesis shows how ASW work in Canadian wilderness during the Second World War offered conscientious objectors the opportunity to prove themselves good citizens to the nation, and good men to themselves. Conscientious objectors' work in Alternative Service Camps is used to demonstrate how masculinity and patriotism were constructed within the camps. This thesis addresses the interactions that conscientious objectors had with wilderness, primarily through their work with forestry and fire fighting. It also addresses the construction of masculinity and national identity in the context of the Canadian wilderness. Furthermore, this work seeks to expand understanding of the conscientious objector experience in Canada by addressing pacifist groups outside of the Mennonite community.

Keywords

Conscientious objectors, Canadian history, Second World War, Alternative Service Work, Oral history, Wilderness, Masculinity, Patriotism, Nationalism.

Summary for Lay Audience

This thesis looks at conscientious objectors in Canada, specifically those who were sent to Alternative Service Work Camps during the Second World War. The men who were sent to these camps were viewed as bad citizens and cowardly men because they refused to take up arms or wear a uniform to fight in the war. They instead worked on building roads, in forestry, and in forest fire fighting. There is evidence that the men were able to prove that they were good Canadian citizens by working in these camps and, as a result, were viewed more favourably by the Canadian public by the end of the war. The men were also able to demonstrate their masculinity individually through work and leisure activities within the camps.

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to acknowledge my supervisor Dr. Alan MacEachern for reading my drafts and providing endless advice. Without your guidance, this work would not have come to fruition and would have remained an abstract concept. You pushed me to improve my writing and academic capabilities which I know will be something I use for the rest of my life. You provided me with countless professional opportunities which I would not have had otherwise.

Thank you to my family for always being the first ones to hear my new ideas, the good and the bad. I cannot count the times that you were the first to receive my calls about the next idea for my thesis, most of which never warranted writing down. Mum, Dad, you helped me get to where I am today and for that I am forever in your debt.

Thank you to my office mates – friends, for providing useful inspiration, and useful distraction, when it was needed most. I will always be appreciative of your kind yet pointed ability to poke holes in my argument when it needed strengthening, sharing books throughout the office that would help each other improve our work, and never having to wait in the Tim Hortons' line myself.

Lastly, but certainly not least, I would like to acknowledge my wonderful partner, Xavier, for his endless support as I switched through more thesis topics than I would like to admit and giving me pep talks when they were much needed. Thank you. I am certain that your uncanny ability to know when I needed a visit to the barn saved me from endless breakdowns.

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| 1.1 Abstract..... | i |
| Summary for Lay Audience..... | iii |
| Acknowledgments..... | iv |
| Table of Contents..... | v |
| List of Abbreviations..... | vi |
| Chapter 1..... | 1 |
| 1 Introduction..... | 1 |
| Chapter 2..... | 28 |
| 2 Understanding Alternative Service Work..... | 28 |
| Chapter 3..... | 44 |
| 3 Nature and Nationalism..... | 44 |
| Chapter 4..... | 77 |
| 4 “Unmanly” Men and “Manly” Work..... | 77 |
| Chapter 5..... | 97 |
| 5 Conclusion..... | 97 |
| Bibliography..... | 104 |
| Curriculum Vitae..... | 110 |

List of Abbreviations

| Abbreviation | Definition |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ASW | Alternative Service Work |
| BCFS | British Columbia Forestry Service |
| CCC | Civilian Conservation Corps |
| CHPC | Conference of Historic Peace Churches |
| CO | Conscientious Objector |
| NRMA | National Resource Mobilization Act |
| POW | Prisoner of War |

Chapter 1

1 Introduction

In 1943, Norman Walters of Camp Q-3 in the British Columbia Forestry Service (BCFS) wrote of the first fire of the season that he and his camp mates were sent to tackle:

With no more delay we reached the summit and found the fire which was a lightning strike and not very large. The fire did not even interest me when I saw the wonderful sight afforded from this peak. Below stretched out Buttles Lake for as far as the eye could see. It is 20 miles long and averages a mile wide. Nestling between two ranges of mountains that arise almost directly from the shore. One must gasp for wonder at the handiwork of the Creator in fashioning this magnificent spectacle. The stoic grandeur of the mountains seems to smile down at this expanse of blue below. If one could only record on paper the various shades of blue on the lake, it would be worth climbing for. One can see the depth of the lake by the shade of blue. We cannot help but say, "Here is a scene undefiled by the greed of men." Below stretches out nature in its maiden form, leaving one breathless with awe.¹

Like many other conscientious objectors (COs)² in Canada, Walters served some of his Alternative Service Work (ASW) term as part of the BCFS. The men were stationed strategically throughout Vancouver Island, allowing them easier access to the wildfires they were tasked with extinguishing.³ Walters' article, published in *The Beacon*, a CO newspaper, provides a poetic account of the wilderness that he faced upon leaving his camp. Although Walters provides just one anecdote of the untouched beauty of his camp's place in the forest, his experience was not unique. He demonstrates just how

¹ Norman Walters, "The First Fire of the Season," *The Beacon*, August 1943.

² Conscientious objectors are commonly referred to as COs or conchies amongst themselves and in the academic literature.

³ Current understandings of forest fires indicate that fire suppression is not a positive form of management and leads to ecological problems, including more destructive wildfires over time. During the time that COs were tasked with forest fire fighting, fire suppression was seen as an unequivocally positive form of forest management and so as a positive societal contribution.

closely COs engaged with the Canadian wilderness, simply defined as secluded natural areas, during their service term. Many of these men were in close, daily proximity to the Canadian wilderness as their ASW camps were either located in national parks, areas designed to preserve wilderness, or within other remote areas used for logging and forestry. CO engagement with wilderness and how this engagement affected the Canadian public's, and their own, sense of patriotism and masculinity will be explored throughout this thesis.

Men like Norman Walters refused to fight in the Second World War due to their religious convictions or their personal creed. The term conscientious objector refers to someone who does not believe in taking up arms, wearing a military uniform, or operating under military command even in non-combatant forces. The extent to which COs followed each of these tenets varied between religions and between individuals. Those who sought status as a CO predominantly belonged to pacifist religions and so fighting in a war went against their religious beliefs. Mennonites, Doukhobors, Hutterites, Quakers, and Jehovah's Witnesses were common pacifist religious groups in Canada during the Second World War. Some of these groups were protected by historic orders in council made when their ancestors first arrived in Canada stating that they would not have to complete military service, but these promises did not initially extend to all pacifists.⁴ The term CO was officially employed by the Canadian government to denote someone who has received accommodations against fighting due to their beliefs. There were likely many individuals who identified as COs but did not receive recognition

⁴ William Janzen, *Limits on Liberty: The Experiences of Mennonite, Hutterite, and Doukhobor Communities in Canada* (Toronto ON: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 198-9.

as such. This thesis uses the term to reference only those who were designated as COs by the Canadian government during the Second World War. Most of the men who were granted CO status were from pacifist religions, although there were some individuals from non-pacifist religions who also received CO status. To gain CO status these men had to request deferment of enlistment which, when approved, gave them the opportunity to serve in occupations outside of armed service. They were given several options for how they would contribute to the war effort: changing their mind and taking up arms, contributing to medical work or the medical corps, or working in wartime industry. Often, however, the individual chose none of these options, either because it would require the men to serve under military authority or to contribute directly to making items used in war, both of which went against their beliefs.

The COs who rejected all three of these options were sent to ASW camps located throughout Canada. The first ASW camps were opened in May 1941 at Riding Mountain National Park in Manitoba, Montreal River in Ontario, Prince Albert National Park in Saskatchewan, and Jasper National Park in Alberta.⁵ In August 1941, there were 290 COs in Montreal River, 200 men in Prince Albert, 290 in Riding Mountain, 150 in Jasper and 135 in Banff.⁶ Roughly one year into the program, many of the men were pulled from these camps to complete service in British Columbia doing forestry work and working in the BCFS.⁷ By 1943, some of the COs were again moved to work in agriculture instead

⁵ A.J. Klassen, *Alternative Service for Peace in Canada During World War II 1941-1946* (ColorCentrix Printoco, 1998), xi.

⁶ "COs Praised by Authorities," *Times Colonist*, August 29, 1941.

⁷ John Toews, *Alternative Service in Canada During World War II*, (Winnipeg: Publication Committee of the Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church, 1959), 52-3.

of the ASW camps.⁸ By 1945, the number of men in ASW had drastically diminished to only 196 men across all of the camps (compared to 1,268 two years earlier).⁹ The exact number of COs who went into the ASW camps is not clearly recorded, but John Toews, the foremost historian of COs in ASW, estimates it to be 3,904 out of 10,851 reported COs by the end of the war.¹⁰ This thesis will explore the experiences of COs in ASW from the outset of the Second World War in 1939, when discussions on ASW first began, until 1943, when many of the men working in the national parks, forest experiment stations, or the BCFS were moved to agricultural work and the ASW camps were made smaller.

The ASW camps can be put into one of four categories. First were the national park camps, at Banff, Glacier, Jasper, Kootenay, Prince Albert, Riding Mountain, and Yoho National Parks. Second were forest experimental stations: Kananaskis Camp in Seebe, Alberta, and Petawawa Camp, in Chalk River, Ontario. Third were surveying and engineering camps: Lac la Ronge Camp in northern Saskatchewan, and Montreal River Camp, in northwestern Ontario. Finally, there were the BCFS camps located on either the mainland or Vancouver Island, British Columbia.¹¹ Two of the camps, Kananaskis, Alberta and Petawawa, Ontario, were only open for 5 months in 1942.¹² While these camps were spread throughout the country, they were all located away from the general public, although close enough that the men were able to take weekend trips into

⁸ Toews, *Alternative Service in Canada*, 89.

⁹ Toews, *Alternative Service in Canada*, 94, 82.

¹⁰ Toews, *Alternative Service in Canada*, 82, 95.

¹¹ Thomas P. Socknat, *Witness Against War: Pacifism in Canada 1900-1945* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 238.

¹² Toews, *Alternative Service in Canada*, 78-80.

populated areas, and they were located in areas typically seen as wilderness – some were near mountains, some were near water, and most were located in forests. The ASW program was managed by a wartime Alternative Service branch of the Department of Labour, except for the BCFS, which was independently managed.¹³ The work duties varied between camps, but included splitting and cutting firewood, harvesting ice, removing dead trees, assisting in the construction of the Trans-Canada Highway, and, in the BCFS camps, fighting fires. Like Walters, many of the COs in ASW had a close relationship with the wilderness as they completed their work in secluded and natural areas away from the disapproving public.

COs were seen in a very negative light by much of the Canadian public because they were viewed as shirking their patriotic and manly duty. As COs were generally considered to be “bad” Canadian citizens who refused to fight for their nation, ASW provides a useful opportunity to identify whether these men were able to remedy the beliefs of the public and, if so, to what extent. The central question of this thesis is whether the COs’ experience in wilderness during ASW made them more patriotic and masculine in the eyes of the Canadian public, and whether this experience changed how they viewed themselves. Exploring COs’ encounters with wilderness is necessary for interpreting their experience overall, and how they were received by the Canadian public during and after the Second World War.

“Wilderness” has historically been defined by Western societies as the natural world undisturbed by humanity, untouched by humans and left as natural as when it was

¹³ Toews, *Alternative Service in Canada*, 51.

first created. This definition has even been formalized in law, such as the U.S. Wilderness Act of 1964 which calls “wilderness” “an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.”¹⁴ There are then two troubles with “wilderness.” First, it erases the long history of Indigenous presence from the land – in some cases for millennia – setting up settler colonialism for justification of possession. Second, it requires the removal of Indigenous peoples to continue into the present. When setting up the world’s first national park system with parks such as Yosemite and Yellowstone, the United States removed Indigenous peoples from within their borders.¹⁵ When the Canadian parks system was established, its managers took a similar approach. For example, in Banff, the first Canadian national park, Indigenous peoples were prevented from hunting and gathering on what was their traditional territory. This decision was made by settler-colonialists out of their concern for the alleged destruction of the natural area that occurred from their hunting, despite the fact that they had been managing the area for thousands of years with little issue.¹⁶ Likewise, in Riding Mountain National Park, where one of the ASW camps was located, members of the Keeseekoowenin Ojibwe band were expelled from their traditional territory following the establishment of the park.¹⁷ In order for settler-colonialists to use

¹⁴ Mark Dowie, *Conservation Refugees: The Hundred-Year Conflict Between Global Conservation and Native Peoples* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2009), xvi.

¹⁵ Ezra D. Rashkow, “Idealizing Inhabited Wilderness: A Revision to the History of Indigenous Peoples and National Parks.” *History Compass* 12, no. 10 (October 1, 2014): 819. doi:10.1111/hic3.12190.

¹⁶ Theodore Binnema, and Melanie Niemi. “‘Let the Line Be Drawn Now’: Wilderness, Conservation, and the Exclusion of Aboriginal People from Banff National Park in Canada.” *Environmental History* 11 (4): 725, 2006. <https://doi.org/10.1093/envhis/11.4.724>.

¹⁷ John Sandlos, “Not Wanted in the Boundary: The Expulsion of the Keeseekoowenin Ojibway Band from Riding Mountain National Park,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 89 (2): 190–92, 2008, <https://doi.org/10.3138/chr.89.2.189>.

these spaces in the way that they desired, “uninhabited wilderness had to be created before it could be preserved.”¹⁸

As can be seen in the case of American national parks, as well as parks in Canada such as Riding Mountain and Banff, the pretense of “wilderness” has been used to justify the erasure of Indigenous land rights. Lands which are defined as “untouched” and “undisturbed by humanity” are lands that can readily be taken and managed by settler-colonialists. By presenting the space in this way, Indigenous peoples and their history on the land are simply erased. “Wilderness” is not only a problematic term because it erases this history, but because it also ignores Indigenous conceptions of land. An illustrative example of this is presented by Mark Dowie in his book *Conservation Refugees: The Hundred-Year Conflict Between Global Conservation and Native People*, where he discussed his experience explaining the concept of “wilderness” to an Ojibway woman in Northern Canada. After trying to explain what he meant, she started to laugh and said, “the only place she had ever seen that she thought [he] was describing as wild was a street corner outside the bus station in Winnipeg, Manitoba.”¹⁹

“Wilderness,” then is a highly problematic term. But it is unavoidable in this thesis, because it was the word of choice among settler-colonialist Canadians in this era for the *concept* and *ideal* of nature to which they so often strove. They imagined sublime nature such as mountains and forests as undisturbed and unpeopled. And they thought of such nature and interactions in such nature as an important component of Canadian

¹⁸ Rashkow, “Idealizing Inhabited Wilderness,” 819.

¹⁹ Dowie, *Conservation Refugees*, 19.

identity. Therefore, I will use the term “wilderness” throughout this thesis – without quotation marks, because they might confuse the reader as to whether the term is being quoted – as a means of showing how the nature under discussion was understood and being treated at the time. Underlying its use will be an understanding of its problematic nature. Given the scope of this research, my discussion of wilderness as a colonial term is limited, however there is a large wealth of literature which discusses the problematic nature of the term and how it has continued to facilitate and justify the dispossession of Indigenous peoples.

Part of the settler-colonial construction of wilderness was contrasting this natural place with the “made” world.²⁰ The idea of COs being immersed in the wilderness may seem incompatible with their living in work camps, but, as historian Tina Loo emphasizes in *States of Nature: Conserving Canada’s Wildlife in the Twentieth Century*, humanity has always had a large influence on the construction and management of wild nature.²¹ While wilderness is defined as this remote natural space, ironically, it requires humans to define it as such. This is elaborated on in William Cronon’s essay “The Trouble with Wilderness.” He posits that while many scholars position the wilderness as one of the places on earth that remains untouched, and uninfluenced by humans, it is fundamentally constructed by humanity and their interaction with it.²² Cronon outlines the changing societal ideas of what wilderness has meant to society. He cites English

²⁰ Colin Coates and Graeme Wynne eds., *The Nature of Canada* (Vancouver: On Points Press, 2019), 4.

²¹ Graeme Wynn, “Troubles with Nature,” foreword of *States of Nature: Conserving Canada’s Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), xxi.

²² William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness; Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature.” *Environmental History* 1 (1996): 7.

material as late as the 18th century that referred to “wilderness” as spaces that were barren, desolate, and savage; wilderness then, was a scary and unappealing place. By the 19th and 20th century, however, “wilderness” had become synonymous with an Eden, a place of natural beauty for North American settlers.²³ How then, could a place that changed so drastically in the eyes of humanity remain separate from human influence? In short, it could not and did not. Not only was the perceived wilderness closely tied to how society interacted with it and lived in proximity of it, but wilderness began to take on broader meanings as well. How humanity perceived wilderness changed throughout the years, based on the present social and political make-up of society.

Cronon attributes the transformation of the wilderness idea to a growing aesthetic appreciation, by Romantics, and economic appreciation, by settler societies, for “new,” “unsettled” nature.²⁴ These ideas came together to create a wilderness that was associated with positive moral values and cultural symbols, and not seen as just a desolate landscape.²⁵ It was something simultaneously romanticized as untouched and valued as something to be conquered.²⁶ Historians Colin Coates and Graeme Wynn write in *The Nature of Canada* that nature at the turn of the 20th century was viewed as a place of worship, and as an area that provided vast resources.²⁷ Further, it was a place of health and vitality which offered a reprieve from the ills of modern society, by remedying urban

²³ Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness,” 8-9.

²⁴ Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness,” 13.

²⁵ Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness,” 9-10.

²⁶ Phil Macnaghten and John Urry, *Contested Natures*, (London: SAGE, 1998), 34.

²⁷ Coates and Wynn eds, “Introduction,” in *The Nature of Canada*, 4.

stress and anxiety.²⁸ Although the wild was given these positive correlations, it was seen as something often engaged with in a controlled manner.

National parks were one of the ways that Canadians were provided with a controlled wilderness. The national parks system was established in Canada in 1885 when the federal government set aside the land which would become Banff National Park for public use. In 1911, the Members of the House of Commons passed a vote creating the Dominion Parks Branch which would manage the country's forest reserves and national parks. When the vote was passed, the Members of Parliament mostly focused on the economic elements of the parks, mainly the large timber supply.²⁹ Unlike the Members of Parliament, James Harkin, the first Commissioner of the Dominion Parks Branch, stressed not only the economic reasons for preserving wilderness, but also the "humanitarian" reasons – the physical, spiritual, social, and patriotic benefits.³⁰ His vision for Canadian national parks is important as it demonstrates that the parks were not just places that contained valuable resources, but also grew to have social meaning as well. These ideas have been associated with the national parks from their origin. Within the annual reports on the parks, Harkin would not only include the economic importance of the parks, but he would also detail these social benefits such as bodily health and rejuvenation.³¹

²⁸ Sharon Wall, *The Nurture of Nature: Childhood, Antimodernism, and Ontario Summer Camps, 1920-55* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), 7.

²⁹ Claire Elizabeth Campbell, ed., *A Century of Parks Canada*, (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2011), 1-2.

³⁰ Alan MacEachern, *Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada, 1935-1970*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 30.

³¹ MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 31.

National parks were believed to promote such desired settler-Canadian values because they were in wilderness, as were all the ASW camps. The creators of the national parks clearly outlined the values that they expected the parks to instil, which is something that the creators of the ASW camps did not do. National parks, however, can serve as a stand in as they were part of the same culture that had the same ideas of wilderness. These so-called humanitarian values associated with national parks were fundamental to the experiences of COs in ASW, particularly with how national parks were viewed with relation to the Canadian nation and to masculinity. Harkin outlined the connection between healthy masculinity and national parks in 1916, in the midst of the First World War: “National Parks exist for the purpose of providing for all the people of Canada facilities for acquiring that virile and efficient manhood so noticeable in Canadian military training camps.”³² To Harkin, national parks were places where men were able to become more manly. By the 1920s, the parks were also being increasingly promoted as places that made better Canadian citizens.³³ National parks became “a construction of nationhood, a source of national identity, and a means of symbolically linking the human presence to the wild.”³⁴ While national parks were linked to ideas of nation and manhood, they were also places known for being in what settlers deemed wilderness. Harkin would refer to these national parks as wilderness parks, alluding to the way that the natural world within the parks was viewed.³⁵ Most of the ASW camps were located within

³² Canada, Department of the Interior, Annual Report, Report of the Commissioner of National Parks 1916, cited in MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 31.

³³ MacEachern, *Natural Selections*, 37.

³⁴ Melody Hessing, Rebecca Raglon, Catriona Sandilands, eds., “Making a Living: Making a Life,” *This Elusive Land: Women and the Canadian Environment* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 80-1.

³⁵ Lyle Dick, “Epilogue,” in Campbell, ed., *A Century of Parks Canada*, 372.

Canadian national parks. Those that were not were still located in wilderness similar to that preserved in the national parks and thus were ascribed much of the same meaning. Wilderness was given the same social meaning whether it was inside a national park or outside one, with the only difference being national accreditation. By being placed in ASW camps within the national parks or other wilderness areas, COs could inadvertently engage with these ideas of masculinity and national identity that were established both in the early years of the park system, and in the years prior.

As a topic, ASW has been infrequently addressed by academics. Most publications related to wartime ASW are part of histories of pacifist religious denominations or are anthologies of CO experiences. The few Canadian academic works on ASW focus on religion and ethnicity as the primary lenses of analysis, which undoubtedly played an important role in the experiences of COs. The present thesis argues, however, that religion and ethnicity should be analyzed in conjunction to place – in this case, wilderness places – to fully understand COs' time in ASW. For many men, ASW was tied so closely to Canadian wilderness that it ought to be used to further understand and analyse their experiences in the Second World War. I argue that Alternative Service Workers associated wilderness with patriotism and masculinity, and so immersing themselves in it allowed them to be seen (and see themselves) as patriotic, and masculine. While most of the literature on COs emphasizes the Mennonite experience, this thesis traces the experiences of COs who were Quakers, Dukhobors, Hutterites, members of the United Church, or those who were not known to be associated with any specific pacifist denomination.

ASW has been written about in both scholarly and popular publications. It has not been extensively studied by academic historians, however, and thus there is a dearth of peer-reviewed literature on the topic. By incorporating popular sources into the history of COs and ASW, I am able to construct a much richer academic history on the topic with a heavy emphasis on personal accounts of ASW.

One of the foremost scholarly books on COs in Canada is Amy Shaw's *Crisis of Conscience: Conscientious Objection in Canada during the First World War*. Shaw's focus on Canadian ideals during wartime provides an important foundation for understanding the CO in the Canadian context, which can generally also be applied to the Second World War. These ideals include a heavy emphasis on the idea that that good citizens fight for their nation, as do good men, so those that do not fight are considered neither good citizens nor good men. While this general context is useful, the experiences of COs in the two wars were different. In the First World War, COs were able to remain in their occupations and homes after declaring their status, whereas in the Second World War, COs had to either select a wartime industry to move into or else be forced into ASW. Because Shaw's book does not deal with the Second World War, it provides no insight into the experiences that COs had in ASW.³⁶

David Fransen completed his MA thesis in 1977, entitled "Canadian Mennonites and Conscientious Objection in World War II." Fransen's thesis is centred around Mennonite COs and themes of internal unity and government recognition of non-resistant status

³⁶ Amy Shaw, *Crisis of Conscience: Conscientious Objection in Canada during the First World War* (British Columbia: UBC Press, 2009).

throughout the war. He emphasizes the impact of religion on the Mennonite experience during the Second World War. His work is invaluable to the study of ASW as he provides extensive information on the structure of the ASW program and how the Mennonites were received by the public during and after their work terms. However, Fransen's work lacks analysis of non-Mennonite COs because he emphasizes that Mennonites were the largest and so most important group of COs. This is a theme present in many of the other publications on COs.³⁷

William Janzen published *Limits on Liberty: The Experience of Mennonite, Hutterite and Doukhobor Communities in Canada* in 1990. It is one of the few publications on COs that includes a discussion of non-Mennonite religions. Within his chapter on the Second World War, Janzen provides a chronological overview of conscientious objection. He provides a more critical view of ASW than other historians and outlines the issues that were apparent in the program in both the early years and as the program diversified to include agriculture and other war work as well. Furthermore, Janzen included Doukhobor experiences that had been largely neglected by other historians. Janzen explains that many Doukhobors were unwilling to undertake any form of ASW and they believed that they should be exempt from both "direct or indirect war service," putting their beliefs in contrast to many other peace churches, in particular the Mennonites.³⁸ *Limits on Liberty* provides significantly more detail on the experiences of non-Mennonite COs, although it is still limited due to the relatively short length of its Second World War content.

³⁷ David Fransen, "Canadian Mennonites and Conscientious Objection in World War II," MA diss., (University of Waterloo, 1977), 159.

³⁸ Janzen, *Limits on Liberty*, 230-231.

One of the only scholarly books that reference the experience of non-Mennonite COs is *Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada: Champions of Freedom of Speech and Worship* by M. James Penton. Penton includes a single chapter on COs in the Second World War, mostly focusing on the treatment of Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada by the public and the government. He picks up the discussion of Jehovah's Witnesses in ASW in 1943, when their religion was no longer banned.³⁹ Penton identifies the primary difference between Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada and other peace-based religions during the war: whereas other pacifists were protected under historic agreements that their ancestors had made with the Dominion Government, Jehovah's Witnesses had no such protection in place.⁴⁰ Penton also briefly discusses the differences in opinion that Jehovah's Witnesses held pertaining to wartime contribution. While most COs had no objection to funding for the Canadian Red Cross being levied off their farm wages, this was something that Jehovah's Witnesses objected to as it was seen as indirect support of the war.⁴¹ Penton's work is valuable in providing one of the few discussions of Jehovah's Witnesses during the Second World War and their experience with conscientious objection but, because they joined ASW much later than other pacifists, he seldom discusses their experiences in the camps.

Bill Waiser provides a preliminary look at how COs engaged with the natural world in a handful of ASW camps in Western Canada in his publication *Park Prisoners: The Untold Story of Western Canada's National Parks, 1915-1946*. Although COs make up

³⁹ James Penton, *Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada: Champions of Freedom of Speech and Worship* (Toronto, ON: Maclean-Hunter Press, 1976), 155-63.

⁴⁰ Penton, *Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada*, 162-3.

⁴¹ Penton, *Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada*, 169.

only one chapter in his publication, he uses oral histories, government documents, and government correspondences to talk about CO experiences in Western Canadian ASW camps.⁴² Waiser predominantly discusses the work that the men completed, but also touches on their personal experiences with the camps. Ultimately, he argues that the COs in national parks were seen by the Parks Bureau as another form of cheap labour for them to exploit for work projects, after the closure of relief work camps during the Great Depression. He also addresses the fact that the national parks work did little to contribute to the war effort. Waiser's work is invaluable to this study as he is one of the few historians who addresses in detail the experiences of COs in ASW and how they engaged with the Canadian wilderness during their work. Amongst the major academic works on COs and ASW, there is significant information on how one became a CO and ended up in ASW, but they are lacking analysis of how the ASW camps themselves affected the experiences of the COs. Waiser somewhat remedies this. Where his work falls short, however, is in only looking at a handful of ASW camps to draw conclusions about the views that the public and other political figures held about COs and their work.

Beyond scholarly publications, there are many public histories written on Canadian ASW and COs. *Alternative Service in Canada During World War Two* by J.A. Toews is perhaps the most widely cited publications within the Canadian CO literature. Although Toews does undertake historical research, he also has personal experience with the topic as he was closely associated with the Historic Peace Churches during the Second World War. His book was published in 1959, so while he was able to draw on his own personal

⁴² Bill Waiser, *Park Prisoners: The Untold Story of Western Canada's National Parks, 1915-1946* (Saskatoon, SK: Fifth House Publishers, 1995).

experiences while writing, his look at the CO experience is now quite outdated. He was limited in the number of documents available to him at the time of publication. Within his book, Toews discusses the immigration of Mennonites, Quakers, Hutterites, and Doukhobors to Canada and their organization of Historic Peace Churches for Alternative Service, followed by an overview of government policy and regulation with regards to deferment of military service and the creation of the ASW program. The remainder of his book is a look at the work that COs undertook within ASW, including agriculture and other war-related industries. He concludes with a chapter on the contributions and achievements of ASW in Canada. Toews' book provides extensive and valuable detail on the topic. He consults numerous primary sources, as well as draws upon his own experience with ASW, to put forward an impressive argument that COs and ASW are an important part of Canadian history and ought to be treated that way by Canadians of the future.⁴³

E. Morris Sider's history of the Brethren in Christ in Canada, entitled *Two Hundred Years of Tradition and Change*, centres COs in a broader chapter on peace during wartime. Sider explains that the pacifist beliefs of the Brethren were closely tied to those of the Mennonite Church.⁴⁴ Sider addresses how the Brethren engaged with the difficulties of being pacifists during wartime to argue that the war helped to strengthen their church's views on war and peace. Their experiences with war helped them better understand their pacifist stance because of their constant need to defend it. He also argues

⁴³ Toews, *Alternative Service in Canada*, 112.

⁴⁴ E. Morris Sider, *The Brethren in Christ in Canada: Two Hundred Years of Tradition and Change* (Hamilton, ON: Canadian Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church, 1988), 1.

that both the First and Second World War brought the Brethren church much closer to Mennonite communities with whom they had many ties.⁴⁵ Although his analysis of conscientious objection in the Second World War is not extensive, Sider expresses the same positive attitude that many other books on this topic do. He states that “the two world wars of the twentieth century, hard as they were..., were educative” and they “helped to clarify and strengthen Brethren in Christ views on war and peace.”⁴⁶ *When Canada Called: Manitoba Mennonites and World War II* is another example of a broad history of a pacifist religion. In this book, Ronald Friesen writes about the experiences of Manitoba Mennonites during the Second World War, situated within a general overview of this religious group, rather than a specific history of COs or ASW. He provides a chronological breakdown of the war for Mennonites, beginning with mobilization for war and progressing through to their involvement in agriculture and with Victory Bonds, and eventually to a chapter on COs. Friesen includes how men obtained CO status, as well as what they did to serve out their ASW. While he does provide some level of analysis, the vast majority of his material on the Second World War is focused on interviews and anecdotes from COs to illustrate their experience without situating them into a broader historical context.

William Janzen published a second book about COs in 1990. Despite its detailed research, *Sam Martin Went to Prison* is not a scholarly publication. It is a much darker look at the experience of COs in the Second World War and illustrates a viewpoint which is often missing from other CO literature. It follows the true story of Sam Martin, an

⁴⁵ Sider, *The Brethren in Christ in Canada*, 239.

⁴⁶ Sider, *The Brethren in Christ in Canada*, 238-9.

Albertan Mennonite man who, when he appeared in front of the Mobilization Board in Edmonton, was told he had not convinced the judge of his religious stance as a CO. This led to a series of events which resulted in Martin being sent to jail after thrice refusing to serve as a soldier when he was called for service. The book's goal is to use Martin's story as a case study of conscientious objection in Canada. It allows Janzen to present a more critical view of the allowances made in Canada for COs and discuss the many issues with the policy that was created during the war. *Sam Martin Went to Prison* is one of the few publications on conscientious objection in Canada that outrightly discusses the negatives of the experience and the issues that were present with the system created. As he did in his larger, more traditional historical publication in the same year, in *Sam Martin Went to Prison* Janzen again dedicates a noteworthy section of his book to looking at non-Mennonite COs. In this case he only provides limited detail on ASW because his Doukhobor and Jehovah's Witness subjects refused to participate in ASW.⁴⁷

Many of the publications on ASW and COs in the Second World War are anthologies of memoirs. The first of these, published in 1995, was *Alternative Service Memoirs*.⁴⁸ Each chapter is written by a different CO about their experience during the war, but they provide no broader historical analysis, nor argument. In 1998, *Alternative Service for Peace* was compiled by A.J. Klassen. As in the previous compilation, each chapter describes a different CO's experience.⁴⁹ This format is also present in *Called to be a Soldier: Experiences of COs at Alternative Service Camps During WWII*, which was

⁴⁷ William Janzen and Frances Greaser, *Sam Martin Went to Prison* (Winnipeg, MB: Kindred Press, 1990).

⁴⁸ Klassen, John Klassen, "Alternative Service Memoirs," (Unpublished manuscript, 1995, typescript).

⁴⁹ Klassen, *Alternative Service for Peace*.

published in 2014 by Darrell Frey, after interviewing COs. It appears as though Frey's goal was to create an accurate narrative throughout his book, rooted in interviews, documentation, and letters. However, he admits to embellishing many of the conversations and minor details to make a "readable story."⁵⁰ What he ends up producing reads more like a work of historical fiction, but throughout his book are a significant number of documents, pictures, and maps, all of which do provide factual information on the men in his book. As a whole, these group memoirs provide useful information as to the lived experiences of COs in ASW, but they fall short of providing historical analysis to further understand these experiences. The public histories are similar in two other ways. First, there is very little written on any but Mennonite COs, although individuals from other pacifist religions, including Christadelphians, Hutterites, Doukhobors, and Jehovah's Witnesses were also able to seek CO status. The majority of CO history of these groups is either recorded within Mennonite's histories or are briefly referenced in broader pacifist histories. Second, little is written about how the men's experiences in the ASW camps influenced them as people and influenced Canadians' opinions of them.

Given the limits of past scholarship on COs and ASW, this thesis will access a broad range of primary sources to explore what work in wilderness meant to the CO experience and to Canadians' opinion of COs. These sources include oral interview collections, CO and mainstream newspapers, and church archival records. Central to understanding masculinity and patriotism in ASW are the lived experiences of COs, which are drawn from oral history interviews conducted with COs who worked in ASW. The two

⁵⁰ David Frey, *Called to be a Soldier: Experiences of COs at Alternative Service Camps during WWII* (Wallenstein, ON: Vineyard Publications, 2014), 7.

interview sets that were consulted were conducted by David Fransen for his master's thesis, and Bill Waiser for his book *Park Prisoners*.⁵¹ Fransen's 23 interviews, accessed through the Mennonite Archives of Ontario, involved conversations with 35 individuals involved with ASW. His research is particularly useful as it was undertaken with the goal of creating a broad understanding of the experiences of Mennonite COs in ASW during the Second World War. Waiser's interviews were accessed, in transcript form, through the University of Saskatchewan Archives and Special Collections. Waiser conducted 16 interviews with COs who completed their ASW in Western Canadian national parks. Waiser's interviews, while useful, do present a few problems. First, his interviews were more selective, and his notes only provide direct answers to each of his questions. Second, his interviews are still restricted, so the names of the participants are redacted. For both of these reasons, his interviews supplement the 35 individuals whom Fransen interviewed, rather than acting as the primary dataset. All these interviews were conducted by other scholars and therefore are limited to the scope of research conducted by the original interviewer, rather than a set of questions prepared specifically for this thesis. However, these interviews provide significantly more information than what previous authors had available.

I hand-coded both sets of transcripts, instead of using a software, in order to better understand what the COs said about their experiences in ASW. As Waiser's interviews were already in transcript form, I was able to immediately begin the revision process. For

⁵¹ David Fransen, *Alternative Service in World War II Oral History Project*, Ontario Mennonite Archives, tape recordings, 1974-1975; Bill Waiser, *Bill Waiser Collection*, University of Saskatchewan Archives and Special Collections, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada.

Fransen's, which were all audio files, I used a software to provide a rough transcription of the interviews from the audio files, which I then went through while listening to the interviews to make changes to, and properly transcribe, the men's accounts. While reading through the transcripts, I looked for instances where the men talked about experiences relating to one of three important themes: wilderness, masculinity, and patriotism or nationalism. Rarely did the men directly reference one of the key words within their accounts of ASW. Instead, I coded quotes to a theme when they were clearly referencing an experience which related to one of the three. I was able to code these quotes under each of the themes to construct a better understanding of how the COs collectively felt about each of these subjects. The accounts of the men presented in this thesis are based on both direct quotations, and also broader understandings put together across different interviews.

Fransen's primary focus was on the religious experience that these men had during their time in ASW. The bulk of his questions were directly related to how their relationship with their religion changed, what their experience with both the pacifist element of their religion and their religious worship was, and their experience in Canada as COs during the war. His interviews ranged from one to three hours, which allowed him to discuss many topics with the men and allowed them to thoroughly answer each of his questions as well as digress into other topics as they saw fit. Waiser's interviews are provided in note form, with a number of the men having provided a written response to Waiser's questions instead of sitting down for a formal interview. He provided a very comprehensive summary of the topics discussed in his interviews and how the men

answered the questions. Waiser focused less on religion than Fransen did and more on the work that was completed and the experiences that the men had in the parks.

While the use of interviews provides the thematic foundation for this thesis, they were used in conjunction with numerous written sources to fill a gap in the history of conscientious objection. I reviewed both sets of interviews with different questions in mind than what was intended for the original publications, such as whether the COs felt like they were contributing to the war effort or the nation, and whether they referenced ideas of their manhood, or masculinity, and duty to their nation. The answers to these questions were then supplemented by other sources, predominantly Canadian newspapers, to ensure that wherever possible ASW is being looked at beyond the Mennonite experience. These newspapers were largely how the general public became informed about ASW and offer insight into Canadians' opinions of ASW. Materials from the United Church Archives were obtained by visiting their collection. they have an extensive collection on COs in the Second World War which provides insight into the experiences of COs from a non-traditionally pacifist church. In addition to the United Church material, this thesis will draw on three specific newspapers that were written by COs during their time in ASW: *The Northern Beacon*, *The Beacon*, and *The Canadian C.O.* Each of these publications was created with the goal of providing a sense of community and camaraderie amongst COs carrying out ASW terms all over Canada. The first newspaper published by COs during the war was *The Northern Beacon*, beginning in January 1942. It was published by the "Conchie boys of the Canadian Service Camp, Montreal River," in Ontario. The publishers outlined the many purposes of the newspaper as providing something for the men to do in their leisure time, for an easy way for the

men to send news home to family and friends, to enlighten the world to the activities taking place in the camps, and to build a sense of friendship among the men in the camp.⁵² In the October 1942 issue of *The Beacon*, published in Campbell River, British Columbia, the publishers outlined the purpose of that publication as being an “inter-camp communication to further create a respectful understanding and common fellowship amongst us.” Much like *The Northern Beacon*, this paper was designed to act as a newsletter for their family and friends back home and show how the COs in ASW lived up to their convictions of pacifism.⁵³ Significantly, *The Beacon* identified as an interdenominational publication which sought to provide equal opportunity to all religious groups.⁵⁴ Finally, *The Canadian C.O.* was published out of Montreal, Quebec from 1942-43. There are only three issues of *The Canadian C.O.* still in existence, but there are complete runs of *The Beacon* and *The Northern Beacon*. *The Canadian C.O.* has many of the same goals as the other two: creating camaraderie amongst Canadian COs and a desire to share what the men did in the ASW camps. It is difficult to assess the reach that these newspapers had throughout Canada. However, it is most likely that they were read by those whose family or friends were in ASW camps or were otherwise invested in the plight of pacifists. While they provide somewhat subjective accounts of the Second World War, they are immensely useful in understanding how the Canadian public felt about COs throughout the course of the war, as well as how COs themselves felt throughout the duration. In addition to CO newspapers, I use evidence from Canadian newspapers to provide more context on how COs were talked about during the Second

⁵² “Our First Edition,” *The Northern Beacon*, January 3, 1942, 1

⁵³ “Our Policy,” *The Beacon*, October 1942, 1.

⁵⁴ “Our Policy,” 22.

World War, and to what extent their ASW was reported on. They are also used to see how the Canadian public spoke about COs and the work that they completed. While useful, these sources do have limits particularly because many of them are editorials published in the newspapers. They do not necessarily represent a generalized Canadian opinion, which given the heavy regionalism in Canada may not even exist. While they cannot speak to Canadian opinions as a whole, as they are merely the opinions of singular individuals, they do paint a broader picture of how COs were viewed in Canada and can be situated within the broader context of CO treatment by Canadians during the war. Further, COs were discussed in these newspapers, although not as heavily as topics like the war itself and other home front activities.

Although there is a wealth of primary sources to draw on for this research, there are gaps within the analysis which ought to be mentioned. First, the majority of the interviews are conducted with individuals from Mennonite communities. While Mennonites made up one of the largest groups of COs in the Second World War, they were by no means the only group who sought CO status. The lack of interviews conducted with groups outside of the Mennonite community is reconciled in this thesis by using written sources from other groups when available. These include the three CO newspapers, the United Church archival material, and published histories from non-Mennonite religions. Second, there are a number of groups who sought CO status, such as Jehovah's Witnesses, who do not have open archives for researchers and individuals outside of their community. Their voices are frequently excluded from works on COs and ASW. Much of their experience is told through the publications of James Penton who has written considerably about their experience during the war. Finally, this study is limited

to COs in ASW. Out of 10,851 recorded COs by the end of the Second World War, over 70% were employed outdoors, doing work such as tree-planting, firefighting, mining, or farming. The remaining 30% were primarily employed in industries such as health care, food packing and processing plants, or were under review for their status as COs.⁵⁵ This thesis, however, purposely focuses only on the experiences of those in ASW, to explore how their immersion in wilderness affected their wartime experience.

I argue that evidence provided in CO newspapers, Canadian newspapers, and oral histories suggests that through their engagement with wilderness in ASW, COs were able to show themselves as patriotic individuals to Canadian society, while also asserting an accepted form of Canadian masculinity, contrary to beliefs that COs were unmasculine. To make this argument, I will begin, in chapter two, by providing a brief overview of the history of COs and ASW during the Second World War. The third chapter details evidence to suggest that by engaging with the Canadian wilderness, COs were able to show that they were patriotic citizens. It will provide an extensive overview of societal views and attitudes towards COs and how this changed over the course of the war because of the work that they conducted in ASW. The fourth chapter will expand on existing ideas of militarism, masculinity, and the CO to look at how engagement with wilderness coincides with the construction of masculinity. It will contextualize masculinity in Canada during the Second World War, masculinity in pacifist communities, as well as frontier masculinity. Ultimately it will demonstrate how COs were able to assert an acceptable form of Canadian masculinity through their work in

⁵⁵ Toews, *Alternative Service in Canada*, 61.

wilderness, despite Canadian society viewing them as emasculate individuals. Each of these chapters will contribute to the overall argument that COs were able to assert themselves as masculine and patriotic individuals through their ASW and engagement with Canadian wilderness.

Chapter 2

2 Understanding Alternative Service Work

Conscientious objectors make up a unique part of Canada's wartime history, in that they refused to participate in the war. The experience of conscientious objection in Canada during the Second World War was largely shaped by the experiences and lessons the federal government learned from the First World War. At the outset of the First World War, Canada relied on voluntary recruits to fill the ranks of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. Those who objected to the war were able to continue their lives in whatever vocation they were in prior to the war. When the voluntary recruitment numbers began to dwindle, the Military Service Act of 1917 was implemented, becoming a highly controversial law that divided Canadians. The act allowed conscription throughout the country, pushing those who had chosen not to fight into military garb at a rapid pace. This law also included an exemption for a select list of individuals who were prohibited by their faith from taking up arms and carrying out service as a combatant. One who "conscientiously objects to the undertaking of combat service and is prohibited from doing so by the tenets and articles of faith...of any organized religious denomination existing and well recognized in Canada...and to which he in good faith belongs" was able to apply for the status of CO.⁵⁶ Although these men were able to stay home and continue in their occupations, doing so was not straightforward. There was a lot of discontent among other Canadians who thought that COs were not doing their duty to country.⁵⁷ Elven Shantz was interviewed by David Fransen, as he had an unusual perspective on

⁵⁶ Shaw, *Crisis of Conscience*, 29.

⁵⁷ Shaw, *Crisis of Conscience*, 120-1.

pacifism in Canada during wartime. He was a CO in the First World War and was heavily involved in the Conference of Historic Peace Churches (CHPC) and its advocacy to give all COs an alternative to uniformed service during the Second World War. In Shantz's interview he emphasized that allowing COs to remain at home exposed them to public harassment and antagonism for their convictions. He recalled the story of one CO that he knew during the First World War who was dragged one evening to a recruiting office by a dozen women in an attempt to make him enlist.⁵⁸ Shantz' story was not unique as COs were often treated poorly and cruelly by the public, who did not understand or empathize with their convictions.

At the onset of the Second World War, the Canadian government again outlined its terms for service in the 1940 National Resources Mobilization Act (NRMA). Unlike the Military Service Act of 1917, the NRMA did not conscript Canadians, but rather enforced mandatory enlistment for home front duties and military training. Those who were forced to enlist were promised that they would not see combat or overseas service. However, they were as fully trained as any other soldier in preparation for attacks on Canada. Due to the combative nature of this training, service until the NRMA still went against the beliefs of many COs. The non-combatant service that was outlined under the NRMA would still force COs to serve under military command and wear a military uniform, and thus would still be associated with the war and violence that they so opposed.⁵⁹ Under the NRMA, the only individuals able to obtain CO status were those who belonged to specific peace churches who, under historic orders in council, were

⁵⁸ Elven Shantz, interviewed by David Fransen, Kitchener, ON, April 24, 1975.

⁵⁹ Sider, *The Brethren in Christ in Canada*, 233.

exempt from all military service.⁶⁰ This action prompted some in Canada to argue that these agreements were too historic to be relevant to the current state of the war and should not exclude COs from service.⁶¹ Nonetheless, the CHPC was established to advocate for another way forward for COs. While this group consisted predominantly of Mennonite men, they also advocated on behalf of those who conscientiously objected to fighting but were not presently eligible for CO status as their religion was not one of the Historic Peace Churches. The CHPC asked whether COs could be exempt from all types of wartime service, but the government made it known that this was not possible. They deemed that some form of service was required in order to maintain the peace between those in Canada who were not COs and those who were.⁶² In his interview with Fransen, Shantz noted that when the ASW program was created, it was largely due to public pressure that COs were not recused entirely from wartime service.⁶³ The CHPC provided alternative ideas to the Dominion government about how COs could undertake some form of service without having to enlist, wear a uniform, or contribute directly to any war- or combat-related industries. In return, the government outlined three choices to the executive committee as to the type of work that could be provided to COs: they could train under military supervision without weapons, serve in hospitals and other institutions (possibly under military supervision), or work in parks, forests, and road building enterprises under civilian supervision.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Thomas Socknat, "COs in the Context of Canadian Peace Movements," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 25 (2007): 64-5.

⁶¹ Penton, *Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada*, 162-3.

⁶² John M. Dyck, *Faith Under Test: Alternative Service During World War II in the U.S. and Canada* (Moundridge, Kansas: Gospel Publishers, 1997), 131.

⁶³ Elven Shantz, interviewed by David Fransen, Kitchener, ON, April 24, 1975.

⁶⁴ Dyck, *Faith Under Test*, 131.

Due to the nature of the CHPS's religious conviction, the only option that they could agree to was to work in parks and forestry. In 1941, the Dominion government announced that, largely due to the unwillingness expressed by COs to perform any service in uniform, a new ASW program would be created. ASW would allow COs to fulfill a term of work service that was not military in nature.⁶⁵ The government was swayed towards implementing the ASW program through the lobbying by the CHPC to ensure that there was an option for service that satisfied all parties. After serving their four-month term in ASW, COs would be able to seek service elsewhere, such as in agriculture or non-war industrial factories, while still adhering to their pacifist beliefs. This changed in 1942, however, when COs were made to take part in ASW for the duration of the war.⁶⁶ A program very similar to ASW had been established in Canada during the Great Depression, when men who were out of work were sent to labour camps around the country. These men were given work, such as road building, which was designed to keep them from urban centres, much like ASW was a way of keeping COs out of the public eye. The work within the relief camps did serve a purpose, but the work was completed slowly and with rudimentary tools such as shovels and horses in order to make more work for the men.⁶⁷ In fact, some of the locations that COs would work in had previously been used as relief camps for the unemployed, such as Jasper and Banff

⁶⁵ Toews, *Alternative Service in Canada During World War II*, 34.

⁶⁶ Conrad Stoesz, "'Are you prepared to work in a mental hospital?': Canadian COs' Service during the Second World War," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 29 (2011): 62.

⁶⁷ Ben Bradley, "'A Questionable Basis for Establishing a Major Park': Politics, Roads, and the Failure of a National Park in British Columbia's Big Bend Country," in Campbell, ed., *A Century of Parks Canada*, 82-3.

National Parks.⁶⁸ Riding Mountain National Park was another one of the camps that greatly benefited from the use of these relief workers as they improved buildings in the camp and developed a campground and golf course.⁶⁹ Bill Waiser believes that the Parks Bureau missed the cheap labour from the relief camps and viewed the COs in their camps as a similar labour source.⁷⁰ While this may have been an added benefit of having ASW camps in national parks, there is no indication in the plans for creating the camps that this was the intention of either the Canadian government or the Parks Bureau.

Prior to their arrival in ASW camps, COs in Western Canada were called before a tribunal to determine the sincerity of their objection. The tribunal experience is what officially led them to being COs and can be understood as a catalyst for their ASW experiences. Further, the tribunals often exemplified the pacifist beliefs of these men and allowed them to explain why they sought an alternative to uniformed service. The tribunal experience varied greatly for different individuals. In March 1942, eight testimonies from COs testifying in front of the Saskatchewan War Service Board were published in *The Star-Phoenix* of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.⁷¹ One of the men whom Waiser interviewed served at least part of his service in Riding Mountain National Park and, given his interview, experienced a similar tribunal process to the one outlined in *The Star-Phoenix*. He noted that the hearing process was very inconsistent between

⁶⁸ Benjamin T. Carver, "Working for Wilderness: A Transnational Study of Relief Work, National Parks and Nature in the Canadian-American Rockies, 1929-1942," (PhD Dissertation, Northern Arizona University, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2015), 80-87.

⁶⁹ Michael O'Hagan. "Beyond the Barbed Wire: POW Labour Projects in Canada during the Second World War," Western University unpublished History Ph.D. (Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository, 2020), 78.

⁷⁰ Waiser, *Park Prisoners*, 136-7.

⁷¹ "Some Typical Testimony of COs," *Star-Phoenix*, March 2, 1942.

individuals. Some men were asked very simple questions, while others were treated rather harshly and asked excessive questions in comparison.⁷² The testimonies within *The Star-Phoenix* provide examples of such treatment, with the length of the questioning varied considerably. One CO who wanted to work in ASW was asked seven questions, while a second was asked thirteen. A third was asked whether they loved the Nazis and the Japanese, implying that this was the reason why he was a CO.⁷³ Judges would occasionally make condemning statements to the COs during their testimony. For example, one individual who was interviewed in Lethbridge, Alberta was told by a member of his panel that his stand of conscientious objection was a cowardly one.⁷⁴ Although these men had to testify in front of the War Service Board, they were not all destined to end up in the ASW camps. Many of them would go on to serve in the Red Cross and a number even enlisted in the military, whether by force or personal choice. This is also represented in the article in *The Star-Phoenix*, showing the varying degrees of conviction that COs held. The ASW route, however, was the one endorsed by the Mennonite church community, which is one reason so many of the COs who went to the work camps were Mennonites.⁷⁵ Many other churches also pushed for their youth to declare CO status and work in the camps. As a member of the Old Order Amish church, David Jantzi said he would have been excommunicated from the church had he not sought CO status and done ASW.⁷⁶

⁷² Interview with anonymous participant by Bill Waiser, 1994, in Typescript, Bill Waiser fonds, 28.

⁷³ "Some Typical Testimony of COs."

⁷⁴ Interview with anonymous participant by Bill Waiser, 1994, in Typescript, Bill Waiser fonds, 39.

⁷⁵ Interview with anonymous participant by Bill Waiser, 1994, in Typescript, Bill Waiser fonds, 42.

⁷⁶ David Jantzi, interview by David Fransen, Milverton, ON, Mar. 26, 1975.

The tribunal experience was one that made up part of the CO experience, but only for individuals in Western Canada; there were no such tribunals in the East. In Ontario, COs from traditional pacifist churches were able to simply defer their military service. This regional difference meant that some western COs were denied status even as, it was alleged, there were men in Ontario able to declare CO status without being true pacifists. Fred Cressman, who spent his term in British Columbia, felt that it would have been worthwhile for Eastern Canadian COs to stand in front of a tribunal to weed out men who discredited those who were truly nonresistant.⁷⁷ This sentiment was echoed by David Wiens, who noticed that not everyone in his camp was there due to personal faith and belief in non-violence. He felt that many who were in the camp would not have been there if they had been forced to go to the tribunals as those in the West were.⁷⁸ As different as the experiences were between COs in Western and Eastern Canada, it was even more different for those who were not from a traditionally pacifist church. Regardless of their location in Canada, those whose pacifist beliefs were not rooted in the historic doctrine of their church had to appear to the War Service Board in their respective locale. The experience for those who objected due to their faith but were not a part of a historic peace church, such as Anglicans and United Church members, was vastly different than those who were, when they declared their desire to postpone their enlistment. While the status of CO could be granted to these individuals, it was significantly more difficult as the NRMA only provided unquestioning CO status to individuals who descended from groups with exemption from military service by historic

⁷⁷ Fred Cressman, interview by David Fransen, Waterloo, ON, Dec. 5, 1974.

⁷⁸ David Wiens, interview by David Fransen, Kitchener, ON, Feb. 6, 1975.

orders-in-council.⁷⁹ Even with this policy in place, there were COs who should have easily received exemption from military service that were refused by the tribunal. William Janzen presents such a case in *Sam Martin Went to Prison*. He chronicles the story of a Mennonite man who had to testify in front of the Mobilization Board in Edmonton, Alberta. Martin regularly attended the Duchess Mennonite Church and had several of his brothers gain CO status and go to the ASW camps to complete their service. Martin, however, did not convince the judge of his religious conviction, despite reciting multiple verses of scripture in the middle of his testimony.⁸⁰ Even in this case where Martin should have easily received CO status as a Mennonite, the judge used his personal discretion to deny him, eventually leading to Martin's imprisonment in the latter years of the war.

If Martin, a member of a Historic Peace Church, was unable to gain CO status, it was significantly more difficult for those who belonged to other religions or no religion at all. As one of the Canadian churches that was not pacifist but had many members who refused to take up arms based on their personal interpretation of the faith, the United Church provides an interesting case as to the experience of their CO members. Its archive contains a great deal of correspondences from their members who sought CO status. Perhaps the experience of William D. Fear best outlines the process which these men undertook to gain CO status. Fear was a young man who was extremely dedicated to his church and his faith. He had an active belief in not bearing arms and contributing to the war in this manner. As with many men his age, Fear was called up, prompting him to

⁷⁹ Socknat, "COs in the Context of Canadian Peace Movements," 65.

⁸⁰ Janzen, *Sam Martin*, 13-14.

begin his letter writing campaign to keep himself out of active service. In a letter on February 16, 1943, Fear wrote to R. Ranger of National Selective Service, Mobilization Section, about his recent application to undertake ASW in lieu of military service. Having just received his call up to military training on the home front, Fear had to put his future in the hands of the Mobilization board which would determine the “validity” of his case.⁸¹ Receiving a response just six days later, Fear was informed that the decision regarding his appeal was entirely in the hands of the Mobilization Board that issued his call up and that it was necessary for him to accept their ruling, whatever it may be.⁸²

In a further correspondence to Ranger, Fear expressed the lack of communication that he had received regarding his request to be a CO. Furthermore, Fear was able to demonstrate that since their last correspondence he obtained a position that was consistent with his humanitarian ideals and that he believed should be considered essential war work. This work was helping with “wound healing problems” at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal. Fear emphasized the reason for his desired status as a CO: “Please do not think that I am applying for this work just to avoid going to Alternative Service Camp. Actually I wish to make the fullest possible use of the education I have in practicing humanitarian ideals consistent with the dictate of my conscience.”⁸³ Over a month later, Fear received a response directing him to present himself in five days to the Transport Building in Montreal, where his Mobilization Board was located.⁸⁴ He

⁸¹ Fear to The Director of the Wartime Bureau Department of Labour, February 16, 1943. United Church Archives. Toronto, Canada.

⁸² Patterson to William D. Fear, February 22, 1943. United Church Archives.

⁸³ Fear to Raymond Ranger, April 2, 1943. United Church Archives.

⁸⁴ Ranger to William D. Fear, May 5, 1943. United Church Archives.

appeared before the Mobilization Board as requested, and received a letter on May 12th informing him that he was not recognized as a CO and would receive further instructions which he must follow without fail.⁸⁵

In an attempt to remedy the rejection of his CO status, Fear's church stepped in on his behalf. A letter submitted by the General Secretary of the United Church of Canada and the Associate Secretary of the Board of Evangelical and Social Service of the United Church of Canada outlined Fear's dedication and devotion to his church, going so far as to include a certificate from his pastor stating that he had indeed been a member of the Bloor St. United Church in good standing until he went to Sherbrooke in 1941. The church stated that if Fear's status as CO was not granted the only apparent solution was his imprisonment, as they believed his conviction too strong to forgo his beliefs to prevent arrest.⁸⁶ After much back and forth between the Mobilization Board, Fear, and the many individuals who vouched for him, Fear received his official letter from the Mobilization Board rejecting his application to be recognized as a CO. With his official letter came a personal letter from Ranger stating that the decision was final and there was to be no more correspondence between Fear and the Mobilization Board. There is no further correspondence in the United Church Archives, but one can assume that Fear was true to his words in his final letter: that he reported to the training camp but refused to take part in the training. However, there is no record of whether Fear was arrested for insubordination, kept on at the training camp for non-military work, or partook in

⁸⁵ Ranger to William D. Fear, May 12, 1943. United Church Archives

⁸⁶ United Church Secretaries to Justice A. Trahan, May 18, 1943. United Church Archives.

military training.⁸⁷ Fear's story is likely not unique, and explains an important detail in the religious makeup of the ASW camps. The convoluted and lengthy process of deferment could be one of the reasons why there were fewer non-pacifist religions represented in the ASW camps, and throughout the ranks of COs as a whole. Logically, one of lesser conviction than Fear might have accepted his fate and attended his military training upon his first call-up, without going through the hassle that Fear did.

The first group of men who did receive CO status were sent to the ASW camps in 1941. A member of this group, Ward Shantz later said that there was a lot of uncertainty at the time about their future in the camps. They were always worried that the government would change their mind on ASW and put the men in jail or force them into the army.⁸⁸ Such apprehension likely stemmed in part from the lack of communication between the government and the COs being sent out to these camps. One of Waiser's interviewees, for example, noted that he knew nothing in advance of leaving for the park on June 12, 1941.⁸⁹ Many of the men were simply given instructions to bring with them clothing, socks, shoes, and any other items that would be needed for their personal comfort and cleanliness. One of the few items they were able to purchase in camp were additional socks, which would be deducted from their pay.⁹⁰ Once the men got to the camps, they were met by an eclectic group of men with whom they would serve out their ASW terms.

⁸⁷ Fear to Reverend John Coburn, July 3, 1943. United Church Archives.

⁸⁸ Ward Shantz, interview by David Fransen, Waterloo, ON, Mar. 19, 1975.

⁸⁹ Interview with anonymous participant by Bill Waiser, 1994, in Typescript, Bill Waiser fonds, 25.

⁹⁰ Interview with anonymous participant by Bill Waiser, 1994, in Typescript, Bill Waiser fonds, 1.

The camps were made up of many religious denominations from all over Canada. While the Mennonites made up the vast majority of COs during the war, there were also Doukhobors, Hutterites, Jehovah's Witnesses, plus members of non-traditionally pacifist Christian denominations who (unlike William Fear) had successfully obtained CO status.⁹¹ For example, Henry Morrow in the BCFS put out a request in *The Canadian C.O.* asking to be put in touch with any other Anglican COs. He believed himself to be the only Anglican serving in ASW, and only knew one other undertaking other non-military work.⁹²

In the Montreal River Camp, some of these religious denominations segregated themselves from the rest of the camp, notably the Christadelphians and the Plymouth Brethren. Groups often sought to emphasize their differences from rather than similarities with others at the camp. Montreal River had many individuals who were from non-pacifist churches. These individuals felt that the Mennonites in particular had it easier because their church supported them.⁹³ Despite some religious groups seeking seclusion from camp life, and others wishing they had more support from their churches, the vast majority of men got along well across denominational lines. Within the camps, the different religious groups worked together to keep things running smoothly. Within Victor Goossen's camp in Banff, there were a number of Seventh Day Adventists who volunteered to help in the kitchen on Sundays so that the regular kitchen men could have

⁹¹ Exact statistics for the number of COs are not precise but according to records from the Research and Statistics Branch, Department of Labour compiled by J.A. Toews for *Alternative Service in Canada During World War II*, Mennonites made up over 70% of COs.

⁹² Henry Morrow, "A Request," *The Canadian C.O.* October 1942.

⁹³ Otto Giesbrecht and Peter Neufeld, interview by David Fransen, Campden, ON, Sept. 30, 1974.

the day off.⁹⁴ Further, there did not appear to be issues within the camp regarding non-resistance amongst those from Historic Peace Churches and other pacifists. In fact, Michael Gerber and Andrew Steckly remember there were some non-Mennonites in the camps whose churches were non-resistant, and they were seen as more committed to non-resistance than many of the Mennonites in the camps.⁹⁵

The religious makeup of these camps is an important element of the CO experience to consider, and it was something that individuals who served in the camps often commented on in their interviews. One group who was frequently discussed among interview participants were Jehovah's Witnesses. This denomination had a unique experience with ASW in contrast to other religions in the camps. Unlike other pacifists, their religion was banned in Canada between 1940 and 1943. This makes it difficult to interpret the evidence for ASW during the war years as Witnesses were reluctant to list themselves as members of a banned organization, because there would be repercussions. In ASW camps, some Witnesses listed themselves as International Bible Students. James Penton also questions whether some of the individuals who were listed as having "no religion" were actually Jehovah's Witnesses attempting to avoid convictions for their faith.⁹⁶ Due to this legal issue, it is difficult to know how many Jehovah's Witnesses were in ASW. As a group, they were also not well regarded by other camp members. Doug and Don Millar, Mennonite brothers, felt that they had positive interactions with all religious groups except for Jehovah's Witnesses, who preferred to keep to themselves in camp.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Victor Goossen, "My Time as a CO in World War II, in Dyck, ed., *Faith Under Test*, 151.

⁹⁵ Michael Gerber and Andrew Steckly, interview by David Fransen, Wellesley, ON, Mar. 24, 1975.

⁹⁶ Penton, *Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada*, 164.

⁹⁷ Doug and Don Millar, interview by David Fransen, Kitchener, ON, Oct. 31, 1974.

Their desire to keep apart from other camp members is understandable, however, as they were forced to be in the ASW camps while many of the other men readily accepted their roles, and so kept to themselves.

While some groups kept to themselves outside of work hours, all of the COs had to work together during the day, as the men had an intense work schedule during the week. Each of the camps assigned different work to the men. In Montreal River, the men were tasked with laying the foundation for what would become the TransCanada Highway. They would clear brush and trees out of the way before laying parts of the road. In Campbell River, the men were assigned to fight forest fires. They were broken into small groups and stationed at small outposts within the forest where they could quickly reach reported forest fires. Other camp work included forestry, both with seedling nurseries and replanting forests, as well as cutting deadfall to be used as firewood or in mines.⁹⁸ The COs stationed in national parks also did general maintenance projects within the parks, such as improving the highways, growing food for and feeding buffalo, or fixing up buildings.⁹⁹

During both work and play, camp life was very structured. According to Lawrence Klippenstein, work started around 8:00am, lunch was served between noon and 1:00pm, and four more hours of work was completed between lunch and dinner.¹⁰⁰ Life at the camps was generally regarded in a positive light. The COs had numerous activities

⁹⁸ Socknat, *Witness Against War*, 242-3.

⁹⁹ Waiser, *Park Prisoners*, 136-7.

¹⁰⁰ Lawrence Klippenstein, *That There Be Peace: Mennonites in Canada and World War II* (Winnipeg, MN: Manitoba CO Reunion Committee, 1979), 59.

that filled their hours outside of work. *The Beacon*, *The Northern Beacon*, and *The Canadian C.O.* reported the goings-on within the camps and provide significant detail about what the men did in their free time. *The Beacon* staff took the time to introduce the men working in each of the small camps, particularly those working in small groups to prevent forest fires, to the rest of the COs in ASW. These introductions provide details on activities in which the men partook, as well as some background on their lives. Given the nature of conscientious objection, there was a heavy emphasis on religious practice within the camps. The men participated in religious worships regularly. Religious leaders were allowed to visit the camps occasionally to lead services, and where they were unable to, the men in the camps led services amongst themselves. As with much else that happened in the camps, the services were not consistent between camps. Some of them were conducted in German, whereas others had to be conducted in English to prevent them speaking the “enemy” language.¹⁰¹ The newspapers, as well as the men interviewed by Fransen and Waiser, also reported on the many sports played within the camps, which was a favourite pastime amongst the men.

Providing an overview of Second World War Canadian conscientious objection and the ASW experience fleshes out a little-explored topic, and it is important to understand how COs ended up in a position to interact with the Canadian wilderness over a prolonged period. COs were sent to these work camps throughout Canada because they refused to serve in other capacities to aid the war effort. Many of the COs who ended up in ASW refused to work in medical fields or non-combatant military roles, while others

¹⁰¹ Interview with anonymous participant by Bill Waiser, 1994, in Typescript, Bill Waiser fonds.

were simply never given the option. The following chapters will address the work that the COs conducted within the ASW camps which suggests that they were ultimately able to externally demonstrate that they were good citizens, and internally express that they were good men.

Chapter 3

3 Nature and Nationalism

The ASW camps were unique places which brought together men from many religious denominations and situated them in the middle of the Canadian wilderness. When ASW camps were first established in 1941, all of them were located within national parks, but within a year they were expanded to forest experiment stations and to special camps in the forests of British Columbia.¹⁰² The men in the national park camps were located away from urban centres but were in a position to travel to local towns or even take bus trips home if they were one of the lucky few men whose communities were nearby. National parks were designed as tourist destinations, so while they provided a respite from urban life, they were not completely cut off from civilization or Canadians would not have been able to visit. It was a different situation for the men located in the BCFS camps, as they were truly located away from civilization. The men were taken to small camps in the middle of British Columbian forests with the intent that they stay there for months on end, specifically during their fire season. Regardless of whether they were in national parks or BCFS camps, the men lived in what would typically be considered Canadian wilderness. Almost all of the camps were located within or near forests, and beside a body of water. Many of the national park camps were in mountainous country, and as pointed out by Norman Walters, some of the BCFS work also brought the men up into the mountains. Even the men in Montreal River, Ontario, who didn't conduct any forestry or wilderness work, were located in camps in the

¹⁰² Toews, *Alternative Service in Canada*, 52-3.

Canadian wilderness. Writing of his time in Montreal River, Paul L. Storms recounts that the men were housed in former lumber camps “where the Montreal River with its awe-inspiring mighty falls flows into the world’s largest fresh lake, Lake Superior.”¹⁰³ Men writing from a Horne Lake camp recalled in *The Beacon* that their camp overlooked the lake and was surrounded by “picturesque mountain scenery, majestically timbered.”¹⁰⁴ These camps placed COs in the middle of the Canadian wilderness for the duration of their ASW.

A particular conception of wilderness has long been viewed as an important building block of settler-colonial national identity in Canada, both economically and culturally.¹⁰⁵ After Confederation, ideas of Canadian nationalism became heavily tied to the wilderness. Proponents of this new Canadian ideal, such as Canada Firster Robert Grant Haliburton, presented Canadians as a Northern people, who were healthy and hardy because they survived Canada’s “cold climate and forbidding terrain.”¹⁰⁶ This connection was emphasized during the 1920s after the First World War ended. This was largely pushed on by the desire to create a Canadian identity distinct from Britain, first by intellectuals but eventually by a wider citizenry.¹⁰⁷ The result is what historian Claire Campbell calls a “national wilderness identity,” which was strongly affirmed in Canada around the mid 20th century, even if it was being developed much earlier.¹⁰⁸ This

¹⁰³ Paul L. Storms, “Life at Montreal River Camp,” *The Northern Beacon*, January 3, 1942.

¹⁰⁴ “Horne Lake “High” Spots,” *The Beacon*, October 1942.

¹⁰⁵ Pamela J. Stewart and Andrew Strathern, *Landscape, Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives*, (London: Pluto. 2003), 4.

¹⁰⁶ Eric Kaufmann, “‘Naturalizing the Nation’: The Rise of Naturalistic Nationalism in Canada and the United States,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40 (1998): 682.

¹⁰⁷ Kaufmann, “‘Naturalizing the Nation,’” 684.

¹⁰⁸ Claire Campbell, “The Wealth of Wilderness,” in *The Nature of Canada*, Coates and Wynn, eds., 175.

connection between nation and nature persists today, and is evident on the Canadian flag, coins, and other symbols. According to Jane Koustas, Munroe Eagles, Maeve Conrick, and Caitriona Ni Chasaide, these representations of nature demonstrate that “the land and nature remain linked to the Canadian sense of belonging as well as to the image of the nation abroad.”¹⁰⁹ Those who visited the parks were able to engage with a singular national identity embodied within wilderness that was created as part of the ongoing process of colonization.¹¹⁰ When COs were sent to ASW, they were living in a society that saw the wilderness as a place tied to sense of proper, settler-colonial national identity.

Not only were COs working in the wilderness, which was already connected to a sense of national identity, but many of them were working in national parks which were judged by Canadian society, as evident in their very establishment, as the apex of Canadian wilderness nature. National parks are fundamental to the idea of wilderness in Canada as they are often viewed as designated spaces where humans can interact with wilderness.¹¹¹ They are places that Canadians flock to as symbols of their identity, and areas where they feel Canadian because of these associations with wilderness and national identity.¹¹² COs were a group in Canadian society who were seen by most Canadians as behaving at odds with the national project during the war, and so were

¹⁰⁹ Jane Koustas, Munroe Eagles, Maeve Conrick, and Caitriona Ni Chasaide, *Landscapes and Landmarks of Canada: Real, Imagined, (re)viewed*, (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2017), 2.

¹¹⁰ Edith-Anne Pageot, “Postcolonial Territorial Landmarks within Canada’s Multiculturalism: The Myth of Virility,” in *Landscapes and Landmarks of Canada: Real, Imagined, (re)viewed*, eds. Jane Koustas, Munroe Eagles, Maeve Conrick, and Caitriona Ni Chasaide (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2017), 175-6.

¹¹¹ Stewart and Strathern, *Landscape, Memory and History*, 4.

¹¹² I.S. MacLaren, “Cultured Wilderness in Jasper National Park,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 34, no. 3 (1999): 8-9, <https://doi.org/10.3138/jcs.34.3.7>

required to work, ironically, in places that had been sanctified as fostering national identity. Their engagement through their work with Canadian wilderness allowed COs to be seen by the Canadian government and the public as contributing to the nation while demonstrating their sense of patriotism, defined with relation to this thesis as showing devotion to and vigorous support for one's country, to the Canadian public.

At the beginning of the Second World War, Canadians carried a largely negative view of COs and pacifists. A.J. Belton of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan wrote to the *Star-Phoenix* in April 1939 to express their concern for pacifist leadership in the United Church. Belton stated that they “could not help feeling that, either the pacifists have not thought their way through these matters; or else they want the Government and their non-pacifist neighbours to defend them while they do nothing, and even weaken the moral feeling that is needed for their country’s defence.”¹¹³ Belton stated a commonly held belief, that COs wanted everyone else to defend their country and family in their stead. Belton also argued that COs threaten to weaken the will of those who would fight. Belton placed COs as the lowest type of Canadian citizen, akin to the enemy overseas. In an article published in the *Edmonton Bulletin* in the summer of 1939, Charles Stebbing likewise voiced his negative opinion of COs in Canada. He stated that “Canada will be a nation of conscientious objectors, pacifists and just plain slackers” if the government does not stop telling lies and distorted facts to the public (though what lies they are allegedly telling is unclear). He goes on to say that there were “too many contemptible COs and pacifists” for the country’s own good. He called COs and pacifists the children

¹¹³ A.J. Belton, “Pacifism,” *The Star-Phoenix*, April 29, 1939.

of disloyal preachers and stated that they were misguided and pusillanimous.¹¹⁴ Stebbing raised the two most prevalent points that others' discontent with COs raise: that they are disloyal to the country of Canada and that they had misguided beliefs which should be put aside during times of war.

On April 1, 1940, the *Globe and Mail* published an article by Lord Queenborough, a British politician, which highlighted the intolerability of pacifism in times of war. Queenborough blamed the present war on the “toleration of ‘pacifist’ agitation in times of peace” as it was pacifism that led to the reduction of British defences at the end of the First World War. “There are times,” he wrote, “when toleration may become a vice. To tolerate subversion and sedition in times of war is to tolerate and encourage the designs of our implacable enemies, to strike a blow at the security of every loyal subject and to betray those whose courage and devotion are now mobilized in defense of our freedom as a nation.” Queenborough emphasised the connection between patriotism and defense of the nation. Subjects who are loyal to the nation act in defense of the nation. Since COs would not take up arms, they were disloyal. Although Queenborough does not articulate which groups he is talking about, he does state that “now is the time to condemn and restrain the organizations engaged in so-called pacifist activities.” Most of the COs in Canada were from pacifist religions, and those who were not identified as pacifists by personal creed. Queenborough advocated for there being stricter actions taken against those who refused to take up arms in defence of the nation. He concludes his article by stating that “peace is not to be bought by abject surrender,

¹¹⁴ Charles Stebbing, “What Will Canada Do?” *The Edmonton Bulletin*, July 18, 1939.

and that the freedom and progress of civilization will not be saved by evasion of duty, or the practice of passive resistance to what is evil.”¹¹⁵ This final remark directly addresses the thoughts of those who were against COs, that they were evading their duty and surrendering to the enemy. Again, it is evident that fighting in the war was considered by Canadian society to be part of one’s duty to nation. Queenborough exemplifies the stubbornly negative view that many had of CO beliefs. In an article titled “Want No More ‘COs,’” published in a newspaper out of Grand Forks, British Columbia in March 1942, another disgruntled citizen expressed their view that there should be no more COs sent to BC. The opinion came in response to the Forestry Department of British Columbia accepting thousands of COs from other provinces to be “put to work in this province as fire guards in forests.”¹¹⁶ The article argues that British Columbia should be “a haven for returned boys, not for those of the fifth-column group” – those sympathetic to or working for Canada’s enemies.¹¹⁷

Although such articles provide clear examples of societal discontent with COs, the lived experiences of this discontent varied greatly among COs. In Fransen’s interviews in particular, the experiences seem largely dictated by the surrounding community, and their experiences and relationships with the Mennonites who lived nearby. Clayton Burkholder remembered that there were some strong feelings that Mennonites were not being faithful to the country.¹¹⁸ David Wiens felt like there was some resentment against COs but never personally experienced any overt statements or

¹¹⁵ Lord Queenborough, “Peace and the Pacifist,” *The Globe and Mail*, April 1, 1940.

¹¹⁶ “Want No More ‘COs,’” *The Gazette*, March 19, 1942.

¹¹⁷ “Want No More ‘COs.’”

¹¹⁸ Clayton Burkholder, interviewed by David Fransen, Breslau, ON, Jan. 9, 1975.

acts against them.¹¹⁹ In the Waterloo area, Wilson Hunsberger knew there were anti-CO sentiments but never personally came across them. He did recall once when he was teaching at a Mennonite school, a man came to the door wanting to talk to the students. Hunsberger allowed him to do so, and the man told the students the importance of supporting the war effort and doing their duty. Hunsberger indicated that the man was not hostile in the delivery of his message but was rather attempting to do his own private patriotic duty by changing people from their deeply entrenched pacifist ways.¹²⁰ While Hunsberger's experience with anti-CO individuals was harmless, there were individuals who took more aggressive actions against pacifist groups.

In June 1940, two Mennonite Churches near Vauxhall, Alberta were burned down by arson. This event exemplifies not only anti-CO sentiments but also how it often intersected with anti-German sentiments, since these Mennonites were of German descent and spoke German in their churches. An article in the *Calgary Herald* stated that "considerable feeling exists against the Mennonite settlers" in the area "because of alleged pro-German sympathies," although the churches emphatically denied this.¹²¹ This sentiment was held not only in Western Canada. Otto Giesbrecht and Peter Neufield recalled a Mennonite church near Virgil, Ontario being set on fire before the war started.¹²² Fransen questioned Hunsberger as to why his experience was milder than what other communities experienced. Hunsberger believed that the difference was "basically that Mennonites had lived here. For a long, long time, that position with respect to war

¹¹⁹ David Wiens, interviewed by David Fransen, Kitchener, ON, Feb. 6, 1975.

¹²⁰ Wilson Hunsberger, interview by David Fransen, Waterloo, ON, Oct. 21, 1974.

¹²¹ "Two Mennonite Churches Burn Near Vauxhall," *The Calgary Herald*, June 19, 1940.

¹²² Otto Giesbrecht and Peter Neufield, interview by David Fransen, Campden, ON, Sept. 30, 1974.

was pretty well known.”¹²³ He did recognize, however, that he knew some individuals in his area who were hostile but that it “was a restrained sort of feeling, and it never really was expressed to my knowledge in any overt action that I saw. There might have been plenty spoken behind my back perhaps I'm not sure. But I was never confronted with hostility.”¹²⁴ This anti-German sentiment was not localized to Western Canada either. Giesbrecht and Neufield spoke of their experience with anti-CO sentiment on the Niagara Peninsula, although noting that the area was quite rural, and that such sentiment was less severe than in the cities. They spoke specifically about how they would receive German literature and letters from German family in their mailboxes and once in a while a local citizen would tell them about their displeasure with their German associations.¹²⁵ John Willms, Abe Bergen, and Gerhard Tiessen also recalled that at the outset of the Second World War there were very strong anti-German feelings among Canadians. They remember reading condemning articles from the *Windsor Star* complaining about German “foreigners” buying land away from the “natives.”¹²⁶ Again, this demonstrates the fear that the public had about non-soldiers buying land from “good” Canadian men fighting overseas. Giesbrecht and Neufield recall similar anti-German sentiment directed at their Mennonite communities in the Waterloo area. Their community got along fairly well with their Canadian neighbours, but in the nearby city there was more anti-German feeling.¹²⁷ As much as the public may have been paranoid, things were not made better

¹²³ Wilson Hunsberger, interview by David Fransen, Waterloo, ON, Oct. 21, 1974.

¹²⁴ Wilson Hunsberger, interview by David Fransen, Waterloo, ON, Oct. 21, 1974.

¹²⁵ Otto Giesbrecht, and Peter Neufield, interviewed by David Fransen, Waterloo, ON, Sept. 30, 1974.

¹²⁶ John Willms, Abe Bergen, and Gerhard Tiessen, interview by David Fransen, Waterloo, ON, Sept. 26, 1974.

¹²⁷ Otto Giesbrecht, and Peter Neufield, interviewed by David Fransen, Waterloo, ON, Sept. 30, 1974.

by the fact that some Mennonites *were* indeed Nazi sympathizers. Willms, Bergen, and Tiessen recall that what was happening in Germany resonated with them more than what was happening in Canada. They listened to Hitler's radio broadcasts and corresponded heavily with Germany.¹²⁸ Giesbrecht and Neufield also remembered Mennonites in their communities supporting the Nazi Party in the years leading up to the war, mostly because they felt that the Canadian government did not understand the threat that Communism posed.¹²⁹ The Canadian public's anti-German feelings only made things worse for those COs who were from German-speaking communities, particularly the Mennonites, as they were already viewed as not fulfilling their duty as a Canadian citizen for not fighting.

Fransen's interviews provide significant detail on the views held by Canadian society on Mennonites for both their CO stance and as alleged German sympathizers. Although some men did recall specific events, many of them could not recall any individuals who expressed outright their opposition to the CO position. While many of them focused on their experiences in the earliest years of the war, some highlighted experiences from later in the war both in and out of the ASW camps. Frank Rempel, for example, spent eight months as a CO in Koksilah River Provincial Park in British Columbia. He also spent time during the war working at a furniture factory where he experienced some hard feelings due to his convictions as a CO. He felt that these feelings came from those who did not know him, as those who did knew that he did not shirk his responsibilities.¹³⁰ Rempel highlights another common theme with anti-CO sentiment,

¹²⁸ John Willms, Abe Bergen, and Gerhard Tiessen, interview by David Fransen, Waterloo, ON, Sept. 26, 1974.

¹²⁹ Otto Giesbrecht, and Peter Neufield, interviewed by David Fransen, Waterloo, ON, Sept. 30, 1974.

¹³⁰ Frank Rempel, interview by David Fransen, Waterloo, ON, Feb. 27, 1975.

which is that many Canadians did not understand pacifist beliefs. They could not comprehend that pacifism did not mean COs were standing by and doing nothing for their nation, but rather that they refused to take up arms and be under the command of the military. In his interview with Hunsberger, Fransen recalled that many of the men remember the Montreal River Camp doctor being particularly antagonistic towards COs.¹³¹ Other than their encounter with the doctor, most of the men interviewed recalled having a good experience with the camp staff, who did not seem particularly concerned with their CO stance. Although the camps were isolating due to their proximity from the men's home communities, the men were still able to go outside of the camps on weekends where they were occasionally exposed to more negativity. One of the men recalls being treated coolly on their visits outside the Jasper camp: the locals were very businesslike and unfriendly. Hunsberger, however, recounted the opposite, that many of the men went into the towns on Vancouver Island, visited the shops, and played basketball with the locals. He did indicate that these people likely did not know much about Mennonites and COs, and therefore would not know much about their pacifist stance.¹³² He did also remember one individual operating the Post Office in Cobble Hill, British Columbia who indicated that he was very indignant towards the COs and did not want them sending their mail from his post office.¹³³

As with Fransen's participants, many of Waiser's participants indicated that they experienced resentment in their home communities for not being in uniform, but that they

¹³¹ Wilson Hunsberger, interview by David Fransen, Waterloo, ON, Oct. 21, 1974.

¹³² Interview with anonymous participant by Bill Waiser, 1994, in Typescript, Bill Waiser fonds, 43.

¹³³ Interview with anonymous participant by Bill Waiser, 1994, in Typescript, Bill Waiser fonds, 43.

were treated with respect in the camps.¹³⁴ There are also articles in *The Beacon* that quote anti-CO sentiment in other newspapers, or commented on it from the perspective of a CO. In the April 1943 issue, H.J. Schmidt wrote an editorial on recent criticisms of Alternative Service Workers in Vancouver. He stated that there were several critical editorials in the newspapers, which he thought was to be expected as time went on in the camps and the longer they spent there.¹³⁵ One article written in *The Beacon* outlined the opinions that Canadian society held regarding COs: “I would say through misinformed information a quite common conception of a Conchie is one who is weak minded, cowardly, lacking a sane understanding without principle.”¹³⁶ In this author’s eyes, there was a generalized and widespread misunderstanding within Canadian society of what a CO was. The author felt that many if not most Canadians viewed COs negatively for their pacifist beliefs and refusal of military service.

Part of the issue that Canadian society had was that if COs chose not to fight, they were able to make good wages, purchase new land, and remain distant from the war effort while non-pacifist men fought and died for Canada. This was one of the perceived issues that arose with COs during the First World War, so the Canadian government changed the process for obtaining CO status in the Second World War. Rather than allowing men to stay in their home communities and occupations, they now had to serve in some capacity that would prevent society from questioning if they profited from their CO status, whether that be working in medical fields, or through completing a term of ASW. The government also ensured that COs did not receive high wages for their work

¹³⁴ Interview with anonymous participant by Bill Waiser, 1994, in Typescript, Bill Waiser fonds, 21.

¹³⁵ H.J. Schmidt, “Editorial,” *The Beacon*, April 1943.

¹³⁶ “Seymour Park Mountain,” *The Beacon*, January 1943.

in ASW. As stated by Don and Doug Miller, who both served in ASW during the war, “We Mennonite boys weren’t supposed to get rich while there were soldiers over there risking their lives.”¹³⁷ This was one of the issues that Canadians who were against COs had as they thought it was wrong for those who refused to fight to be earning significantly more on the home front than men fighting overseas. In their view, COs would be rewarded for their refusal to fight. Interestingly, many COs, particularly those from historic peace churches, worked on farms prior to being called up for service. However, as a matter of principle, these men declared themselves as COs rather than simply working in agriculture, a wartime industry that granted military deferment. They would have earned more money for themselves staying in farm work than moving into ASW which had purposefully poor pay.

Instead, men who declared themselves as COs ended up in a program that was implemented quickly at the beginning of the war. The Miller brothers called it a “crash program,” in the sense that the government put it together to quickly move COs from their home communities and “out of people’s hair.” The government viewed the ASW camps as a place to “stash” the COs to “take the heat off” the fact that they refused to fight and bear arms. The Millers felt that the government looked through the existing work that they wanted done, and that is where they put the COs, preferably housing them in lumber camps that were already established near their work sites to keep them out of the public eye.¹³⁸ The men were sent to particularly isolated places. In fact, many were also locations for prisoner of war camps, secluded from the general population, even if

¹³⁷ Don and Doug Millar, Interviewed by David Fransen, Kitchener, ON, Oct. 31, 1974.

¹³⁸ Don and Doug Millar, Interviewed by David Fransen, Kitchener, ON, Oct. 31, 1974.

they were not physically far from them. Although it is not clear whether COs were isolated from civilization for their own safety or to keep them from spreading their ideas to the public, the comments made by the Miller brothers suggest it was the former. Similarly, one of Waiser's interviewees noted that it was more important for the COs to be kept out of the public eye than it was for them to actually complete important work for the war effort.¹³⁹ Otto Giesbrecht and Peter Neufeld mentioned that in Canadian cities there was a certain amount of discrimination against COs, which they believed was the reason why the government sent them away from home instead of working locally.¹⁴⁰ Presumably this was driven by the government's desire to avoid the issues of national disunity that arose during the First World War.

At the beginning of the ASW program, COs were sent to a number of camps around the country. Most camps, particularly those in the national parks, were designed for the men to contribute to some form of work in the wilderness. In August 1941, there were just over 1000 men distributed among the camps.¹⁴¹ The makeup of the camps changed drastically in 1942 when the Canadian Government altered its ASW program to move many of the COs from other camps to British Columbia to work as part of the BCFS.¹⁴² The motivating factor for this change was the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. With Canada now at war with Japan as well as Germany, there was increased concern within the government that Japan would bomb Canada. Of particular concern to the Forestry Branch were the effects that incendiary bombs might have on BC

¹³⁹ Interview with anonymous participant by Bill Waiser, 1994, in Typescript, Bill Waiser fonds, 43.

¹⁴⁰ Otto Giesbrecht and Peter Neufeld, Interviewed by David Fransen, Campden, ON, Sept. 30, 1974.

¹⁴¹ "COs Praised by Authorities," *Times Colonist*, August 29, 1941.

¹⁴² "Canadian C.O.'s Move West," *The Canadian C.O.*, August 1942.

forests.¹⁴³ The Canadian government decided to move many of the COs over to British Columbia to respond to fires more quickly, should there be such a need. According to Gordon Dyck, by 1942 most of the COs from Alberta such as himself were being sent into the BCFS. He was inclined to believe that it was this increased concern regarding incendiary bombing campaigns that prompted the move.¹⁴⁴ After this policy change, many COs in ASW worked primarily to prevent forest fires while completing other important forestry work in their spare time.

Part of this work consisted of cutting down dead brush in the forests to allow there to be new trees planted by other COs. Many of the trees that were cut down were already dead from forest fires but had remained standing and would only be fodder for future fires. Depending on the size of the trees that were removed, the men would either cut them into firewood or cut them to be pit props to stop the ceiling of mining tunnels from falling in. The firewood was hauled away to be sold, while the pit props were sent to nearby mines.¹⁴⁵ Victor Goossen, for example, spent time cutting wood in Camp No. 1 in Banff National Park which was then sent to Drumheller, Alberta to be used as pit props.¹⁴⁶ The forestry tasks assigned to the COs extended far beyond logging and trimming bushes from the sides of roads. One of the curious tasks assigned was the work at the Quinsam Nursery in Campbell River, Vancouver Island. Quinsam was a seedling

¹⁴³ A.J. Klassen, "Alternative Service Work and the B.C. Forest Service," in *Alternative Service for Peace in Canada During World War II 1941-1946* (Abbotsford, British Columbia: ColorCentrix Printoco, 1998), 316-7.

¹⁴⁴ Klassen, "Alternative Service Work and the B.C. Forest Service," 58.

¹⁴⁵ Victor Goossen, "My Time as a CO in World War II," in *Faith Under Test: Alternative Service During World War II in the U.S. and Canada*, ed. John M. Dyck (Mountridge, Kansas: Gospel Publishers, 1997), 150-151.

¹⁴⁶ Goossen, "My Time as a CO in World War II," 150-151.

nursery where trees were grown before being planted elsewhere in Campbell River by other COs. Lloyd Smith worked at the nursery in 1943 and wrote a detailed account of its process and goals. The nursery grew many of the trees that were to be planted in the Campbell River region. According to Smith, if the Quinsam Nursery was worked to capacity, there could be a turn around of four million two-year-old trees yearly. In his article for *The Beacon*, Smith wrote of the importance of their forestry work: “This year’s planting is the harvest of the next generation. It is our return for what our brothers did for us.”¹⁴⁷ Smith viewed the work that was conducted in the nurseries as extremely important, as it was something paid forward to the next generation. The Quinsam Nursery was not unique, in that COs worked at many other nurseries. Once the seedlings were an appropriate size, the men were tasked with planting them throughout the forests. They planted significant numbers of seedlings throughout their service. According to Gordon Dyck, the BCFS would not permit any man to plant more than 1000 trees in a day. More than that, and they felt that the seedlings were just being thrown away, despite Dyck’s assertion that the men could easily have planted more if the rules allowed it.¹⁴⁸ Nonetheless, even a single individual planting 1000 seedlings in a day is an impressive contribution to forestry efforts, although the success rate of transplantation is unknown.

Andrew Steckly worked as a fire-fighter in British Columbia. As part of his ASW, Steckly spent two one-month periods on Vancouver Island planting trees. He felt that the tree-planting that the men did was worthwhile, and even the menial tasks were designed to have them located within the forest if there was a fire.¹⁴⁹ J.L.R. McLenahan,

¹⁴⁷ Lloyd Smith, “Tree-Propagation at the Quinsam Nursery.” *The Beacon*, April 1943.

¹⁴⁸ Klassen, *Alternative Service for Peace*, 58-60.

¹⁴⁹ Andrew Steckly, interview by David Fransen, Wellesley, ON, Mar. 10, 1975.

superintendent of the forestry station in Kananaskis, Alberta, gave a statement on the far-reaching nature of the work of COs as they supplied most of the pit props for the Drumheller mine and the war-training centres in Alberta, as well as the wood used as fuel in the Japanese-Canadian internment camps.¹⁵⁰ The long ranging impact of the forestry work cannot be overstated either. The COs are said to have planted over 20 million trees in British Columbia alone.¹⁵¹ In his article in *Alternative Service for Peace*, Ed Janzen made his own calculations on the monetary value of the BCFS tree planting operation. He stated that 17 million trees were planted in two years on Vancouver Island. Based on market rates for the time, Janzen estimated the value of the trees planted to be \$1.75 billion, and that every hour the COs worked resulted in \$9500 worth of lumber.¹⁵² On Vancouver Island in 1988, Dave Parker, the then Minister of Forests for British Columbia, gave a speech which recognized the incredible regrowth in the forest thanks to the COs who did the planting. The COs working on reforesting the area devastated by the Sayward fire had planted 3,380 acres of forest in 1943.¹⁵³

While some COs worked on replanting the Canadian forests, there were others who worked on preventing the need for replanting in the first place. For many men, such as Andrew Steckly, these tasks were completed simultaneously. As previously mentioned, the move into war with Japan prompted the Canadian government to rethink where COs would be of best use. The men sent to do fire fighting in British Columbia were as concerned as the government itself that the Japanese would drop incendiaries

¹⁵⁰ "Conchies Work Well," *The Calgary Gazette*, May 25, 1944.

¹⁵¹ Janzen, *Limits on Liberty*, 243.

¹⁵² Klassen, *Alternative Service for Peace*, 278-80.

¹⁵³ Klassen, *Alternative Service for Peace*, 18-20.

over the forest in an attempt to destroy one of the major Canadian industries, and many Canadian communities.¹⁵⁴ The firefighting work certainly expanded after 1942, after Pearl Harbor, but there were active projects already happening in 1941 to prevent forest fires and make fighting them easier. In August 1941, many of the national park camps had men widening trails in the parks to make it easier for fire-fighting apparatus to be moved through the forests should there be an active fire.¹⁵⁵ The firefighting work intensified as it expanded. While many of the men serving in ASW camps were able to take limited leave in the summer, specifically on weekends, this was not an option for the men whose work was firefighting. For these men, no leave at all was permitted during the fire season.¹⁵⁶ Throughout the summer, the men were required to always be ready for immediate action, including having their trucks loaded with equipment. The only exception to this was during periods of wet weather or high humidity. In these cases, the men were still tasked with “fireproofing” the forests, which meant felling dead standing trees that would only add fuel to a fire.¹⁵⁷ They were not able to take any leave, even in weather unfavourable to forest fires.

Abram Thiessen completed part of his ASW in the BCFS. He described his experience in great detail when he and his crew were sent to fight their first fire after starting their training. Their camp was stationed in Campbell River, so they traveled from their camp to Powell River, and then further into the mainland to meet the fire. They moved around with their portable water pumps, portaging their boats to get to an optimal

¹⁵⁴ “Canadian C.O.’s Move West.”

¹⁵⁵ “COs Praised by Authorities.”

¹⁵⁶ “Letter from a Disabled Veteran,” *The Beacon*, March 1945.

¹⁵⁷ “Mennonites Do Valuable Work in B.C. Forests,” *Times Colonist*, October 29, 1942.

location to try and halt the fire's progress. They fought the fire every single day for over five weeks, until they believed that there was nothing else that could be done to prevent its further spread.

A light rain started to fall right after supper and we all went outside, stood in the rain, and silently prayed for it to last at least three days, and it did. We had those three days of rest and were thankful that what we had not been able to do with all our hard work, God and nature was doing so effortlessly and effectively.¹⁵⁸

Eventually the fire was thwarted, and the men returned to their camp for a much-needed rest and a feast of freshly caught rainbow trout.¹⁵⁹ Thiessen's experience was just one of many that COs had during their extensive firefighting season.

Outside of firefighting, COs had varied opinions as to their ASW work. One theme running throughout the CO interviews is the degree to which they wanted to make a contribution to the nation. They did not want to contribute to the war effort, but they did want to contribute to the national effort. This is contradictory to what Canadian society thought of COs, as they did wish to contribute – so long as it still let them uphold their religious beliefs. While the beliefs of COs varied depending on their religion, most of those who were from Historic Peace Churches were taught that war is wrong, as it is hurting and killing others.¹⁶⁰ Others, like those in the United Church, were not precluded from military service by the basis of their religion, but rather believed personally that taking up arms was wrong based on their interpretation of their faith.¹⁶¹ The extent to

¹⁵⁸ Abram Thiessen, "Memoirs by Abram J. Thiessen Altona, Manitoba," in "Alternative Service Memoirs," ed. John Classen (unpublished manuscript, 1994), typescript, 38.

¹⁵⁹ Thiessen, "Memoirs by Abram J. Thiessen," 38.

¹⁶⁰ Janzen, *Limits on Liberty*, 199.

¹⁶¹ See discussion of William D. Fear and his experience with conscientious objection presented in chapter 2.

which each of these men could or would aid the nation varied greatly within individuals and religions. Many of the COs who served time at the ASW camps wished they had done work that was of greater value or contributed more directly to the nation, such as medical work that was overseen by the Red Cross, not military personnel.¹⁶² Isaac Brubacher, an interviewed Mennonite man, was frustrated with his work in British Columbia; he expressed a sense of responsibility to the country as well as God, responsibilities that he felt he was not meeting.¹⁶³ While many of the men felt their work was less productive than they hoped, it certainly cannot be seen as useless, nor was it seen as useless by the government and the Canadian public. The COs had clear ideas about which work was worthwhile and which was not. Generally, the work completed in the wilderness in British Columbia was seen by the COs, such as Wilson Hunsberger, as a more valuable contribution to the nation than the work conducted in the Montreal River. Hunsberger seemed more realistic than some of the other COs about the nature of ASW: “I didn’t...get all worked up about the futility of the work. I just accepted it as something that we’re going to do for four months because we weren’t taking military training.”¹⁶⁴ Clayton Burkholder also spent time in Montreal River and British Columbia and felt that work in the former had been meaningless, and the work in the latter was valuable. In Montreal River, they felt like the work did not help in anyway which is why they viewed it so poorly. In fact, Burkholder opted to remain at the camp in British Columbia until he was released from ASW instead of returning home to work as a farm

¹⁶² Interview with anonymous participant by Bill Waiser, 1994, in Typescript, Bill Waiser fonds, 6.

¹⁶³ Isaac Brubacher, and Ray Good, interview by David Fransen, St. Jacobs, ON, Nov. 21, 1974.

¹⁶⁴ Wilson Hunsberger, interview by David Fransen, Waterloo, ON, Oct. 21, 1974.

laborer.¹⁶⁵ Likewise, an anonymous Alternative Service Worker writing in *The Canadian C.O.* accepted the monotonous tasks which were a part of the work in British Columbia: “sometimes our tasks seem monotonous and rather useless but then if we can do these things well, perhaps soon the opportunity will be given us to bear witness to our convictions amidst the same dangers as the soldiers and in some work of mercy calculated to help relieve even a little part of the suffering and death in the world today.”¹⁶⁶ This CO hopes that if he does his time in ASW that maybe he will be trusted to participate in the national effort in a more public way.

COs were eventually moved into other tasks during the war. Some newspaper articles in 1943 provide evidence to suggest that the public desired COs be sent to do farm work throughout Canada instead of working in the ASW camps. In January 1943, the government of British Columbia asked the Dominion government to establish a women’s land army as part of their effort to help with agricultural production. Serving as the Minister of Agriculture for British Columbia, the Honorable K.C. MacDonald announced a four-point program for the “alleviation of labor difficulties now confronting farmers of this province in the production of food to meet shortages existing on the domestic market and abroad.” The second point of their proposal was to have COs “who are experienced farmers” sent to farm labour to fulfill their ASW, rather than being “absorbed in less essential services.”¹⁶⁷ Labour on farms had become a significant issue in Canada by this time of the war. According to *The Beacon*, roughly 40% of the harvest

¹⁶⁵ Clayton Burkholder, interview by David Fransen, Breslau, ON, Jan. 9, 1975.

¹⁶⁶ “My Task,” *The Canadian C.O.*, October 1942.

¹⁶⁷ “B.C. Appeals to Ottawa for Women’s Land Army,” *The Vancouver Sun*, January 13, 1943.

in Alberta was left in the fields due to the shortage of farm labour in the fall of 1942. An editor with *The Beacon* anticipated there would be a 50% cut in farm production for parts of Southern Ontario if present labour conditions remained.¹⁶⁸ Despite the desperate need for more agricultural workers, COs were not pulled out of the ASW camps at a rapid rate as might be expected if they were simply doing make-work projects. It was only proposed that some of the men, with experience, be pulled from the camps. In 1943, the policy on ASW changed so that COs could accept employment on farms or in other industries that were more directly related to the war effort.¹⁶⁹ In the April 1943 issue of *The Beacon*, the forthcoming plans for COs and farming were clearly outlined. Farmers would pay for the labour at \$40 a month and wartime industries would pay for it at current wage rates. COs themselves would be given \$25 a month to cover board and lodging, with the remaining balance being sent to the Red Cross.¹⁷⁰ Transferring to wartime industries was something that most COs would not consider. One stated at his tribunal that “if I make bullets, direct planes to bomb cities, I may just as well have dropped them myself, which I could not.”¹⁷¹ It was also stated in *The Beacon* that as of April 1943 there were no immediate plans to remove the men from the camps. Instead, it was expected that an order in council would soon be issued to remove men of “special qualifications,” presumably those with agricultural experience.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁸ “Farmers Need Help,” *The Beacon*, April 1943.

¹⁶⁹ “Objectors Go to War Jobs,” *The Leader-Post*, May 10, 1943.

¹⁷⁰ “To Work on Farm.”

¹⁷¹ Interview with anonymous participant by Bill Waiser, 1994, in Typescript, Bill Waiser fonds, 47.

¹⁷² “To Work on Farm.”

Many COs who were sent to complete mandatory ASW should have been exempt from this service as they were farmers; men could postpone their service if they were working in the agricultural sector.¹⁷³ Nonetheless, many COs who were also farmers preferred to declare their pacifist beliefs rather than their vocation. Elven Shantz, who was a member of the Military Problems Committee, felt that over 90% of the Mennonites could have applied for exemption as farmers but opted to make their pacifist beliefs known instead. Further, he notes that exemption as farmers would also have made them exempt from making Red Cross payments. As COs they were required to make these payments, which meant that many of the men did not have enough money to live or support their families.¹⁷⁴ By the end of the war, COs had cumulatively paid over \$2.1 million to the Canadian Red Cross.¹⁷⁵ Adjusted for inflation, that amounts to about \$35 million.¹⁷⁶ By 1943, the attitude surrounding the ASW program had changed enough that not only were the men moved to do agricultural work on the farms, but some of the public, as evidenced in British Columbia, were specifically requesting that the COs be removed from the camps to do this work instead of hiding them away.

William Janzen writes in *Limits on Liberty*, “There is little doubt that the value of the ASW program helped prevent the emergence of widespread public feelings against COs.”¹⁷⁷ This shift was also present in the way that COs were treated in other areas. In his article on COs working in mental institutions, Conrad Stoesz stated that there was a noticeable shift in the attitudes toward men, specifically at their tribunal hearings from

¹⁷³ Elven Shantz, and E.I. McLoughry, interview by David Fransen, Galt, ON, June 26, 1973.

¹⁷⁴ Elven Shantz, and E.I. McLoughry, interview by David Fransen, Galt, ON, June 26, 1973.

¹⁷⁵ Sider, *The Brethren in Christ in Canada*, 236.

¹⁷⁶ Bank of Canada Inflation Calculator, <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/>

¹⁷⁷ Janzen, *Limits on Liberty*, 243-4.

1943 onwards. Stoesz emphasized that the questions that were asked to potential COs and the tone that was taken was much less harsh in later years than earlier ones.¹⁷⁸ The men were also given more choices of the work that they would conduct as the program evolved. No longer were they relegated to take up arms or go to a camp, but could work in hospitals, mental hospitals, mines, and industries.¹⁷⁹ Further, COs began to receive high praise for their work in ASW. Officials were pleasantly surprised by the work ethic of COs as they completed a considerable amount of work during ASW.¹⁸⁰ The district forestry inspector George Tunstell stated that the work COs did with fire fighting, fire prevention, forest conservation, and cutting timber for pit props was amazing.¹⁸¹ He also commented on the determination of the COs in ASW.¹⁸² As early as 1941, some officials were starting to take notice of the work ethic and willingness of COs to complete the work assigned to them. “Once we get them into the camps they are swell,” said T.C. Davis, associate deputy minister of National War Services. “They work like Trojans. They are doing a great job.”¹⁸³

Historian Eric Olfert’s work on Mennonite COs in ASW confirms that the subjects of his research were viewed more favourably by the Canadian press through the course of the war. Olfert cites three newspaper articles from 1943 that concluded ASW work was making COs a “valuable resource” to the country.¹⁸⁴ This is a sharp contrast to

¹⁷⁸ Stoesz, ““Are you prepared to work in a mental hospital?,”” 63.

¹⁷⁹ Stoesz, ““Are you prepared to work in a mental hospital?,”” 63.

¹⁸⁰ Waiser, *Park Prisoners*, 137.

¹⁸¹ “Conchies Work Well,” *The Calgary Gazette*, May 25, 1944.

¹⁸² Waiser, *Park Prisoners*, 137.

¹⁸³ “COs Praised by Authorities.”

¹⁸⁴ Eric Olfert, “A Look at WWII C.O.s Through the Eyes of the Press,” (Unpublished manuscript, 1974, typescript), 3.

views of COs earlier in the war, when they were viewed as unpatriotic, lazy, and cowardly. Olfert notes that the transition – COs in the press going from being liabilities to assets – began around 1942.¹⁸⁵ In an article in *The Province* from April 1943, a letter to the editor from “Seconder” responded to a previous letter from “Disabled Veteran,” advocating fairness in the treatment of those whose views are different from their own, specifically COs. “Seconder” noted that COs were employed at Cultus Lake where they received only 50 cents a day for their work. “Seconder” objected to these men being responsible for purchasing their own clothes and boots, particularly in conditions where they were bound to wear out quickly, due to the rough country in which they were working. The writer went so far as to say that Canada was treating its prisoners of war and internees better than the COs: “We are fighting for the Freedoms; let us begin right here at home.”¹⁸⁶ Writers such as “Seconder” viewed COs in a much more positive light than did those writing letters to the editor earlier in the war. They advocated on behalf of the COs rather than say they were not doing enough for the country. These changing attitudes were evident outside of newspaper, too. A.J. Funk served time as a CO in Banff National Park for roughly two and a half years. In his chapter in *Alternative Service Memoirs*, he recalls:

When we were looking at and discussing gifts in a gift shop with some soldiers one time, the proprietor asked us to leave, saying it was a disgrace to see us beside a person in uniform. After we told our superiors about the sad event, they apparently had a serious discussion with the gift shop proprietor, explaining to him that COs were improving the parks, repairing telephone lines, building and gravelling trails, supplying the mines with props, and cutting firewood for stores and fireplaces

¹⁸⁵ Olfert. *A Look at WWII C.O.s Through the Eyes of the Press*, 3.

¹⁸⁶ “Begin at Home,” *The Province*, April 20, 1943

where needed. A few weeks later the proprietor apologized through the daily paper.¹⁸⁷

Funk's recollection is enlightening for a number of reasons. First, it demonstrates the negative attitudes that were held towards COs, specifically with how they were viewed in relation to soldiers. COs were seen as lesser than soldiers to the point that they should not be seen next to them. Second, it demonstrates that the work COs completed in the camps was valued and made them valued, too. Their supervisors went out of their way to visit the storekeeper and inform him of the important work that the COs were completing. Finally, the storekeeper provided a public apology in the newspaper for his actions, which indicates a change of opinion on COs and how he viewed them. While this is just one anecdote, and cannot alone be evidence of nationwide attitudinal change, it provides an example of the changed public perception of COs.

Conscientious objectors completed demanding and grueling labour, gaining them favour with the Canadian and provincial governments. "Forest protection in the war emergency becomes an even more important function than ever before, and this department commends the Alternative Service Workers for their attitude and performance during the past critical period," stated A. Wells Gray, the Minister of Lands in British Columbia. Gray emphasized that not only was the work completed by COs in ASW vital to the nation, but that they have been an asset to completing this necessary work. The work these men completed certainly earned them public praise from the officials that they worked under. They would often set the record straight about the beliefs and attitudes of

¹⁸⁷ Funk, "My Experience as a C.O. during WWII," 220.

COs. For example, Gray went on to say that “these workers are young men of military age whose religious convictions forbid their bearing arms. At the same time, contrary to the common conception of COs, most of these are not only willing, but anxious to be doing something of national importance in the present emergency, and their record in B.C. during the last summer bears out this fact.”¹⁸⁸ COs’ desire to contribute to the nation is clear throughout the oral interviews, but it was not something that was clear at the time to the general public. Statements such as Gray’s are crucial as it shows that COs were changing the preconceived notions about their willingness and ability to contribute to the nation during the war. Another article in the *Times Colonist* referred to the view of forestry officials that “these men may object to killing human beings, but they pull no punches when it comes to work in the British Columbia woods.”¹⁸⁹ Again, COs are portrayed in a positive light for the work that they completed in the Canadian wilderness and demonstrating their ability to assert themselves as patriotic individuals through their engagement with the wilderness.

The praise of COs extended past their work in forestry to their work in firefighting. Many of the men were transferred out of the BCFS to other industries before the start of the 1944 fire season. Their removal was not a reflection of their work ethic or their value to the province of British Columbia but was due to the lengthy war causing problems with agricultural production. COs were moved into agriculture where their work could continue to benefit the entire country. Their removal from the BCFS prompted many articles in British Columbian newspapers expressing how highly the COs

¹⁸⁸ “Mennonites Do Valuable Work in B.C. Forests,” *Times Colonist*, October 29, 1942.

¹⁸⁹ “1500 Ready to Fight Fires If Japs Raid Island Forests,” *Times Colonist*, May 9, 1942.

work was valued. A March 1944 article lamented the loss of “conchies,” going so far as to say it robbed the province of its best firefighting crews. Part of the reason outlined for their efficiency was their location at 20-25 different camps on Vancouver Island, as well as their training, which allowed them to quickly respond to any fire.¹⁹⁰ The men were viewed in sharp contrast to the volunteer recruits usually employed: COs could respond to fires within three minutes whereas volunteers before the war responded in three to six hours.¹⁹¹ The praise in this article is understandable, given the firefighters’ record. At the end of the 1942 fire season, A. Wells Gray had reported that the COs on Vancouver Island and the lower mainland had successfully fought 210 fires.¹⁹² When the 1944 fire season broke out, the COs were missed even more. It was a particularly bad season, with an alleged 400 percent increase in fires between May 1 and May 18 compared with previous years. An article in *The Province* noted the exceptional efficiency of the COs who had previously performed firefighting. The author believed the BCFS to be seriously disadvantaged since losing these men.¹⁹³ A *Forest and Outdoors* article reprinted in the April 1943 issue of *The Beacon* stated that British Columbia employed 700 COs during the past year. “In holding down losses from forest fires, the fire-fighting crews made up from the ranks of ‘Conchies’ worked unsparingly and under steady discipline.”¹⁹⁴ The impact that the firefighting had on the forests of British Columbia is unquantifiable, although the praise they received by government officials for their work is indicative of their value. The heightened risk of fires from incendiary bombs was a very real threat to

¹⁹⁰ “Loss of ‘Conchies’ Robs B.C. of Best Fire-Fighting Crews,” *The Victoria Daily Times*, Mar. 18, 1944.

¹⁹¹ “Loss of ‘Conchies’ Robs B.C. of Best Fire-Fighting Crews.”

¹⁹² “Mennonites Do Valuable Work in B.C. Forests.”

¹⁹³ “Forest Fire Hazard Grows,” *The Province*, May 18, 1944.

¹⁹⁴ “COs,” *The Beacon*, April 1943, 6.

many in British Columbia and was seen as such by the Canadian government. The service of COs helped act as a buffer in keeping the natural landscape the way it was intended should there have been an attack. Outside of the immediate fighting of fires, the men also created extensive new trails within the forests to allow better access to areas that were high fire risk. In 1942 alone, the COs of the BCFS created 90 miles of new trails.¹⁹⁵

The ASW experience was highly varied, as was COs' ability to show that they were patriotic. Those who actively engaged with the program were viewed positively by the Canadian government and public, while those who did not were viewed in a negatively. Mennonites were seen as an example of "how much COs can contribute to a nation at war."¹⁹⁶ Referencing statistics from National War Services, a *Globe and Mail* article from July 1941 indicated that "practically all Mennonites notified answered the first call to labour service," which demonstrated their acceptance of the ASW program.¹⁹⁷ Doukhobors, on the other hand, did not contribute to the ASW program without significant protest and thus were still receiving bad press in 1944.¹⁹⁸ In 1941, in the initial months of the ASW program, Doukhobors were called a "difficult problem for [the] government" as they "oppose everything" that was proposed as a form of ASW.¹⁹⁹ A *Globe and Mail* article from February 1944 reported on a nude protest orchestrated by Doukhobors in British Columbia against the enforcement of ASW. It was further reported

¹⁹⁵ "Mennonites Do Valuable Work in B.C. Forests."

¹⁹⁶ Olfert, *A Look at WWII C.O.s Through the Eyes of the Press*, 3.

¹⁹⁷ "Objectors Fine Park Camps OK," *The Globe and Mail*, July 12, 1941.

¹⁹⁸ "Objectors Fine Park Camps OK,"

¹⁹⁹ "Groups of Alien Origin Enlist Commendably, Thorson Tells House," *The Globe and Mail*, Nov. 13, 1941.

that the group had conducted a protest two days prior where they destroyed registration cards.²⁰⁰ Such articles demonstrate that different pacifist religions viewed ASW in different ways, and those who opposed it were seen in a more negative light than those who accepted it. This is addressed by Thomas Socknat in his article on COs in Canada. He states that the two religious groups that most strongly resisted ASW during the Second World War were Doukhobors and Jehovah's Witnesses.²⁰¹ Jehovah's Witnesses often found themselves in a position where they were forced to take military training and when they refused were jailed or, in rare instances, beaten and humiliated.²⁰² Although they were eventually given CO status and thus sent into ASW, they continued resisting the program by refusing to pay the remainder of their agricultural pay to the Red Cross.²⁰³ J. F. McKinnon, assistant to the Chief Alternative Service Officer, stated in 1946 that if there was another war, Jehovah's Witnesses should not again be classified as COs as they were not COs in the way that the government recognized.²⁰⁴ He provided no reasoning for this decision, but it can be assumed that his discontent was due to their lack of participation with the program. As for the Doukhobors, L. E. Westman, Chief Alternative Service Officer, proposed that those in British Columbia be resettled in Central America in exchange for Mexican laborers.²⁰⁵ This is evidence that the groups that were still viewed very negatively by the government were those that had not fulfilled the perceived patriotic duty within ASW.

²⁰⁰ "Nude Doukhobors Agitating Against Summons to Army," *The Globe and Mail*, Feb. 15, 1944.

²⁰¹ Socknat, "COs in the Context of Canadian Peace Movements," 72.

²⁰² James Penton, "Jehovah's Witnesses and the Second World War: Resistance to Militarism and to Alternative Service," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 25 (2007): 76-8.

²⁰³ Penton, "Jehovah's Witnesses and the Second World War," 77.

²⁰⁴ Socknat, "COs in the Context of Canadian Peace Movements," 72.

²⁰⁵ Socknat, "COs in the Context of Canadian Peace Movements," 72.

For those COs who did engage positively with ASW, such as the Mennonites, attitudes surrounding their reputation as citizens had changed. Many COs were not given extensive choice about where to serve their time during the war, but when they were placed into wilderness work, they were likely able to show that they were good citizens through a phenomenon known as environmental patriotism. Although not the first scholar to reference the idea of environmental patriotism, Anne-Marie Todd was the first to apply it historically to the environmental movement in America.²⁰⁶ Todd defines environmental patriotism as the belief that “the national environment defines a country’s greatness.”²⁰⁷ Todd ties environmental patriotism to the idea of wartime conservation and patriotism during the Second World War. Her limited application of environmental patriotism relates less to the actual interaction between humans and the environment, and more to how perceived environmental actions, such as recycling, were used by governing bodies in the Second World War. Todd’s concept has been developed further by historian Connie Chiang, who discusses Japanese Americans in Second World War internment camps and their engagement with the natural world within these camps through victory gardens and other farming. Chiang argues that in wartime, environmental patriotism can be seen as “one’s devotion to [the] nation...expressed through engagement with the natural world.”²⁰⁸ In contrast to traditional patriotism, understood as the love or devotion that one feels for their country, environmental patriotism specifically refers to the ways in which an individual or a nation can express their patriotism with relation to the natural

²⁰⁶ Anne Marie Todd, “A Call for Environmental Patriotism,” *Taproot Journal* 23, no. 2, (2014): 4.

²⁰⁷ Anne Marie Todd, *Communicating Environmental Patriotism: A Rhetorical History of the American Environmental Movement* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge Press, 2013), 6.

²⁰⁸ Connie Y. Chiang, “Environmental Patriotism.” in *Nature Behind Barbed Wire*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 123, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190842062.003.0006>.

world. Utilizing the term environmental patriotism with regards to ASW is not to say that COs were unpatriotic if they undertook other work, but rather that they engaged with patriotism in a different way. Unlike many other COs, the men in ASW camps expressed their patriotism within places that were ascribed national importance. Places such as mental hospitals, farms, medical testing, and industry, were all important to the war effort and COs working there were able to be patriotic in their work. However, unlike ASW camps, those places had not been ascribed as nationally important beyond what they provided for the war effort, whereas national parks specifically, and Canadian wilderness generally, had. Todd argues that the connection between the environment and patriotism is a logical one, as patriotism is formed by the emotional attachment of an individual to the land where they are born, or where they live.²⁰⁹ This connection is evident in the heavy emphasis that has been put on the connection between nation and wilderness in Canada. To paraphrase the definition, environmental patriotism brings the connection of the physical environment into the discussion of patriotism, “[emphasizing] the role of place in national identity.”²¹⁰ As in the case of COs in ASW, the wilderness was seen as a place with significant national meaning and national identity. Through their engagement with this place of national identity and meaning, COs were able to affirm their position as good citizens.

Unlike Todd, Chiang discusses the juxtaposition of applying environmental patriotism to a group of individuals who were given little choice in their wartime endeavors: interned Japanese Americans. Chiang states that “environmental

²⁰⁹ Todd, *Communicating Environmental Patriotism*, 6.

²¹⁰ Todd, “A Call for Environmental Patriotism,” 5.

transformations in fundamentally undemocratic places...thus received a patriotic spin, but they came to represent Japanese American oppression and government hypocrisy as well.”²¹¹ This hypocrisy can also be seen in the application of environmental patriotism in countries such as Canada, with lengthy histories of dispossessing Indigenous people, and making this so-called patriotic environment fit one singular view. When place is brought into the discussion of national identity, it is a limited identity created by settler-colonialists with a very specific and racialized view of the natural environment. Canadian COs can be viewed in a similar light to interned Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians in that they had little choice on whether they would end up in ASW. Often, COs were forced into ASW by the Canadian government if they refused military service, but they were also heavily influenced by their churches to request ASW in the work camps. Clayton Burkholder noted that all Mennonite men in his community had the opportunity to go to an ASW camp and that to choose any other option was to say no to church membership. Thus, to remain a part of the community, the men were required to declare themselves COs despite what they might have believed was acceptable work in line with their pacifist beliefs.²¹² This juxtaposition can also be seen in the newspaper articles from British Columbia lamenting the losses of COs in the BCFS. They were sorry to see them go and highly praised their work yet not addressing the fact that the men had little choice in where they went and the work that they completed. This evidence suggests

²¹¹ Connie Y. Chiang, “Winning the War at Manzanar: Environmental Patriotism and the Japanese American Incarceration,” In *Rendering Nature: Animals, Bodies, Places, Politics*, ed. Marguerite Shaffer and Phoebe Young (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 262.

²¹² Clayton Burkholder, interviewed by David Fransen, Breslau, ON, Jan. 9, 1975.

that COs were able to engage with Canadian wilderness to show that they were indeed patriotic individuals.

Chapter 4

4 “Unmanly” Men and “Manly” Work

With COs in ASW successfully engaging with the Canadian wilderness, attitudes towards them changed. Even though many COs felt their contributions were minimal, they were able to demonstrate their work ethic. Much of the discontent surrounding COs was rooted in their shirking of patriotic duty due to the gendered expectations of men in Canadian society. Throughout the Second World War, expectations of men became very closely tied to ideas of patriotic duty, largely dictated by gender and age. For the men in ASW, their role in the war would otherwise have been to take up arms overseas, or at least work in an essential and necessary field such as medicine or agriculture. Those who declared themselves COs and took ASW over other work failed to meet Canadian society's expectations of masculinity. C.E. Long of Kingston, Ontario felt compelled to state his opinion on COs' societal failures in *The Kingston Whig-Standard* on March 20, 1941:

There is a type of male in the human family who claims his conscience will not allow him to bear arms, even to protect his hearth and home, and his women and children, who should be very dear to him. But, apparently, his conscience is too consistent to admit him to even protect them from the common enemy. How long, Mr. Editor, are we to be without legislation which will compel such a type to take his place with his fellow men in battle against aggression? Such an individual does not allow his conscience to trouble him about the bearing of arms when he is out hunting to destroy innocent, harmless wild life. Oh no! he is quite safe from harm there, as there will be no gun in the hands of wild life. Does this type of human male ever appreciate how his fellow men are today sacrificing themselves in order that civilization may not perish from the face of the earth; and that he may still enjoy safety from all harm, as he being a CO is exempt from taking his place alongside them in battle? So I say 'Wake up Mr. CO and reclaim your manhood.'²¹³

²¹³ C.E. Long. "The CO," *The Kingston Whig-Standard*, March 22, 1941.

Long argued that COs were not fulfilling their duty as men. It was evident to him that there was a clear correlation between taking up arms to defend one's family and country and doing one's manly duty. This chapter builds on the intersection of wilderness and patriotism presented previously to look at how masculinity was closely tied to both. It addresses the intersections of wilderness and masculinity in ASW to demonstrate how CO engagement with the masculine location of wilderness helped COs to assert an accepted form of Canadian masculinity, contrary to what society believed. This chapter does not try to argue that Canadian society viewed COs as more masculine after their ASW, but rather that the work affected the COs' sense of masculinity. Although this chapter focuses on ideas of Canadian masculinity, the expression of masculinity in pacifist communities was distinct, and this will be recognized as well as the fact that many pacifist communities were also immigrant communities, with their ancestors coming from various European countries. By the end of the war, COs in ASW had been able to engage with the Canadian wilderness to express themselves in a way more consistent with a Canadian male ideal.

Marlene Epp is the foremost historian to address ideas of gender among COs in ASW. This chapter draws heavily on Epp's scholarship as a foundation to understand conceptions of masculinity in a pacifist community. Epp's publications on constructions of gender and the COs are novel, although they can be expanded by providing a further lens of analysis to addressing these topics. I propose that the gendered nature of the wilderness can be used to further understand the CO experiences of masculinity during the Second World War. Throughout Canadian history, wilderness has played a fundamental role in how people have constructed their identities. These constructions of

identity have certainly changed over time, but wilderness has largely remained a constant that Canadians engaged with through work, play, or simply necessary proximity. The ASW camps became a place where masculinity was constructed and affirmed through engagement with the wilderness, in both work and leisure.

As highlighted by Geoffrey Hayes and Kirk Goodlet, as well as by Marlene Epp, there has been relatively little scholarship on how Canadian masculinities were constructed during the Second World War.²¹⁴ Rather, scholars have skipped over the wartime period to focus on postwar reconstructions of masculinity. Understanding how masculinity was constructed during the war shines light on a further reason COs were viewed so poorly by Canadian society. Undoubtedly, Canadian masculinity during the Second World War was closely tied to participation in the war effort. Paul Jackson's book *One of the Boys*, on homosexuality in the Canadian military during the Second World War, is one of the few publications that concretely addresses constructions of masculinity during the war. Jackson demonstrates that the average infantryman became the symbol of manhood to Canadian, so that anyone who was the opposite of this symbol was seen as comparatively unmanly.²¹⁵ Society constructed an ideal masculinity that was directly correlated with military training and participation.²¹⁶ Further, the masculine

²¹⁴ Geoffrey Hayes and Kirk W Goodlet, "Exploring Masculinity in the Canadian Army Officer Corps, 1939-45." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 48, no. 2 (2014): 45; Marlene Epp, "Alternative Service and Alternative Gender Roles: COs in B.C. During World War II," *BC Studies* 105/106, (Summer 1995): 140-1.

²¹⁵ Paul Jackson, *One of the Boys: Homosexuality in the Military During World War II* (Kingston, ON: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 8.

²¹⁶ Cynthia Commachio, "Challenging Strathcona: The Cadet Training controversy in English Canada, 1920-1950," in *Worth Fighting For: Canada's Tradition of War Resistance from 1812 to the War on Terror*, eds. Lara Campbell, Michael Dawson, and Catherine Gidney (Toronto, ON: Between the Lines, 2015), 88.

ideals of an infantryman entailed being aggressive, fearless, and resolute.²¹⁷ In his analysis of Western masculinities in war, Robert Nye further expands on the expression of men who took up arms and joined any form of military service as they were considered “physical, sculpted and aggressively masculine.”²¹⁸ What Nye calls this “turn to hardness” is representative of what society considered to be masculine with the onset of the war.²¹⁹ Nye found that different allied nations expressed their ideas of masculinity differently: the British favoured masculinity associated with being emotionally reserved and plucky, while Americans closely associated ideas of national strength with bodily strength.²²⁰ In their publication on masculinity in the Canadian officer class, Hayes and Goodlet reassert sociologist Steven Nock’s claims that masculinity in the 1940s was not something that one simply had, but rather something that had to be proven and demonstrated constantly. They correlate Nock’s ideas of masculinity to the Canadian context, as masculine men were expected to protect their family and fight for their country.²²¹ Not only did society usher in a new ideal of masculinity during the Second World War, but it provided an opportunity to revert the “humiliating effects” that the Great Depression had on Canadian men who were unemployed, and thus not fulfilling their masculine duty.²²² If an ideal man during the war was one who was capable of

²¹⁷ Jackson, *One of the Boys*, 8.

²¹⁸ Robert A. Nye. "Western Masculinities in War and Peace." *The American Historical Review* 112, no. 2 (2007): 423. Accessed April 7, 2021. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4136608>.

²¹⁹ Nye, "Western Masculinities in War and Peace," 423.

²²⁰ Nye, "Western Masculinities in War and Peace," 423-4.

²²¹ Hayes and Goodlet, "Exploring Masculinity in the Canadian Army Officer Corps," 44.

²²² Patricia Jasen, "Heroes on Campus: Student Veterans and Discourses of Masculinity in Post-Second World War Canada," in *Making Men, Making History: Canadian Masculinities Across Time and Place*, ed. Peter Gossage and Robert Allen Rutherford, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2018), 294.

defending his family, and contributing to his country, he could now express ideas of manhood that may not have been possible to him throughout the Great Depression.

If one who was willing to fight for his country was considered to be the epitome of masculinity, then one who would not was its antithesis. Those who refused to take up arms were often referred to as cowards.²²³ Cowardice was a gendered expression throughout the war as it denoted a man who was the opposite of the masculine ideal. By the end of the war, there was even a hierarchy among veterans, with those who placed themselves at risk in overseas combat ranking at the top, as these men were seen to have made the true “manly sacrifice.”²²⁴ If you were not fighting for freedom, then you were not a good citizen nor a good man. If you had fought for freedom, you were seen as deserving because of your sacrifice and suffering.²²⁵ Veterans were rewarded by the nation for fulfilling their masculine duty. This masculinity that arose during the war is referred to as military masculinity and was the dominant expression of what it meant to be a man in Canada during the Second World War. According to Marcia Kovitz’ work, military masculinity acts in opposition to the feminine, where the masculine is exemplified by uniformity and strength and the feminine by non-uniformity and weakness.²²⁶

²²³ Conrad Stoesz, “This Thing Is in Our Blood for 400 Years: COs in the Canadian Historic Peace Churches during the Second World War,” in Campbell, Dawson, and Gidney, eds., *Worth Fighting For*, 100.

²²⁴ Stoesz, “This Thing Is in Our Blood,” 294-5.

²²⁵ Christopher Dummitt, *The Manly Modern: Masculinity in Postwar Canada*, (British Columbia: UBC Press, 2007), 30.

²²⁶ Marcia Kovitz, “The Roots of Military Masculinity,” in *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State*, ed. Paul Higate, Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 9.

Masculinity is always socially constructed, and different groups in different eras have different ideas of what it is to behave in a masculine way. While it is important to understand the ideals of masculinity that were present in Canadian society, it is equally important to understand ideals of masculinity in CO communities. Conrad Stoesz has written the most comprehensive exploration of Mennonite masculinity in Second World War Canada as part of his dissertation. Stoesz primarily discusses the breakdown of masculinity in Mennonite communities, but also touches on ideas of masculinity in other CO communities:

Yet in pacifist groups such as the Mennonites, ideals around masculinity were more complicated, having been informed by their religion that counselled against public displays of physical power and strength. Such men had been formed with distinctive ideals of what it meant to be a man.²²⁷

Pacifist masculinities, then, emphasized humility, cooperation, and communal direction rather than power and strength.²²⁸ Stoesz refers to a 1941 newspaper article from the *Prince Albert Daily Herald* which explained the difference in masculine heroes for Doukhobors and other Canadians. The article states that for Doukhobors, the hero is one who is a martyr for the pacifist cause. They are revered for their suffering for these ideals. In contrast, most Canadians are taught to revere heroes of empire and nation, especially those who have sacrificed everything, including their lives, for the good of their country and the cause they fight for.²²⁹ Stoesz states that it was differing understandings of masculinity between Mennonites and other Canadians that resulted in a culture clash

²²⁷ Conrad Stoesz, "The Creation of an Identity: The CO in Canadian Mennonite Memory," MA diss., (University of Manitoba, 2018), 49.

²²⁸ Stoesz, "The Creation of an Identity," 49.

²²⁹ Stoesz, "The Creation of an Identity," 47.

when Canada expected its young men to serve in armed combat.²³⁰ COs did, however, self-identify as wishing to be “numbered among the brave and strong.”²³¹ Further, they were not above thinking about themselves in mainstream “manly” terms as evident in one particular personal description included in *The Beacon*. The article was a way of saying goodbye to the men in ASW who were moving on to other work. Pete Dyck was called a “6ft. 2 specimen of massive manhood.”²³² Even a CO newspaper held COs to a standard of manhood similar to what COs could be, and were, held to similar standards of manhood as Canadian society. As the dominant construction of masculinity during the Second World War adhered to the idea of military masculinity, pacifist men not only had differing ideas of masculinity than most of society but were also unable to achieve that masculine ideal due to their conviction of faith. COs directly challenged dominant ideas of masculinity during the war, as front-line service was what society expected of men.²³³ These men could never achieve the epitome of military masculinity without bearing arms and serving for Canada. In her article on gender and ASW in the Second World War, Marlene Epp has the same conclusions as Stoesz’ assessment of masculinity and conscientious objection. She states that “conscientious objection not only represented a political nonconformist stance, but also meant a deviation from a gender construction which equated masculinity with militarism and which saw men bravely take up their weapons to protect their nation and their homes.”²³⁴ Pacifist constructions of masculinity

²³⁰ Stoesz, “The Creation of an Identity,” 49.

²³¹ H.J. Schmidt, “Editorial,” *The Beacon*, April 1943.

²³² “We Mourn the Loss Of,” *The Beacon*, April 1943.

²³³ Campbell, Dawson, and Gidney, “Introduction: War Resistance in Canada,” in eds. Campbell, Dawson, and Gidney, *Worth Fighting For*, 3.

²³⁴ Epp, “Alternative Service and Alternative Gender Roles,” 139.

challenge masculine representation of Canadian society, as they call into question the idea that being a man means being a fighter, warrior, and protector.²³⁵ Not only were COs viewed as individuals who would not do their national duty to fight for Canada, but they were also seen as not doing their duty as men. In part, the analysis of gender, war, and place presented in this thesis serves as a continuation of Epp's critiques of gender and wartime. Her article acts to address a gap in the historiography of gender and war, whereas this thesis acts to address this same gap, and how gender, war, and place intersected in the case of COs.

Epp further discusses the experiences of COs who served in the BCSF as revealing a struggle with gender identity. These men rejected the patriotic duty of fighting for nation, yet many of the men expressed a desire to perform duties that were of national importance. Epp goes so far as to argue that these men were experiencing diminished self-worth because they were forced into work that was not fulfilling.²³⁶ This self-worth was arguably further diminished by the way that the public responded to COs. Newspaper articles often referenced the unpatriotic nature of COs – and also called them unmasculine.²³⁷ The term “yellow-jackets” was used to degrade non-combatants and eventually some men began using these terms to refer to themselves.²³⁸ There were others who were hyper-aware of the view taken by the general public towards COs. Nick Vogt was one of these men and wrote a response to some jokes he saw published in *The Beacon* as he was displeased with the self-deprecating humor. He recalled a cartoon that

²³⁵ Epp, “Alternative Service and Alternative Gender Roles,” 141.

²³⁶ Epp, “Alternative Service and Alternative Gender Roles,” 144.

²³⁷ Epp, “Alternative Service and Alternative Gender Roles,” 144-5.

²³⁸ Epp, “Alternative Service and Alternative Gender Roles,” 145.

was published earlier in the year depicting a CO as a skinny hog being scoffed at by two fat hogs for not being able to produce the fat for victory. Rather than seeing the humour in this, Vogt argued that this was already the attitude that the general public held on COs so why should it be advertised among COs? He went on to argue that *The Beacon* was read by many people who were not COs so rather than advertising this, *The Beacon* should take the opportunity to change the attitudes of the general public and win their respect.²³⁹ The interviews with COs after their service also included examples of these emasculating attitudes. One of Bill Waiser's interviewees recalled a carload of women returning from a visit to the Dauphin military base that stopped to heckle one of the COs for being a coward. The women were eventually chased away by the foreman.²⁴⁰ As cowardice was seen as the antithesis of the masculine ideal, this can be seen as an attack on his manhood. Another of the interviewees recalled being called a coward by a member of the panel reviewing his CO status in Lethbridge, Alberta.²⁴¹ Among Fransen's interviewees, one particular instance stands out from the interviews. One CO remembers that when he and 35 other men were boarding a bus, he had his manhood called into question by people he considered to be "former school chums."²⁴² While this provides a handful of instances where these men experienced negative sentiments from the Canadian public about their masculinity, there were undoubtedly more negative feelings that were never expressed in words.

²³⁹ Nick Vogt, "On Jokes," *The Beacon*, January 1943.

²⁴⁰ Interview with anonymous participant by Bill Waiser, 1994, in Typescript, Bill Waiser fonds, 15.

²⁴¹ Interview with anonymous participant by Bill Waiser, 1994, in Typescript, Bill Waiser fonds, 39.

²⁴² Interview with anonymous participant by Bill Waiser, 1994, in Typescript, Bill Waiser fonds, 40.

Conscientious objectors were the source of disdain for some Canadians for the way that they expressed their masculinity and its lack of adherence to the military ideals that were so prevalent in the lead up to war. As seen by the existence of pacifist masculinity, there were other ways to be masculine than just through embodying the “good soldier.” Some forms were not tied to involvement in the war effort and were rooted in much earlier elements of Canada’s past, while still being seen as an acceptable way for Canadian men to be men. One form of Canadian manliness, frontier masculinity, had long been constructed from a romanticized idea of the untamed wilderness, where men could step out into adventure and exhibit courage, bodily strength, and a rugged self sufficiency, with the goal of actively subordinating the natural world.²⁴³ Much as military masculinity was constructed within the context of war, frontier masculinity was constructed in the context of the wilderness.²⁴⁴ Male colonizers interacted with the wilderness through provisioning and utilizing resources, both of which were considered to be masculine duties.²⁴⁵ In doing so, these men were considered energetic, courageous, honourable, determined, daring, and to have an indomitable spirit.²⁴⁶ These ideals were continued on in society, but took on different meanings once Canada became increasingly urbanized and people no longer lived in close proximity to this wilderness. Men were no longer travelling out into the wilderness as part of their daily life, but rather it became a societal remedy for concerns with urbanization.²⁴⁷

²⁴³ Sine Anahita and Tamara L. Mix. “Retrofitting Frontier Masculinity for Alaska’s War against Wolves,” *Gender and Society* 20, no. 3 (2006): 333–334. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27640894>.

²⁴⁴ Anahita and Mix, “Retrofitting Frontier Masculinity for Alaska’s War against Wolves,” 334.

²⁴⁵ Hessing, “The Fall of the Wild?” 286.

²⁴⁶ Peter Kikkert and P. Whitney Lackenbauer, “‘Men of Frontier Experience’: Yukoners, Frontier Masculinity, and the First World War.” *Northern Review (Whitehorse)*, no. 44 (2017): 219.

²⁴⁷ Wall, *The Nurture of Nature*, 176-8.

While engagement with the wilderness produced masculine men, wilderness itself became viewed as a virile masculine space by society. It served as both a place of national identity, and a place of male adventure by those who sought to control it.²⁴⁸ Wilderness was a place where men could express “rugged masculinity,” so the places themselves became identified as masculine spaces.²⁴⁹ This created a strong correlation between healthy masculinity and outdoor life that has been a theme throughout much of Canada’s past.²⁵⁰ As addressed by Sharon Wall in her work on nature and the establishment of Ontario summer camps, strenuous outdoor activities were seen to be the solution for flagging adult masculinity.²⁵¹ This so-called problem arose from the increase in unskilled workers and the creation of the middle class worker, who was distanced from physical labour, which Wall argues explains the increase in male engagement with intense outdoor activity.²⁵² Wall further notes that the further people went from civilization, the more masculine – and the more Canadian – the spaces were considered to be.²⁵³ The further one is from civilization, the more they have wandered out of curated nature settings, and into what was seen as the true Canadian wild. If these places were defined as being traditionally masculine, then the parks which were touted as preserving this wilderness are the epitome of masculine wilderness. National parks, as national

²⁴⁸ Melody Hessing, “The Fall of the Wild? Feminist Perspectives of Canadian Wilderness Protection,” in eds. Hessing, Raglon, Sandilands, *This Elusive Land: Women and the Canadian Environment*, 285-6.

²⁴⁹ Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness,” 12-13.

²⁵⁰ Claire Elizabeth Campbell, “‘We All Aspired to be Woodsy’: Tracing Environmental Awareness at a Boys’ Camp,” *Oral History Forum d’histoire orale* 30 (2010): 10.

²⁵¹ Wall, *The Nurture of Nature*, 177.

²⁵² Wall, *The Nurture of Nature*, 177-8.

²⁵³ Wall, *The Nurture of Nature*, 179.

bastions of this wilderness, have also been defined as masculine places, as can be seen in Harkin's statements about them.²⁵⁴

Wall's discussion of how summer camps were designed to produce men out of boys is useful in understanding wilderness as a masculine place. But it does not address how wilderness was also used to maintain or develop men's masculinity. One place where this idea of improving manhood can clearly be seen was in the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the United States. This program was largely designed around completing many of the same tasks as the men in the BCFS, building roads and trails, planting trees, and fighting forest fires.²⁵⁵ The CCC was designed with societal ideas of masculinity in mind, so that boys would be turned into men and express desired ideas of manhood in "body and soul."²⁵⁶ Through their work, these men asserted dominant North American ideals of masculinity. Likewise, Canadian COs did not adhere to the ideals of military masculinity but used the masculine space of the wilderness to engage with a different masculine ideal through their work. This is not to say that COs were not masculine individuals prior to their ASW term, but rather that their beliefs and actions ran in contrast to the military masculine ideals of Canadian society in the Second World War. ASW gave COs access to an accepted form of non-military masculinity. These men were able to express ideas of Canadian masculinity in a different form, adhering more closely to ideas of frontier masculinity than to military masculinity. Conrad Stoesz wrote of the experiences of COs who worked in hospitals and mental

²⁵⁴ Joanna Dean, "A Gendered Sense of Nature," in *The Nature of Canada*, eds. Coates and Wynn, 282.

²⁵⁵ Bryant Simon, "'New Men in Body and Soul': The Civilian Conservation Corps and the Transformation of Male Bodies the Body Politic," in *Seeing Nature Through Gender*, ed. Virginia J. Scharff (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 80-1.

²⁵⁶ Simon, "'New Men in Body and Soul,'" 82-3.

institutions, and how there was occasionally a physical nature to their job. He asserts that this utilization of physicality helped support the masculine identity of these men.²⁵⁷

Similarly, men in the BCFS and other forms of ASW were also able to use the physical nature of their work to support ideals of Canadian masculine identity.

Given the extent of forestry work that was completed in ASW, looking at logging and bush work outside of wartime provides a parallel of how masculinity was performed and affirmed in wilderness spaces. There was an established culture of manliness present in forestry and bush work. Although COs were not bush workers by trade, their time in ASW often had them working as such. In his book *Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario 1900-1980*, Ian Radforth describes the culture of forestry camps.

Detailing the logging industry over an 80-year period, he discusses not only the experiences of men in these camps but also the changing social and political factors that influenced the work. Notably, Radforth discusses the way that masculinity was expressed and promoted in the camps among the bush workers. The experiences in ASW expressed in both CO newspapers and the interviews of their service show clear parallels between the culture that was fostered in the camps and the culture among bush workers. Stoesz noted that at times, camp culture replicated mainstream masculine ideas. He points out that camp bosses encouraged athletics as well as competitive games and rivalries as part of this masculine expression.²⁵⁸ In the April 1943 issue of *The Beacon*, the men wrote about a picnic between camps Q-1 and Q-3 at Elk Falls Park, ending their day with a spirited softball game between the two camps.²⁵⁹ There are extensive photographs from

²⁵⁷ Stoesz, "This Thing Is in Our Blood for 400 Years," 103.

²⁵⁸ Stoesz, "This Thing Is in Our Blood for 400 Years," 101.

²⁵⁹ Henry Hamm, "Happenings of Q-3," *The Beacon*, April 1943.

the ASW camps which show the men posing during various athletic and other competitive activities. The men can be seen playing hockey on a frozen lake, sailing on barges down a river, and making a human pyramid.²⁶⁰ In their monthly report to *The Beacon*, the men from Shawnigan Lake, Camp C-3 reported that one of their camp mates, Corny Barg, had already begun setting up their volleyball court. Camp C-3 had a “famous after supper league” for volleyball which commenced as soon as the days began getting longer. Barg was also given the role of Sports Director for his camp, indicating that the men there took part in many athletic endeavours.²⁶¹ In fact, news about sports appeared in most issues of *The Beacon*. Marsh Ariss reported on the athletic activities in Q-3 throughout the summer which included volleyball, softball, and “walkathons” – walking back to camp after missing the bus. He emphasised the nature of friendly athletic competition which was prevalent in their camp.²⁶² Further, Ariss referred to the group of COs as “healthy young men, full of vim, vigor, and vitality,” which directly touches on ideas of masculinity being tied to their physical health and strength.²⁶³ In the bush camps that Radforth writes about, it was common for workers to take part in other masculine activities, including tests of strength such as arm wrestling.²⁶⁴ Similarly, in the ASW camps, boxing and wrestling, two sports that demonstrate aggression and fighting ability, were popular.²⁶⁵ Many of the men also engaged with the immediate wilderness around them in their time off, through recreational equipment or other activities which allowed

²⁶⁰ Klippenstein, *That There Be Peace*, 67.

²⁶¹ “Shawnigan Lake, Camp C-3,” *The Beacon*, January 1943.

²⁶² Marsh Ariss, “Sports,” *The Beacon*, December 1942.

²⁶³ Ariss, “Sports.”

²⁶⁴ Ian Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario 1900-1980* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 96.

²⁶⁵ Epp, “Alternative Service and Alternative Gender Roles,” 152.

the men to participate in adventurous and athletic activities. The degree of recreational equipment varied from camp to camp. Some but not all camps had horseshoes and baseball bats and balls. When this recreational equipment was unavailable, the men often took advantage of the wilderness surrounding them to pass their spare time. One of the most popular activities was swimming in the warm weather.²⁶⁶ Large numbers of the men who were sent to the camps in BC and Alberta were from the Prairie provinces, and the landscape they experienced was foreign to them, only making them want to explore it more.²⁶⁷ Going for long walks through the wilderness was another common activity in the camps.²⁶⁸ One of the individuals who completed his ASW in Jasper and then Banff reminisced fondly of the activities that the men did outside of their work hours. At his camp near Jasper, the men were allowed to take a truck on the weekends to Jasper and go mountain climbing and visit the town. At his camp in Banff, the men would walk three or four miles into town to go skating or walk to a hot springs pool in the winter.²⁶⁹ Given the isolated nature of the camps, and with the weekends the only time-off, the men spent a lot of time taking part in athletics or other typically manly pursuits in the wilderness. In Radforth's discussion of Canadian forestry camps, he argues that strong athletic engagement was indicative of the masculine culture that pervaded the camps,²⁷⁰ much like how it pervaded the ASW camps.

Radforth's discussion of masculinity in *Bushworkers and Bosses* has been critiqued as he assumes a clear link between danger and masculinity, without explaining

²⁶⁶ Interview with anonymous participant by Bill Waiser, 1994, in Typescript, Bill Waiser fonds, 2.

²⁶⁷ Interview with anonymous participant by Bill Waiser, 1994, in Typescript, Bill Waiser fonds, 9.

²⁶⁸ Interview with anonymous participant by Bill Waiser, 1994, in Typescript, Bill Waiser fonds, 9.

²⁶⁹ Interview with anonymous participant by Bill Waiser, 1994, in Typescript, Bill Waiser fonds, 17-18.

²⁷⁰ Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses*, 96.

why, other than that dangerous work conditions reinforce a rugged masculinity.²⁷¹ Radforth provides no information of different kinds of masculinity; had he, the connection between frontier masculinity and the work camps would have been clearer. Working in a dangerous place like a logging camp provided men with the opportunity to be courageous, a cornerstone of frontier masculinity. This is supported by anthropologist Carol Colfer, who theorizes a number of reasons for the association of forests with manliness. She notes that forestry provides an opportunity for men to demonstrate physical strength and the manly virtue of courage.²⁷² All of these were elements that made up parts of camp identity - particularly that it took courage to do dangerous work such as fire fighting or forestry. The correlation between manliness and danger is further outlined in Arthur McIvor's chapter in *Men, Masculinities and Male Culture in the Second World War*, on working class male bodies in Second World War Britain. McIvor highlights that it was not the immediate danger that identified working class men as more manly, but rather that danger was associated with toughness and strength, cornerstones of military masculinity which was seen as the epitome of manhood in the war.²⁷³ The ideas of toughness and strength are, however, also associated with the sort of frontier masculinity developed in the ASW camps. The ASW camps were considered to be dangerous by the COs who worked there, much like the bush camps that Radforth discusses. In their interviews, many of the men recalled injuries that they or others

²⁷¹ Steven Maynard, "Rough Work and Rugged Men: The Social Construction of Masculinity in Working-Class History," *Labour (Halifax)* 23, (1989): 161.

²⁷² Carol J. Pierce Colfer, *Masculinities in Forests: Representations of Diversity* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge Press, 2021), 4-5.

²⁷³ Arthur McIvor, "Rebuilding 'Real Men': Work and Working-Class Male Civilian Bodies in Wartime," in *Men, Masculinities and Male Culture in the Second World War*, Linsey Robb and Juliette Pattison eds. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 134-136.

sustained. Injuries were frequently reported on in the CO newspapers as well. Jake “Jerry” Gerbrandt was reported to have almost cut off his fingers at Camp Q-1.²⁷⁴ In a report from the Websters Corners Camp, one of the men reported that of the thirty-three men at camp, two were off with work-related injuries requiring serious hospitalisation, one a broken ankle and the other a broken hip. It was also reported that another man from Camp Q-7 was in hospital with two broken ribs and a broken collar bone after being struck by a falling snag.²⁷⁵ In *Alternative Service Memoirs*, Helen Fehr wrote of her brother David Fehr’s experience of ASW in Wasagaming, Manitoba in 1942. Fehr did bushwork and whatever other work was required of him during his term. He was first injured by a splinter to his eye in March, presumably from bush work, which resulted in a visit to the hospital. He was then injured more severely in April when working in a gravel pit. According to his sister he was deaf in one ear so did not hear a warning call and frozen gravel fell on him, burying him to his chest and crushing one of his legs. Although he apparently recovered from the injury, it was discovered after his death in 1947 that the falling gravel had also damaged his liver.²⁷⁶ This harrowing case exemplifies the danger that these men faced in the work camps, which reinforced manhood as it gives men an opportunity to show that they are strong, brave, and courageous.

Although the COs in ASW were able to assert themselves as masculine in accordance with ideas of frontier masculinity, they also referred to themselves as boys which is a term some scholars view as an emasculating act. In his analysis of German-

²⁷⁴ “Horne Lake High Spots,” *The Beacon*, April 1943.

²⁷⁵ “Websters Corners Camp G.T.4.,” *The Beacon*, January 1943.

²⁷⁶ Helen Fehr, “Interview of David C. Fehr,” in *Alternative Service Memoirs*, ed. John Klassen, (Unpublished manuscript, 1995) typescript, 13.

speaking refugees in Canadian internment camps, Patrick Farges argues that these men were unable to assume their traditional protective role in their families which caused them to experience a form of emasculation.²⁷⁷ He further argues that this is why they referred to themselves as boys, and not men. Although COs were not forcefully interned, in the sense that they could have chosen work in combatant medical battalions or hospitals, CO newspapers similarly referred to COs as “boys” or “the boys.” Even in their interviews years later, they still referred to themselves as boys. For example, David Jantzi recalled the time he spent in the BCFS and frequently referred to his camp mates as boys: “The majority of the other boys were from Manitoba,” “a group of boys went up,” “the conductor let the train stop for a few minutes to let the boys go and take pictures there.”²⁷⁸ The first group of men that were sent to the ASW camps were from the 21-year-old age group, the first group of call ups, with each group getting older as further men were called up.²⁷⁹ Those in ASW were young, but by no means still in their boyhood. Frager hypothesizes that interned men called themselves boys because internment was an emasculating experience, but he does not provide further analysis of this. As asserted by Shaw in *Crisis of Conscience*, ideas of manliness are not solely contrasted with being feminine, but also with ideas of being childish. For many, the transition to being a soldier was also a transition into manhood, but COs did not have access to this transition.²⁸⁰ Given the evidence presented by Frager and Shaw, it would be

²⁷⁷ Patrick Farges, “Masculinity and Confinement: German-Speaking Refugees in Canadian Internment Camps (1940-1943),” *Culture, Society and Masculinities* 4, no. 1 (Spring, 2012): 37.

²⁷⁸ David Jantzi, interviewed by David Fransen, Milverton, ON, Mar. 26, 1975.

²⁷⁹ Henry Sawatzky, “C.O. Memoirs,” in *Alternative Service Memoirs*, ed. John Klassen (unpublished, 1995), 8.

²⁸⁰ Shaw, *Crisis of Conscience*, 126.

an easy assumption to make that COs called themselves boys because they saw themselves as childish and unmanly. However, this would be incorrect. In his history of working-class drinking culture and masculinity, Craig Heron provides a detailed analysis of this phenomena in his analysis on working class masculinities in Hamilton, Ontario. He argues that rather than “boys” being an emasculating word, working class men used the term as it was fundamental to the shaping of masculine identities in the working class.²⁸¹ Heron argues that the assertion of themselves as “boys” was an assertion of their fraternal solidarity with their peers, and not a way of emasculating themselves.²⁸² This assertion of working-class masculinity should be drawn into the broader discussion that place played on the experience of masculinity in ASW camps. COs did not refer to themselves as boys because they saw themselves as emasculated through their work, but rather they were expressing the kind of fraternal solidarity that Heron identifies.

COs were able to engage with wilderness as a place of masculinity and through researching their experiences in the ASW camps, it can be concluded that they, contrary to what society believed, did express an accepted form of Canadian masculinity. Although their masculinity was questioned throughout the course of the war, they were sent to areas ascribed as masculine by society and thus ASW camps provided a place where COs were able to engage with Canadian ideas of frontier masculinity. This idea is taken one step further by Marlene Epp in her article “Heroes or Yellow-bellies? Masculinity and the CO,” where she draws connections between COs in ASW and how they even occasionally expressed military masculinity. She demonstrates the “ironic

²⁸¹ Craig Heron, “The Boys and Their Booze: Masculinities and Public Drinking in Working-Class Hamilton, 1890-1946.” *The Canadian Historical Review* 86, no. 3 (2005): 411-12.

²⁸² Heron, “The Boys and Their Booze,” 411-12.

similarities” that arose over time between Canadian soldiers and COs, such as COs growing moustaches to look more soldierly, crafting a theme song sung to the tune of “It’s a Long Way to Tipperary,” and using battlefield analogy when discussing tree planting.²⁸³ She argues that these similarities between two drastically different ideological positions were rooted in common understandings of gender. Epp argues that COs fell outside the idea of military masculinity, but they were able to redefine the ASW experience to make themselves “wartime heroes” nonetheless.²⁸⁴ Men in the ASW camps were able to make their experiences in the camps fit the way that society thought they should be acting as men. Epp notes that later in the war an effort was made to more closely relate the experience of COs to those of Canadian soldiers, particularly through the language that was used to describe the work that they carried out in their camps.²⁸⁵ Even within their articles in the *Canadian C.O.* one can see certain terms often equated with military and military service. For example, when discussing the proposed establishment of a pacifist newsletter to connect pacifists across Canada, authors frequently used terminology such as “allies” and “creating a pacifist front.”²⁸⁶ While Canadian society likely would not call ASW military in any sense, COs were still able to engage with masculinity in a way that was accepted by Canadian society. They were able to assert Canadian ideas of manhood through ideas of frontier masculinity, and wilderness as a masculine place during their ASW.

²⁸³ Epp, “Alternative Service and Alternative Gender Roles,” 139.

²⁸⁴ Epp, “Alternative Service and Alternative Gender Roles,” 152.

²⁸⁵ Epp, “Alternative Service and Alternative Gender Roles,” 150.

²⁸⁶ *The Canadian C.O.*, various issues.

Chapter 5

5 Conclusion

The experience of conscientious objectors in Canada during the Second World War was distinct from the experiences of other men their age who undertook home front or overseas military service. The COs were a group of men who, due to their convictions of faith or personal creed, not only faced the disapproval of Canadian society but, in many cases, were kept secluded in ASW camps from much of society during the earlier years of the war. But even there, the COs could engage with the broader nation. The time that COs spent in nature allowed them to significantly interact with the wilderness that surrounded them. They planted trees and fought fires in Western Canada, and in Ontario worked out of wilderness camps to clear land for the planned TransCanada Highway. However, as Waiser points out in *Park Prisoners*, the contribution in the camps was largely unrelated to the greater war effort. This sentiment was one that many of the men in ASW also expressed. They often felt disheartened by their lack of contribution to the nation throughout the war, despite their refusal to take up arms or wear a uniform. Alternative Service Workers may have contributed little to the overall war effort, but I have argued that the value of understanding their experiences is in how their work changed both society's views of them and reaffirmed their ideas of themselves, through their engagement with wilderness.

Thrust into this wilderness work, COs were put in positions to engage with the societal meaning that had been ascribed to these places. Canadian wilderness, as has been demonstrated throughout this thesis, has historically been viewed as both a patriotic and a masculine place. It was associated with a sense of Canadian identity and people were

encouraged to work and play in the wilderness to affirm these ideas. For many COs, this went a step further as they conducted their work not merely in wilderness, but in national parks, making their work even more imbued with national meaning. From their creation, national parks were places designed to encourage the traits of good settler-colonial citizenship –bravery, strength, ruggedness – while discouraging the bad traits – weakness, cowardice, dependence. Within these spaces, COs were able to conduct appropriate, hard, manual, outdoor work and appropriate play, with the end goal of perceived betterment of not just the natural world but also themselves. The work that the men completed in the ASW camps was commended by government officials and the public – a noticeable change from the condemnation they received earlier in the war. Humphrey Mitchell, the Minister of Labour, stated,

Conscientious objectors have willingly undertaken heavy and difficult work during the war. Their services have been available at several periods when critical situations developed due to labor shortages. As an example of this, some 75 conscientious objectors were employed at the Head of the Lakes [Thunder Bay, Ontario] in loading and unloading grain cars at a time when a serious congestion was developing... Labour Department officials relate stories of conscientious objectors coming to district offices to obtain heavier and more difficult work in order to do more for the war effort.²⁸⁷

T.A. Crerar, Minister of Mines and Resources during the war, agreed with Mitchell's statement. He admired the strong work ethic of COs: "It has been found that excellent service has been rendered by these COs. They are, in the main, Mennonites, farmers' sons, well used to hard work."²⁸⁸ J.F. McKinnon, the Chief Alternative Service Officer,

²⁸⁷ Press Release by Department of Labour, June 1, 1945, quoted in John Toews, *Alternative Service in Canada During World War II*, (Winnipeg: Publication Committee of the Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church, n.d.), 110.

²⁸⁸ Press Release by Department of Labour, June 1, 1945, quoted in John Toews, *Alternative Service in Canada*, 110.

said that “The Mennonites cooperated in every way from the beginning of Alternative Service. There was very close cooperation between the Mennonite bishops and the Alternative Service The bishops were always most willing to discuss mutual problems and to go as far as possible to cooperate within the limits of their conscience.”²⁸⁹ Alternative Service Workers were able to change the view that many in Canada held about their status as unpatriotic citizens. The work that they completed was praised for its usefulness in many government statements as well as in Canadian newspapers. They were no longer seen as men who were shirking their patriotic duties. It seems likely that they were able to demonstrate themselves to be full citizens through their engagement with, and work to manage, the wilderness.

These spaces not only allowed COs to demonstrate that they were willing and hard workers, likely helping them appear as more patriotic, but also allowed them to affirm themselves as masculine individuals in a way that would be acceptable to Canadian society. While one of the commonly held notions among Canadians was that COs were emasculated, their work in wilderness clearly demonstrated that this was not the case. As discussed throughout this thesis, the men adhered very closely to frontier masculinity, a historically accepted way for Canadian men to express their manhood. The extent to which CO behaviour changed society’s beliefs as to their masculinity is difficult to ascertain, because Canadian newspapers, which spoke of COs negatively in feminine terms early in the war did not explicitly describe them in masculine terms later in the war, when describing them more positively. Nevertheless, COs were able to fit into an

²⁸⁹ Press Release by Department of Labour, June 1, 1945, quoted in John Toews, *Alternative Service in Canada*, 111.

established form of masculinity and show that contrary to what society thought, they were Canadian men as well as being pacifists. Although the experiences within ASW varied between individuals, many believed that they came out stronger in their faith, were able to work for their nation, and exerted their manhood, seeing the entire experience as a positive one. Many COs cherished the strong friendships they created in the camps, forged through their shared experiences.²⁹⁰ Through their engagement in the camps, these men were able to create a sense of boyish camaraderie that helped to affirm ideas of Canadian masculinity. This closely resembled the camaraderie of soldiers fighting overseas. Ultimately, Alternative Service Workers were able to engage with the wilderness as a masculine place, demonstrating amongst themselves that they were also masculine.

While it is difficult to conclusively prove that COs were seen as more masculine and more patriotic specifically because of their work *in the wilderness*, and not just because they worked, this thesis looks at the way that wilderness has been socially constructed over time to demonstrate that these men engaged with it in a way that COs in other areas of work could not. Certainly, COs in other forms of work were also viewed more positively than at the outset of the war,²⁹¹ when Canadian society thought that they would not do anything other than remain with their families. Those men, however, were not able to engage with places that were already viewed as masculine and patriotic in the way that the Canadian wilderness was. In agriculture, for example, COs were working in

²⁹⁰ Sawatzky, "C.O. Memoirs," 8.

²⁹¹ For an example of this see Conrad Stoesz, "'Are you prepared to work in a mental hospital?': Canadian COs' Service during the Second World War," *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 29 (2011).

a place that was virtually the antithesis of wilderness as it requires the constant, unrelenting arresting of natural ecological succession. Such COs were certainly not able to express ideas of frontier masculinity nor military masculinity in this work. While it could be argued that they were expressing environmental patriotism, as they were directly contributing to the war effort, it is more likely that farming was viewed as a more traditional expression of patriotism. In this instance, changing opinions on these men can be attributed to their contribution to the nation. COs in ASW did not contribute to the war effort, but they did contribute to the national effort, earning heavy praise for their work. This thesis argues that it was their work with the Canadian wilderness that was the primary factor that led to this change.

The importance of studying ASW in Canada extends beyond the intersection of masculinity, patriotism, and wilderness. Recently, there has been a move for historians to provide an environmental analysis of war. As outlined in the comprehensive *The Long Shadows: A Global Environmental History of the Second World War*, the Second World War was as much an environmental catastrophe as a human one.²⁹² Addressing the environmental element of war allows historians to look at how humans impacted the natural world through war, whether on the home front or overseas. It also allows historians to look at how the environment changed human interactions with, or experiences of, the war. My analysis of COs in ASW contributes to the idea of the long shadows of war as presented in the context of the environment, as it draws into the

²⁹² Simo Laakkonen, Richard P. Tucker, and Timo Olavi Vuorisalo, *The Long Shadows: A Global Environmental History of the Second World War*, (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2017), 315.

broader idea of how the landscape can be militarized.²⁹³ Although not intentionally designated as military spaces, the ASW camps became such for the role that they played in the COs' experience of war. COs were sent to natural spaces during the war, specifically because they refused to take up arms, and they were put in a position to alter that natural space. Further, when COs were moved to work in the BCFS they worked with wilderness in a way that connected to the long shadows of war: they were placed into their small bush camps out of fear that the Japanese would drop incendiary bombs on Canada's large forest reserves, and that there would be no one there to deal with the fires if they did. COs' experiences of war were directly changed because of the desire to preserve this part of the natural environment. The long shadows of ASW can be seen in both the legacy created within the national parks by COs, substantial tree planting effort, and in the changes in cultural understanding of pacifism that arose out of ASW as well. An environmental history of ASW provides a more in-depth analysis of the men who served outside of combat in Canada. Although not all COs were sent to the ASW camps, the men who were contributed significantly to the Canadian nation and engaged substantially with the wilderness where they worked. They shaped the wilderness in accordance with what was needed to support the Canadian nation at war. Furthermore, these men and their experiences illustrate the way that the natural environment can act upon humans, as much as humans can act upon the natural environment. Due to the social construction of wilderness as both a place of patriotic and masculine activity, ASW involved the creation of camps where COs were able to both assert their desires to

²⁹³ Laakkonen, Tucker, and Vuorisalo, *The Long Shadows*, 8-9.

contribute meaningful and patriotic work to the nation, but also affirm their masculinity in a time where it was called into question. Despite the experiences in ASW, the opinions of men like C.E. Long of Kingston, Ontario, who wrote the 1941 letter for *The Kingston Whig-Standard* expressing the need for COs to reclaim their manhood, certainly did not disappear entirely. However, ASW in Canada provided a way for pacifists to engage with the nation in a way that adhered to their religious convictions. Much of the available evidence indicates that their work allowed them to reclaim their position as patriots in the eyes of the Canadian public and politicians, while affirming their Canadian manhood.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Archival Collections

Fransen, David. Alternative Service in World War II Oral History Project. Ontario Mennonite Archives, tape recordings. 1974-1975.

United Church of Canada Board of Evangelism and Social Service Fonds. The United Church of Canada Archives, Toronto, Ontario.

Waiser, Bill. Bill Waiser Collection. University of Saskatchewan Archives and Special Collections. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada.

Magazines

The Northern Beacon

The Beacon

The Canadian C.O.

Newspapers

Calgary Herald

The Edmonton Bulletin

The Gazette (British Columbia)

Globe and Mail

The Kingston Whig-Standard

The Leader-Post

The Province

The Star-Phoenix

Times Colonist

Vancouver Sun

Secondary Sources

- Anahita, Sine, and Tamara L. Mix. "Retrofitting Frontier Masculinity for Alaska's War against Wolves." *Gender and Society* 20, no. 3 (2006): 332–53.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/27640894>.
- Benidickson, Jamie. *Idleness, Water, and a Canoe: Reflections on Paddling for Pleasure*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1997.
- Binnema, Theodore, and Melanie Niemi. "'Let the Line Be Drawn Now': Wilderness, Conservation, and the Exclusion of Aboriginal People from Banff National Park in Canada." *Environmental History* 11 (4): 724–50. 2006.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/envhis/11.4.724>.
- Campbell, Claire Elizabeth. "'We All Aspired to be Woodsy': Tracing Environmental Awareness at a Boys' Camp." *Oral History Forum d'histoire orale* 30 Special Issue "Talking Green: Oral History and Environmental History." 2010.
- , ed. *A Century of Parks Canada*. Calgary: University of Calgary Press. 2011.
- Campbell, Lara, Michael Dawson, and Catherine Gidney eds. *Worth Fighting for: Canada's Tradition of War Resistance from 1812 to the War on Terror*. Toronto: Between the Lines. 2015.
- Carver, Benjamin T. "Working for Wilderness: A Transnational Study of Relief Work, National Parks and Nature in the Canadian-American Rockies, 1929-1942". PhD Dissertation. Northern Arizona University. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. 2015.
- Chiang, Connie "Winning the War at Manzanar: Environmental Patriotism and the Japanese American Incarceration," In *Rendering Nature: Animals, Bodies, Places, Politics*, edited by Marguerite Shaffer and Phoebe Young, 237-62, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.
- *Nature Behind Barbed Wire: An Environmental History of the Japanese American Incarceration*. Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Coates, Colin, and Graeme Wynn eds. *The Nature of Canada*. Vancouver: On Point Press. 2019.
- Colfer, Carol J. Pierce. *Masculinities in Forests: Representations of Diversity*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 2021.
- Cronon, William. "The Trouble with Wilderness; Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature." *Environmental History* 1 (1): 7–28. 1996. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3985059>.
- Dowie, Mark. *Conservation Refugees: The Hundred-Year Conflict Between Global Conservation and Native Peoples*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press. 2009.

- Dummitt, Christopher. *The Manly Modern: Masculinity in Postwar Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press. 2007.
- Dyck, John M. *Faith Under Test: Alternative Service During World War II in the U.S. and Canada*. Moundridge, Kansas: Gospel Publishers. 1997.
- Epp, Marlene. "Alternative Service and Alternative Gender Roles: COs in B.C. During World War II." *BC Studies* 105/106 (Summer 1995): 139-58.
- Farges, Patrick. "Masculinity and Confinement: German-Speaking Refugees in Canadian Internment Camps (1940-1943)." *Culture, Society and Masculinities* 4, no. 1 (Spring, 2012): 33-47. <http://dx.doi.org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/10.3149/CSM.0401.33>.
- Fransen, David. "Canadian Mennonites and Conscientious Objection in World War II." MA Diss. University of Waterloo, 1977.
- Frey, Darrell James. *Called to Be a Soldier: Experiences of COs at Alternative Service Camps During WWII*. Wallenstein: Vineyard Publications. 2014.
- Gossage, Peter, and Robert Allen Rutherford. *Making Men, Making History: Canadian Masculinities Across Time and Place*. Vancouver: UBC Press. 2018.
- Hayes, Geoffrey, and Kirk W Goodlet. "Exploring Masculinity in the Canadian Army Officer Corps, 1939-45." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 48 (2): 40-69. 2014. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jcs.2014.0025>.
- Heron, Craig. "The Boys and Their Booze: Masculinities and Public Drinking in Working-Class Hamilton, 1890-1946." *Canadian Historical Review* 86 (3): 411-52. 2005. <https://doi.org/10.1353/can.2005.0126>.
- Hessing, Melody, Rebecca Sue Raglon, and Catriona Alison Hayward Sandilands eds. *This Elusive Land: Women and the Canadian Environment*. Vancouver: UBC Press. 2005.
- Higate, Paul. *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers. 2003.
- Jackson, Paul. *One of the Boys: Homosexuality in the Military During World War II*. 2d ed. Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press. 2010.
- Janzen, William. *Limits on Liberty: The Experience of Mennonite, Hutterite, and Doukhobor Communities in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1990.
- Janzen, William and Frances Greaser. *Sam Martin Went to Prison*. Winnipeg: Kindred Press. 1990.

- Jordan, Ben. "Conservation of Boyhood: Boy Scouting's Modest Manliness and Natural Resource Conservation, 1910-1930." *Environmental History* 15(4): 612-42. 2010. <https://doi.org/10.1093/envhis/emq090>.
- Kaufmann, Eric. "'Naturalizing the Nation': The Rise of Naturalistic Nationalism in the United States and Canada." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40 (4): 666-95. 1998. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417598001698>.
- Kikkert, Peter, and P. Whitney Lackenbauer. "'Men of Frontier Experience': Yukoners, Frontier Masculinity, and the First World War." *Northern Review (Whitehorse)*, no. 44: 209-42. 2017. <https://doi.org/10.22584/nr44.2017.010>.
- Klassen, A. J. *Alternative Service for Peace: in Canada During World War II, 1941-1946*. Abbotsford: Mennonite Central Committee B.C., Seniors for Peace. 1998.
- Klassen, John. "Alternative Service Memoirs." Unpublished manuscript, 1995, typescript.
- Klippenstein, Lawrence. *That There Be Peace: Mennonites in Canada and World War II*. Winnipeg: Manitoba CO Reunion Committee. 1979.
- Koustas, Jane, Munroe Eagles, Maeve Conrick, and Caitriona Ni Chasaide. *Landscapes and Landmarks of Canada: Real, Imagined, (re)viewed*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press. 2017.
- Laakkonen, Simo, Richard P. Tucker, and Timo Olavi Vuorisalo. *The Long Shadows: A Global Environmental History of the Second World War*. Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Press. 2017.
- Loo, Tina. *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century*. Vancouver: UBC Press. 2006.
- MacEachern, Alan. *Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada, 1935-1970*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press. 2001.
- MacLaren, I.S. "Cultured Wilderness in Jasper National Park." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 34 (3): 7-58. 1999. <https://doi.org/10.3138/jcs.34.3.7>.
- Macnaghten, Phil and John. Urry. *Contested Natures*. London: SAGE. 1998.
- Maynard, Steven. "Rough Work and Rugged Men: The Social Construction of Masculinity in Working-Class History." *Labour* 23: 159-69. 1989. <https://doi.org/10.2307/25143139>.
- Nye, Robert A. 2007. "Western Masculinities in War and Peace." *The American Historical Review* 112 (2): 417-38. 2007. <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr.112.2.417>.

- O'Hagan, Michael. *Beyond the Barbed Wire: POW Labour Projects in Canada during the Second World War* (2020). Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository. 6849.
- Olfert, Eric. "A Look at WWII C.O.s Through the Eyes of the Press." Unpublished manuscript, 1974, typescript.
- Penton, James. *Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada: Champions of Freedom of Speech and Worship*. Toronto: Maclean-Hunter Press. 1976.
- "Jehovah's Witnesses and the Second World War: Resistance to Militarism and to Alternative Service." *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 25: 75-88. 2007.
- Radforth, Ian. *Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario, 1900-1980*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1987.
- Robb, Linsey and Juliette Pattison eds. *Men, Masculinities and Male Culture in the Second World War*. London: Palgrave Macmillan. 2018.
- Rashkow, Ezra D. "Idealizing Inhabited Wilderness: A Revision to the History of Indigenous Peoples and National Parks." *History Compass* 12, no. 10 (October 1, 2014): 818–32. doi:10.1111/hic3.12190.
- Sandlos, John. "Not Wanted in the Boundary: The Expulsion of the Keeseekoowenin Ojibway Band from Riding Mountain National Park." *The Canadian Historical Review* 89 (2): 189–221. 2008. <https://doi.org/10.3138/chr.89.2.189>.
- Scharff, Virginia. *Seeing Nature through Gender*. Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas. 2003.
- Shaw, Amy J. *Crisis of Conscience: Conscientious Objection in Canada During the First World War*. Vancouver: UBC Press. 2009.
- Sider, E. Morris. *The Brethren in Christ in Canada: Two Hundred Years of Tradition and Change*. Hamilton, Ont: Canadian Conference of the Brethren in Christ Church. 1988.
- Socknat, Thomas. *Witness Against War: Pacifism in Canada 1900-1945*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1987.
- "COs in the Context of Canadian Peace Movements." *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 25 (2007): 61–74.
- Stoesz, Conrad. "'Are You Prepared to Work in a Mental Hospital?': Canadian COs' Service During the Second World War." *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 29: 61-74. 2011.
- "The Creation of an Identity: The CO in Canadian Mennonite Memory." MA Diss. University of Manitoba, 2018.

- Todd, Anne Marie. *Communicating Environmental Patriotism: A Rhetorical History of the America Environmental Movement*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 2013.
- "A Call for Environmental Patriotism." *The Taproot*. Cortland: New York. 2014.
- Toews, John A. *Alternative Service in Canada During World War II*. Winnipeg: Publication Committee of the Canadian Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church. n.d
- Waiser, W. A. *Park Prisoners: The Untold Story of Western Canada's National Parks, 1915-1946*. Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers. 1995.
- Wall, Sharon. *The Nurture of Nature: Childhood, Antimodernism, and Ontario Summer Camps, 1920-55*. Vancouver: UBC Press. 2009.
- Warner, Anne. "'The Construction of Wilderness': An Historical Perspective." Paper presented at Canadian Parks for Tomorrow, University of Calgary, AB, May 2008.
- "To Grow in the Open Air and to Eat and Sleep with the Earth," PhD diss., University of Western Ontario, 2010.

Curriculum Vitae

Name: Rosemary Giles

Post-secondary Education and Degrees: The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada
2016-2020 B.A.

The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada
2020-Present M.A.

Honours and Awards: The Western Scholarship of Excellence
The University of Western Ontario
2016-2017

Faculty of Arts and Humanities Entrance Scholarship of Excellence
The University of Western Ontario
2016-2017

Dean's Honour List
The University of Western Ontario
2018

Professor Kenneth Hilborn Global Opportunities Award
The University of Western Ontario
2018-2019

International Learning Award
The University of Western Ontario
2018-2019

Global and Intercultural Engagement Honour
The University of Western Ontario

Chair's Scholarship
The University of Western Ontario
2020-2021

Dean's Honour List
The University of Western Ontario
2020-2021

Social Science and Humanities Research Council Canada Graduate
Scholarship - Masters
2021-2022

United Empire Scholarship for Local History
The University of Western Ontario
2021

**Related Work
Experience**

Teaching Assistant
The University of Western Ontario
2020-2022

Undergraduate Research Assistant
The University of Western Ontario
2020

Graduate Research Assistant
The University of Western Ontario
2021-2022