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Searching for Sakitawak: Place and People in Northern Saskatchewan's Île-à-la-Crosse

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in History

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ABSTRACT

This presentation is a history of a small community, Île-à-la-Crosse, located in an area now part of Saskatchewan, Canada. With an historic reputation for cooperation and enviable trading circumstances, its residents traditionally have determined that protection of the community ensured the best opportunities for the advancement and security of individuals. As a result of this belief, residents reinforced their own understandings of sustainability as a means to ensure personal success. The community's fame for hosting such a set of norms grew, particularly from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, and outsiders often visited to improve their own efforts as a result of this reputation. Given the belief that community longevity assured individual concerns, many visitors quickly decided to adopt local processes even if those functions contrasted sharply from their own original beliefs. Based on these decisions, the visitors' institutions experienced changes as well.

Through this social cooperation to better ensure personal success, a culture began to develop, and so the village's distinctive administrative and economic processes were continued through family, neighbourly, and kinship ties. Some characteristics, such as multiculturalism, shared land use, complex trading activities, and sustainability, further distinguished Île-à-la-Crosse as a result. Though well aware of the village a number of parties (such as the Hudson's Bay Company and the Canadian government), still regularly excluded the community from their deliberations because of its unique ability to supposedly need less intervention considered necessary elsewhere. These various corporate and political authorities, concerned with their own existence, instead emphasised the conditions of communities that demonstrated social hostility, monetary difficulties, and other forms of disparity. As these historic parties failing to appreciate the village's positive components in their fullest form, historians also did not integrate the village into their narratives since they almost always focused on conflict and change in their investigations. Because of this missing analysis about Île-à-la-Crosse, historical

accounts have created lacunae in our understanding and awareness not just of local but also of provincial and national issues pertaining to “development.” Today, the lack of historic and historical awareness has as well directly impacted a modern day Indigenous “land claim”. Particularly when examining “absence” and “overlap” in a space’s natural and social form, Île-à-la-Crosse’s story from its earliest existence to its present shape can finally remind us how local conditions –even before humans started living in those circumstances – can teach us about how to survive and succeed today as individuals and as part of a larger community and country. It also reminds us how we should pay more attention to peace, cooperation and interaction in both intellectual and social circles.

Key words: sustainability; Métis history (Saskatchewan); Churchill River; microhistory; economic rights; overlap; historical absence; community history; land claim; Indigenous history.

Dedicated to

Hazel Daum and Margaret Shanks

Very different backgrounds
overlapping lives
faith in what cooperation could bring

“MARSHI”:¹

I have many places that deserve my thanks. At the University of Saskatchewan, Brent Cotter was a great boss and super strategizer. Paul Hackett got me excited about mapmaking and “sites”. Marie-Ann Bowden ensured I did not make more mistakes by her instructions that started “Look, kiddo”. Winona Wheeler, first at First Nations University, provided work for me that led to so many other opportunities. Felix Hoehn and Sarah Buhler were the best next-door neighbours at work I could have. Doug Surtees became a quick good friend and stellar role model.

When I moved to Osgoode Hall Law School for work, so many people kept saying “welcome back home.” Sonia Lawrence, Amar Bhatia, Ruth Buchanan, Janet Mosher, Kate Sutherland and Dayna Nadine Scott have reassured me that I can run into their offices, close the door behind me and pester them about what is ever on my mind. The same is true with Shin Imai and Kent McNeil. Lorne Sossin, my boss-boss also told me “everyone expects you to be yourself”. What a relief.

At Western University, Brenda Hutcheson and Chris Speed were administrative geniuses at numerous important moments. Bill Turkel let me brainstormed about microhistory repeatedly and deeply. Jonathan Vance and Margaret Kellow let me write about what recharged me the most.

Financial assistance has helped the journey less burdensome at very pivotal moments. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History, Society for American Ethnohistory, Western’s Department of History, all had faith in what I wanted to do. In addition, two deans’ offices provided extra funding so I could meet and work with Aaron Starr, Sara-jane Nussbaum, Brittany Hazell, Kelsey Burke, Sabrina Molinar, Kurtis Macdonald and Nancy Carlson and get the gift of time for this project.

Specific people have helped with specific things: A long time ago, Brenda Macdougall befriended me. Or took pity on me. Maria Campbell kept her eagle eyes on me. Michael Trebilcock told me I was writing about law and economics. Bob Cooter (UC Berkeley) told me to go to the board, do the math and just plain admit I’ve been fascinated by deadweight loss and reverse induction all my life. Jeffery Hewitt, Margaret Froh and Rachel Osborne ensured I didn’t become Ontario’s version of a ‘road allowance’ person. Some individuals have helped me think carefully about communities in history and how learning isn’t done in the archives alone. Leanne Laprise and Jenny Kyplain, both students along the way, helped me get to know the “West Side” even better and have fun playing tv bingo, going to the Chicken Shack and seeing mother loons with four babies. Allan Blakeney found me as soon as I arrived to work at University of Saskatchewan’s law school and subsequently came by my office for tea every day he was in. As his eyes got yellower, I found myself

¹ A Michif word for expressing thanks.

feeling like a library was about to burn down and I needed to learn as much as I could from him. Thankfully, he let me. Rita Bouvier, Marilyn Poitras and Tim Foran have provided such wonderful insight on some matters that impacted me greatly while organizing my research. Jean Teillet helped me get my head around 1906 scrip matters.

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My dissertation committee challenged, supported, and recharged me. Rick Fehr made me slow down and consider how much maps mattered. Katherine McKenna challenged me to think about *my* place in writing about "place". Jim Miller showed up ready to wrestle and expected me to wrestle right back. I am so privileged to have learned the skills I did from these people. Ben Forster was an eager and incredibly helpful "Second Reader".

My Great Aunt Beatrice Annetts (Muscowpetung First Nation): you ensured I remembered things about family, stories about the land and self-awareness. I've had to be a little prodigal about stuff, and and I'm thankful you forgive me for that. I hope I'm getting "there".

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SEARCHING FOR SAKITAWAK:
PLACE AND PEOPLE IN
NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN ÎLE-À-LA-CROSSE

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASGM: Archives de soeurs Grises, Montréal

CCF: Co-operative Commonwealth Federation

NDP: New Democratic Party

HBCA: Hudson's Bay Company Archives

LAC: Library and Archives Canada

PAA: Provincial Archives of Alberta.

SAB: Saskatchewan Archives Board

SBHS/Arch: Saint Boniface Historical Society Archives

“There are doubtless quite different races...that happen to fuse together. But the métis that results from such crossings constitutes a population very inferior to the products from which it derives, and is completely incapable of creating or even continuing a civilization.”²

(Gustave Le Bon, 1919.)

This is no place for a Ladies Man, and Mr. B. finds it so.

(Hudson’s Bay Company Archives,
Île-à-la-Crosse- Post Journals,
28 October 1904.)

“I’ve made tea! Now we can get back to
talking about those ‘social animators’ of yours...”

(Allan Blakeney to the author,
Saskatoon, 28 October 2010.)

² Gustave Le Bon, *Lois psychologiques de l'évolution de peuples* (Paris: Alcan, 1919), quoted by Pierre-André Tanguieff on page 215 in a chapter called “The specter of Métissage” in his *The Force of Prejudice: On Racism and Its Doubles*, trans. and ed. Hassan Melehy (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001). (Tanguieff’s translation)

PART I

HISTORIC EVENTS AND HISTORICAL VALUE



3

1. Seeing Absence and Calculating Presence

This study recounts the life of a particular place's space – now known as Île-à-la-Crosse – located in what is now northern Saskatchewan. Because historical studies of this village's activities as a “place” are few and focus upon specific themes such as family ties or religious efforts, an investigation about the space's evolution can contribute to how the village's region, and that region's role beyond the North West, is understood.⁴ After

³ Image 1 – Île-à-la-Crosse highway sign. Image courtesy of Leanne Laprise JD (2017). This sign appears in the ditch beside Saskatchewan's Highway 908.

⁴ Paul David contends a community is a type of institution that should be studied as much as any type of organization, topic, or person. See his “Why are Institutions the ‘Carriers of History’?: Path

starting, the historical project demanded I needed to recognize a significant – and complicated – factor: learning about the village meant realizing it appeared with great importance in some documents but was nowhere to be found in other presumably relevant archives. This condition, of being well known but also perplexingly underappreciated, intertwined itself among all the documentation that mentioned Île-à-la-Crosse, for as many times as Île-à-la-Crosse's life was "famous," it was just as often ignored. As a result, as much as I wanted this study to be about the village's "times," I realized it was impossible to avoid learning about how the place repeatedly disappeared from the historical horizon. To write the *historical* story, I had to recognize that I would simultaneously need to solve a *mystery* story. Learning about the village's life meant also learning about when individuals and institutions forgot about Île-à-la-Crosse – and what that forgetfulness represented.

At the outset, an example of this puzzling condition might be helpful.⁵ A few years ago, the Government of Canada decided to issue a formal "apology" for the federal use of

Dependence and the Evolution of Conventions, Organizations and Institutions," *Structural Change and Economic Dynamics* 5, no. 2 (1994): 205-220. A similar argument is made by Keith H. Basso in *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language of the Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996). Brenda Macdougall's work, *One of the Family: Metis Culture in Nineteenth-Century Northwestern Saskatchewan* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011) is an excellent example of using the lens of family ties (or kinship) and cultural traits as a starting point for revealing a place's functions as an effect of important genealogical and oral history. Timothy Foran has also focused on the village by evaluating the work of the Catholic Church there. See Timothy Paul Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place: Oblates and the evolving concept of Metis at Ile-a-la-Crosse," (ph.d. dissertation: University of Ottawa, 2011).

⁵ In noticing this intriguing, yet frustrating, paradigm, and then struggling with how a historical effort could be organized which took into account the more linear existence and this capacity to disappear from historical scrutiny, I was inspired by Angela Wanhalla's *In/visible Sight: The Mixed-Descent Families of Southern New Zealand* (Edmonton, AB: Athabasca University Press, 2010), Caroline B. Walker's "Wonder," *American Historical Review* 102, no. 1 (February 1997): 1-26, and Carlo Ginzburg's chapter entitled "The Inquisitor as Anthropologist" in his *Clues, Myths and the Historical Method*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991) as reassurances to show that I could somehow organize a historical study about Île-

residential schools to educate, control, and arguably to eliminate many Indigenous communities in Canada.⁶ This apology contained a number of unique features.⁷ First, the federal government arranged to broadcast the apology live on several national television networks. As well, the apology was made in the House of Commons during the time normally devoted to “Question Period.” But most notably, the apology was part of a session when for the first time in Canadian history, people neither elected nor a monarchical figure would address Members of Parliament. After the Prime Minister finished reading the apology, a group of Indigenous leaders responded to the statement. Of note, when given his turn to speak, Métis National Council President Clem Chartier stated during his remarks: “Prime Minister, the Métis Nation of western Canada, which has been excluded from many things by the workings of this House and its policies, wants in.”⁸

à-la-Crosse – if only I realized that appreciating a landscape is also about acknowledging what I *cannot* see.

⁶ For the most part “residential schools” were institutions for Indigenous children, and nearly all these schools were located a great distance from the children’s families and home communities. The most detailed analysis of this educational system remains J. R. Miller’s *Shingwauk’s Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

⁷ On April 25th, 2006, (then) Minister of Indian Affairs Jim Prentice announced in Question Period that the Aboriginal leadership and government officials had approved a “Final Settlement Agreement” which would provide compensation to students who attended residential schools. Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 25 April 2006. It was soon approved by the Courts of Appeal across Canada, and was not appealed by any provincial government to the Supreme Court of Canada. As part of the Agreement, any residential school student had to apply for compensation by 20 August, 2007. Applicants also lost the right to commence any legal action in the future pertaining to their experience as a residential school student. Notably, this arrangement happened before the apology so the federal government could ensure the apology could not be used as evidence of responsibility.

⁸ Besides MNC President Chartier, leaders included National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Phil Fontaine, National Chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples Patrick Brazeau, President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami Mary Simon, and President of the Native Women’s Association of Canada Beverley Jacobs. See Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 11 June 2008, starting at page 1605. President Chartier’s statement appears on page 1619.

The next day during Question Period, (then) Leader of the Official Opposition the Right Honourable Stéphane Dion stood up to ask the Prime Minister a question. Rather than reflecting on the apology's national (or even international) impact, Dion instead focused his question on one small place. Dion said

Mr. Speaker, yesterday leaders in the House formally apologized for the legacy of residential schools. We must now move forward toward truth and reconciliation. Will the Prime Minister give his words weight by, for example, honouring his election promise to compensate the victims of schools who have been left out of the settlement, such as Île-à-la-Crosse in Saskatchewan?

Obligated to reply as per Question Period protocol, Prime Minister Stephen Harper responded:

Mr. Speaker, as the Leader of the Opposition knows, there were a number of schools similar to Indian residential schools that were run by provincial governments. They were not covered by the settlement, which was ultimately negotiated with the Assembly of First Nations. We understand these are unresolved issues and I know the minister, I and others have spoken about the need for governments to address these issues.

Dion did not find this response satisfactory. He retorted:

Mr. Speaker, (The Minister of Indian Affairs should do so)—immediately. He must honour his words and show that he will, indeed, compensate these schools in order to show that the words yesterday will be followed by a new era for Canada in our relationship with aboriginal peoples.⁹

This post-apology exchange likely raised some questions for the other MPs in Question Period. Where exactly was this Île-à-la-Crosse? How could some educational institution

⁹ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 12 June 2008, 1415.

potentially be a residential school? Why would the Prime Minister want to ignore this school's history? How did Quebec-representing Dion learn of Île-à-la-Crosse? And why should this place hardly anyone knew about get significant attention in Question Period's modern history? Certainly, Dion's challenge called into question the sincerity of the preceding day's apology. But it also put the spotlight on many other matters that apparently Dion considered imperative for his fellow MPs to learn about.¹⁰ With a little more than eight hundred people living there, one village shifted a Parliament's understanding about a tragic part of the past that its elected officials likely believed they already comprehended.¹¹ After collecting and analyzing documentation about Île-à-la-Crosse this type of "moment,"¹² where the village is simultaneously "famous" and yet under-acknowledged, happens more than any other theme that a community's life could have.¹³ This ability of the community, to change its relevance within a larger macro historic role in an instant, is one of its strongest historic qualities.

¹⁰ J. R. Miller views both Métis history and the gathering of that history as examples of "willful neglect." J. R. Miller, *Lethal Legacy: Current Native Controversies in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2004), 18. It has yet to be learned how exactly Mr. Dion learned about Île-à-la-Crosse, but coincidentally on the same day that this Dion-Harper exchange occurred, Métis National Council President Clem Chartier addressed the Senate and described the plight of the village's residential school students. Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 12 June 2008, 1550. When re-elected president of the Métis National Council in late 2010, Chartier re-announced his concern about the issue of compensation for Île-à-la-Crosse school attendees, of which he was one. To this day, Canada contends that the school's transformation into a provincially run institution means that the school does not qualify as a "residential school" for the purposes of compensation, regardless of whether abuse occurred there. "Métis Grant Chartier New Mandate," CBC News, accessed July 7, 2015, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/Métis-grant-chartier-new-mandate-1.293038>.

¹¹ For another explanation after the apology, see Clement Chartier, "Métis still waiting for their apology," *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 18, 2010, A17.

¹² For remarks about how many modern studies build upon previous presentations rather than challenge those presentations' roles, consider the comments of Peggy Ochoa in "The Historical Moments of Postcolonial Writing: Beyond Colonialism's Binary," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 15, no. 2 (Autumn 1996): 221-229.

¹³ Another example of when an individual seems extremely interested in Île-à-la-Crosse in ways which seem, at first blush, very surprising is the attention given to the village by novelist Sinclair Lewis and his brother Claude. See Claude Lewis, *Treaty Trip: An Abridgement of Dr. Claude Lewis's journal of an expedition made by Himself and his Brother, Sinclair Lewis, to northern*

Besides being a part of its historic condition (and likely as an effect), Île-à-la-Crosse's shifting role is a matter of historical presence as well.¹⁴ Emerging and disappearing while also surviving as a place means that this community's "biography,"¹⁵ overarching narrative,¹⁶ set of loosely linked stories, or whatever other term might seem suitable, is also a presentation that shows how "places are not simply affected by the institutional maneuvers surrounding them. Places are those machinations."¹⁷ On this point, the village's strength lies in its ability to adapt and, by effect, challenge the institutional maneuvers that have been attempted there. Regularly understood as the historic centre of the fur trade since more than half of trade occurred with at least one stage located in the community,¹⁸ Île-à-la-Crosse was mapped incorrectly for years. It had one of the longest

Saskatchewan and Manitoba in 1924 (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1959), 17-20.

¹⁴ Paul Carter contends that the higher the amount of Indigenous influence upon a region, the higher the possibility of historical absence. See *The Road to Botany Bay* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 332.

¹⁵ For an effort which also demonstrates the analysis of one place over a long period of time, see Ronald Williamson, ed., *Toronto: An Illustrated History of Its First 12, 000 Years* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 2008). In particular, its division of topics is especially notable, being natural history, pre-contact, the impact of colonialism, economic trends, and the city's role in the future. The book's definition of "middle ground" also challenges previous understandings of this term by emphasising the permanent quality of such a region instead of imagining it as a temporary or potentially intangible area. See page 7 of the preface by Ronald Williamson entitled "Living in the Middle Ground" and Roger Hall's reference on page 120 in his chapter entitled "Toronto into the Twenty-First Century." Jennifer S. H. Brown justifies her broad span as a way to help mitigate the issue of uneven quantities of evidence for various decades. See her introduction for *Strangers in Blood Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 1980). Another defense for this technique appears in Edmund Russell, "Evolutionary History: Prospectus for a New Field," *Environmental History* 8, no. 2 (April 2003): 204-228. Thomas F. Thornton calls stories about places or objects "emplaced biographies" in *Being and Place Among the Tlingit* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2007) 33.

¹⁶ I consider that the word "narrative" is as applicable to a historical study as it is to presentations considered creative/fictional in nature. See Bert Van Roermund, *Law, Narrative and Reality: An Essay in Intercepting Politics* (Dordrecht, NL: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997), 13.

¹⁷ John R. Logan and Harvey L. Molotch, *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of a Place* 2nd ed. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007), 43.

¹⁸ Richard Somerset Mackie, *Trading Beyond the Mountains: The British Fur Trade on the Pacific, 1793-1843* (Vancouver, British Columbia: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), see Map 1, p. xvi.

histories of peaceful multiculturalism among western Canadian communities but rarely was it acknowledged for its inter-ethnic condition. It also demonstrated one of the best examples of historic sustainable development¹⁹ in Canada. Despite these profound roles, the place's historical role is relatively rarely acknowledged and arguably weakly presented when it does appear. Anthropologist Robert Jarvenpa explained how "overlapping ... networks have been regarded by some as notoriously amorphous and difficult to bound and, thus, a challenge for analysis."²⁰ The repetition of overlapping processes at Île-à-la-Crosse is high, and its historical influence relatively low. If Jarvenpa is right, such an imbalance is predictable. In researching the community, examining the overlaps, then responding to point of its low mention, presenting this history has required a certain historical "disentangl(ing)."²¹ As will be explained, it also means introducing less familiar sources and providing them in less familiar ways. Without these newer methods and different types of evidence, the village's "visible invisibility" will likely continue.

Before learning about Île-à-la-Crosse's unusual history, however, and before prefacing that presentation with an explanation about its construction, it is helpful to consider previous findings and methods presented by those who have investigated topics that include that link to Île-à-la-Crosse's story. Not only do those works provide data themselves, they likely give some context for the village's "presence/absence" condition.

¹⁹ This source provides a commonly accepted definition of 'sustainable development': "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs": World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 43.

²⁰ Robert Jarvenpa, "Silot'ine: An Insurance Perspective on Northern Dene Kinship Networks in Recent History," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 60, no. 2 (Summer, 2004): 154.

²¹ Margaret MacMillan, *The Uses and Abuses of History* (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2008), 124.

My new trail to find Île-à-la-Crosse is only possible by first appreciating how others determined to travel through the past's terrain.²²

2. Earlier Trails

Undoubtedly, a story about Île-à-la-Crosse is a story about “Canadian history.” Works by two of Canada’s most influential historians, Harold Innis and Donald Creighton, have challenged whether general conclusions about Canada could be applied to all parts of northern North America. When considering that Creighton’s efforts focus on locations more central and eastern, it is still possible to link much of what he concluded to Île-à-la-Crosse. Decisions in the East had an impact upon many distant communities – even those as far flung as Île-à-la-Crosse. As result many of Creighton’s ideas, such as his “Laurentian thesis” about the central Canadian development of key staple products, can be applied when thinking about people living around the Churchill River system even when that

²² This issue, of the possibility of an absence-presence existence, is addressed in Part Four, entitled “Circumstance, Change and Continuity” of Lyle Dick’s award-winning *Muskox Land: Ellesmere Island in the Age of Contact* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2001). More examples of arguing for national recognition of a small location to appreciate a difficulty experienced by a group beyond the location is addressed successfully in William J. Turkel’s *The Archive of Place: Unearthing the Pasts of the Chilcotin Plateau* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007) and J. R. Miller’s *Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aboriginal Treaty-Making in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009). Of note here, Valerie Alia argues that Indigenous communities that demonstrate qualities considered successful are often underreported due to presumptions about Aboriginal dependence and also how that success, if done in ways not typical of Indigenous societies, is an automatic criticism of other communities’ efforts. Valerie Alia, *Un/Covering the North: News, Media, and Aboriginal Peoples* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 144. On page 16 of *A Concise Economic History of Britain: from 1750 to Recent Times* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), W.H.B. Court contends that studying economic trends need not be about locations with large populations. In fact, the measure of a case study’s relevance is instead determined by noticing the community’s capacity to adapt. For reflections about why certain narratives are vital to weave into an academic presentation when writing about Indigenous peoples and environmental issues, see William Cronon, “A Place for Stories: Nature, History, and Narrative,” *The Journal of American History* 78, no. 4 (March 1992): 1347-1376.

system can only be considered linked to the St. Lawrence if much of the travelling is by land.²³

While acknowledging Creighton's efforts as pivotal, his colleague Harold Innis had earlier concluded it was imperative to write about topics that illustrated how other parts of Canada could be just as impactful as whatever happened in Toronto or Montréal. By illustrating this theory in his *The Fur Trade in Canada*, Innis introduced several variables into macro-historical understandings of Canada that his colleagues at the University of Toronto (including Creighton) and elsewhere had chosen to ignore.²⁴ Particularly after Creighton wrote *The Commercial Empire of the St Lawrence*, Innis remained stalwart about how central Canada arguably depended upon what happened elsewhere much more than the reverse. In his own book and articles after, Innis investigated the fur trade out West, included the activities of Indigenous peoples in particular, called for a broader interpretation of "trade," and even openly challenged other historians. Indeed, Innis contended those attracted to ideas about the Laurentian were simply reassigning

²³ See generally D. G. Creighton, *The Commercial Empire of the St Lawrence, 1760-1850* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1937); D.G. Creighton, *Dominion of the North: A History of Canada* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1944). Creighton's influence and his "Laurentian theme" upon Canadian historicism during the twentieth century cannot be overemphasized, as explained by John Moir in the introduction to *Character and Circumstance: Essays in Honour of Donald Grant Creighton* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1970). See also Lewis Thomas' book review of Creighton's *Canada's First Century: 1867-1967* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970) in *The American Historical Review* 77, no. 2 (Apr. 1972): 598-599.

²⁴ H. A. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada: an Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1930). See W. J. Turkel's discussion about how economics is about more activities than merely "a simple-minded accounting of red and black ink or of the 'bottom line'" Turkel, *The Archive of Place*, 68. For an interesting biographical study see Alexander John Watson, *Marginal Man: The Dark Vision of Harold Innis* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006). For a source which uses a limited understanding of "economic," consider Dale Miquelon, "Canada's Place in the French Imperial Economy: An Eighteenth Century Overview," *French Historical Studies* XV, no.3 (Spring 1988): 432-443. Allan Greer chastises perspectives such as Miquelon's as "too narrow a range of class relations". See Greer, "Wage Labour and the Transition to Capitalism: a Critique of Pentland," *Labour/Le Travail* 15 (Spring 1985): 8-10.

Frederick Jackson Turner's famous "frontier thesis" to Canada's past instead of realizing that this country had its own intricacies worthy of investigation.²⁵

Today, some historians have argued Innis merely re-interpreted Turner's theoretical 'frontier' himself by still focusing on a natural resource and simply noticing a dominating force in a different locale.²⁶ But whatever one's view about his efforts, Innis still forced Canadianists to admit they had rarely considered the West, hardly ever considered local activities, and thought account books were the only major source for making conclusions about Canada's economic past.²⁷ Innis included more people, places, and subjects than only central Canadian cities and their male Anglo residents, and that fact puts him in a

²⁵ For a discussion about the beneficial and limiting aspects of frontierism see Michael S. Cross' *The Frontier Thesis and the Canadas: The Debate on the Impact of the Canadian Environment* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1970). Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: H. Holt, 1921) created this historical stir.

²⁶ Michael Bliss argues Innis' application should be limited: "H.A. Innis and his disciples suggest the NWC created the Dominion of Canada." Bliss, *Northern Enterprise: Five Centuries of Canadian Business* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987), 105. See also Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 527 for another example which critiques Innis' strict perspective about what "economic" means.

²⁷ Henry Bolton is credited with coining the term "borderlands." See generally Henry Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands: A Chronicle of old Florida and the Southwest* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1921). Richard White's *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991) is considered one of the most influential presentations upon the evolution of "borderlands" discourse; the term in his title often seems to replace writers' urge to use the word "borderlands." For a critique of White's invention, see David McNab, *Circles of Time: Aboriginal Land Rights and Resistance in Ontario* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1999), 187. One of the most recent versions of "borderlands" data is the invention "Shatterzones." See generally Robbie Ethridge, ed. *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone: The Colonial Indian Slave Trade and Regional Instability in the American South* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2009). Two works which attempt to confront the limitations of this subfield are Talal Asad, *Anthropology and Colonial Encounter* (Ithaca, NY: Ithaca Press, 1973) and Gerritt Huizer and Bruce Mannheim, *The Politics of Anthropology: From Colonialism and Sexism Toward a View from Below* (The Hague, NL: De Gruyter Mouton, 1979). As the dates for these books demonstrate, criticisms about borderlands discourse have not appeared until more recently. Helpful reflections appear on page 6 of Michelle Hamilton, "Contested Histories: Museum, Collectors and Iroquoian Peoples in Ontario, 1797-1910" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Western Ontario, 2004).

different category than his contemporaries.²⁸ As it is still possible to find recent presentations that hold on to the themes Creighton introduced, Innis appears even more groundbreaking for how early he imagined different understandings for what “economic” and even “Canadian” could mean.²⁹

Since Innis’ and Creighton’s times, views have also changed about *who* and *what* can be investigated. Today, different ethnicities, classes, and the role of gender and sexuality appear frequently in historical writing. The newer content is insightful because of the ways in which it challenges earlier understandings about history. In addition, these more contemporary topics challenge previous historical methods. By observing how many people and subjects that make up Canada’s past that are *not* found in documents and formats earlier historians used, these more recent writers must in effect introduce styles

²⁸ Consider Arthur Ray’s introduction to the most recent edition of Harold Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada* (University of Toronto Press, 1999). An important analysis of Innis’ influence also appears in J. M. S. Careless, “Frontierism, Metropolitanism, and Canadian History,” *Canadian Historical Review* 35 (March 1954): 1-21.

²⁹ See John Warnock’s call for a broader understanding of “economic” regarding western Canada, due to his view that “people put a high priority on values other than pursuing their own self-interest at all times.” Warnock, *Saskatchewan: The Roots of Discontent and Protest* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2004), 36. While Barrington’s comment about how the economic history of Indigenous peoples is “still in its infancy” appeared more than a decade ago, I still consider it important to highlight how specialists in Indigenous history believed some topics had dominated the subfield at the cost of under exploring Indigenous trade relationships. See *The Other Side of the Frontier: Economic Explorations into Native American History*, ed. Linda Barrington (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), 40. For a typical example of a scholar using a broader analytical lens for observing a community while not realizing a narrow understanding of “economic” is still of issue, see Spaulding’s comments about Métis people having concern about monetary cost but also “emotional and economic support.” Philip T. Spaulding, “The Métis of Ile-a-la-Crosse” (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1970), 96. I appreciate Thomas Mayer’s description in *Invitation to Economics: Understanding Argument and Policy* (Oxford, UK: John Wiley & Sons, 2009), 32-35, where he explains that an issue about economics includes discussions about how individuals act, a “model” of an institution being evaluated, and measurements for what happens when those individuals and institutions interact. Other scholars have taken the field of anthropology to task for still reinforcing overly simplistic understandings about trade and Indigenous-newcomer relations. See John S. Matthiasson, *Living on the Land: Change among the Inuit of Baffin Island* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 1992), 106. See also Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, and their explanation about “what anthropologists call customary law” in *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2001), 125.

that sideline the male, political, and central Canadian focus of their predecessors. Rural lives,³⁰ non-English or French cultures,³¹ gender relations,³² quantitative data,³³ and Indigenous-newcomer relations deserve attention because they reveal the multi-faceted nature of Canada. But they also deserve some time in the intellectual spotlight due to how they challenge any presumptions about how the more affluent and less marginalized members of society are more important to know.³⁴

With a focus that directly and indirectly challenges the overemphasis of male/European/political views of the past especially represented in the academy,³⁵ some

³⁰ These challenges to the urban and Upper Canadian emphasis include Allan Greer, *The People of New France* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), Louise Dechêne's *Habitants et marchands de Montréal au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: Plon, 1974), and Carolyn Podruchny, *Making the Voyageur World: Travelers and Traders in the North American Fur Trade* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006). Gerald Friesen's *The Canadian Prairies: A History*, rev. ed. (1984; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), citations are to the 1993 edition and W. A. Waiser's *Saskatchewan: A New History* (Calgary: Fifth House, 2005) speak to the importance of writing history and simultaneously criticize others for excluding the prairies for so long.

³¹ See Peter Burke, *What is Cultural History?* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2004).

³² See Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society in Western Canada, 1670-1870* (Winnipeg: Watson and Dyer, 1980). See also Joy Parr, "Introduction" in *Childhood and Family in Canadian History* (Joy Parr, ed., Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), 11 and Sarah Carter, *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004).

³³ Arthur Ray's contributions are numerous. See *Indians in the Fur Trade: Their Role as Trappers, Hunters, and Middlemen in Lands Southwest of Hudson Bay* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974); *"Give Us Good Measure": An Economic Analysis of Relations Between the Indians and the Hudson's Bay Company Before 1763* (co-written with Donald B. Freeman) (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978); and *The Canadian Fur Trade in the Industrial Age* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990). See also Conrad E. Heindenreich and Arthur J. Ray, *The Early Fur Trade: A Study in Cultural Interaction* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), which build upon Ray's analysis, include Frank Tough, *'As Their Natural Resources Fail': Native peoples and the Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1870-1930* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1996) and Carolyn Podruchny, "Baptizing Novices: Ritual Moments Among French Canadian Voyageurs in the Montreal Fur Trade," *Canadian Historical Review* 83, no. 2 (June 2002): 165-195.

³⁴ See the remarks in Richard Colebrook Harris, *The Seigneurial System in Early Canada: A Geographical Study* (Kingston, ON: McGill-Queens University Press, 1984), xvi; Heindenreich and Ray, *The Early Fur Trade*, 51. For an example of introducing Indigenous information, but still not listing the Indigenous contributor to a project's creation see Bridget Moran, *Stoney Creek Woman: The Story of Mary John* (Vancouver: Tillicum Library, 1995).

³⁵ Edward Said's observations are as much a criticism of academics as they are an analysis of historical events. See generally Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979). In

of these works call for more Indigenous-based sources.³⁶ Among those arguing for that inclusion, like Innis did, a number of authors attempt to shift the searching process for gathering historical knowledge. In doing so, they also reveal how Indigenous peoples impacted colonial forces as much as (or more than) newcomers changed the lives of North America's original inhabitants.³⁷ In other words, Indigenous peoples arguably took over European activities as much as the colonizers had impact upon the Indigenous peoples they met. Ostensibly aimed at challenging a (too) rigid historical form, some of these efforts have rightly experienced negative feedback. For example, the subfield of 'ethnohistory' has faced significant criticism recently for not taking historical trends into account.³⁸ As well, scholars who concluded that some Indigenous groups' main role

his *Culture and Imperialism*, Said makes the stronger argument that colonialism is a construct which is still enforced today and is arguably more damaging in modern times due to assumptions parties make about the success of global democracy. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993). A more confrontational examination of this issue is contained in Hardt and Negri's *Empire*. Henry Steele Commager concludes that anyone using the term "culture" automatically creates a comparative method that invariably finds non-European and non-American ways inferior. See Henry Steele Commager's lamentation that until we eliminate the concept of a person becoming "cultured," we will never lose our prejudices about the inferiority of non-European nations. Commager, *The Nature and Study of History* (Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1965), 49. Another historic example of the academy (and particularly political science) reinforcing social inequality is succinctly explained by Timothy Mitchell in *Colonising Egypt* (University of California Press, 1991).

³⁶ Laura Murray and Keren Rice, *Talking on the Page: Editing Aboriginal Oral Texts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), xvi. An example of a broader application of "cultural history", which is illustrated by intercultural relations, is Carolyn Podruchny, *Making the Voyageur World*. See also generally Julie Cruikshank, *Life Lived Like a Story* (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1992).

³⁷ Robert Utley, *The Indian Frontier in the American West 1846-1890* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), 11 and Fred Anderson, *The Crucible of War*, 379. Compare these views to Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 165.

³⁸ The growth of ethnohistory, and the amount of support for this growth originating from anthropologists, is noticed by historians. See Margaret Connell Szasz's introductory remarks in her compilation *Between Indian and White Worlds: The Cultural Broker* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 13. Melissa L. Meyer and Kerwin Lee Klein are concerned with the type of attention ethnohistorians give to Aboriginals when those ethnohistorians are not trained as historians. See "Native American Studies and the End of Ethnohistory," in R. Thornton ed., *Studying Native America: Problems and Prospects* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 182-216. For a less skeptical view, see Francis Jennings, "A Growing Partnership:

included being 'in between' other nations have learned their views can be considered ignorant of the autonomous nature those 'middle' people demonstrated.³⁹ In these ways, studies about Indigenous peoples are as prone to limitations as the works those studies are open to challenge.

While works about Indigenous peoples have appeared, studies about isolated places and cultures have also more recently contributed to historical analysis. Labeled with terms such as "annalism,"⁴⁰ "regional" study,⁴¹ "microhistory,"⁴² or "biography,"⁴³ these

Historians, Anthropologists and American Indian History," *Ethnohistory* 29, no. 1 (Winter 1982): 21-34.

³⁹ Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 125; Uma Narayan, *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions, and Third-World Feminism* (New York: Routledge, 1997) explains how every community has a role which includes being on some type of periphery, whether physical, political, or economic in nature. As a result, the borderlands idea either exists everywhere or, alternatively, is a neutral quality. See Narayan, 125. An argument which more successfully challenges some of the 'frontierist' notions borderlands discourse contains is found in Walter D. Mignolo's *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000) and Donald Worster's *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity and the Growth of the American West* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985). Definitely, Bernard de Voto's 1952 *The Course of Empire* (Cambridge, MA: The Riverside Press, 1952; Reprinted with preface by Wallace Stegner, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989) has influenced how all these writers imagined how to describe the fundamental qualities of anything called an empire; others argue using a 'border' motif means also creating the impression that the relationship is subject to revision with a party on either side of the border taking over the area on the other side. See Arnold Davidson, Priscilla L. Walton, and Jennifer Andrews, *Border Crossings: Thomas King's Cultural Inversions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 151. Said claims the British and French rarely overlapped, *Orientalism*, 220. In that way, I see Île-à-la-Crosse as representing one of those rarities.

⁴⁰ Analysts typically use data such as statistics or more empirical information. For a concise and complete description, see Gwynne Lewis, "Annales School," in *Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writing*, Kelly Boyd, ed. (London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1999), 36-37. One of the most influential modern works which is often classified as an example of "annalism" and challenges historians' assumptions about who merits attention and how that attention is justified is Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's *Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error* (New York: Vintage, 1979).

⁴¹ For an explanation which distinguishes "local history" from regional history, see Joseph Amato, *Rethinking Home: A Case for Writing Local History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), especially Chapter 2 where Amato challenges the promoters of "local history" to be more critical. For an example demonstrating the qualities Amato considers "local", see Sakitiwak Bi-Centennial Committee, *Ile-a-la-Crosse, 1776-1976* (Meadow Lake, SK: Meadow Lake Progress, 1977). The concept of "local" is also regularly critiqued in Geoffrey Plank, *An Unsettled Conquest: The British Campaign Against the People of Acadia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), especially at 437-448. See also Norman Ward's argument that "local history" today means what "regional history" meant in the past in *Proceedings of the Local Archives and History*

presentations contend a study about a single person or place can sometimes do more to explain large-scale interaction than a multi-layered 'social' or 'macro' history can accomplish.⁴⁴ Less apparent in Canadianist circles,⁴⁵ efforts in this subgenre considered

Conference (Regina: Saskatchewan Archives Board, 1980), 7. Another example is Shahid Amin's *Event, Metaphor, Memory: Chauri Chaura 1922-1992* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995). For a justification of why a regional study should be completed at all, see Ken Coates' comments about how such an analysis is the best way to help clarify the most complex processes in history. Ken Coates, "Introduction," in *Aboriginal Land Claims in Canada*, ed. Ken Coates (Mississauga, ON: Copp Clark Pittman, 1992), 3-4.

⁴²One of the best works known as a "microhistory" is Judith Brown's *Immodest Acts: The Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). For fear of appearing too strategic in what they research (and therefore actually more subjective than non-microhistories) a few historians claim to have an obvious disassociation with microhistory. One of the most extreme examples of such a claim is the microhistorical Alain Corbin in his "Prelude" in *Life of an Unknown: The Rediscovered World of a Clog-Maker in Nineteenth Century France*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001). Michael Szonyi's observations are particularly helpful: "Microhistorical approaches make it possible to see institutions not simply as forms imposed by the state but as the outcome of the interaction between those forms and local dynamics. They show ongoing negotiations and contest over meanings." Michael Szonyi, *Practicing Kinship: Lineage and Descent in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 206.

⁴³ Examples of biographies overlapping with microhistorical methods include Jim Phillips and Rosemary Gartner's *Murdering Holiness: The Trials of Franz Creffield and George Mitchell* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003) and the chapters in Constance Backhouse's *Colour Coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada 1900-1950* (Toronto: Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History/University of Toronto Press, 1999).

⁴⁴ Joan Weibel-Orlando, *Indian Country, L.A.: Maintaining Ethnic Community in Complex Society* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 6. For other examples see generally Alan Taylor, *William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), Richard White, *Remembering Ahanagan: Storytelling in a Family's Past* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), Richard M. Morse, *From Community to Metropolis: A Biography of Sao Paulo, Brazil* (Gainesville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1958), Peter Ackroyd, *London: The Biography* (London: Vintage, 2001), Norman Davies and Roger Moorhouse, *Microcosm: A Portrait of a Central European City* (London: Pimlico, 2003) and Martin Horak, *Governing the Post-Communist City: Institutions and Democratic Development in Prague* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007). I support John M. Conley and William O'Barr's observation that "society's macrodiscourse is best understood by understanding its microdiscourse." See John M. Conley and William M. O'Barr, *Just Words: Law, Language and Power* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 128.

⁴⁵ A few examples have surfaced. H.V. Nelles' microanalytical work is about a shorter period of time due to a larger geographical scope in *The Politics of Development: Forests, Mines and Hydro-Electric Power in Ontario, 1849-1941* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1974). The issues of microanalysis, Indigenous peoples and a specific location are not completely absent from research circles. See James G. E. Smith, "The Emergence of the Micro-Urban Village among the Caribou-Eater Chipewyan," *Human Organization*, 37, no.1 (Spring 1978): 38-49. Both David Damas' *Arctic Migrants, Arctic Villagers: The Transformation of Inuit Settlement in the Central Arctic* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002) and Robert Utley's, *The Indian Frontier* share many qualities with works about Europe which are considered examples of microhistory. An example of analysing on smaller terms (but not merely about Île-à-la-Crosse, so a larger geographical region over a shorter period of time) is Robert Jarvenpa's and Hetty Jo

microhistories contain some of the boldest challenges to traditional historical methodology.⁴⁶ So, as much as they critique other disciplines for not taking history into account, microhistorians simultaneously take on their departmental colleagues for not presenting memorable, specific accounts.⁴⁷ Microhistorians flag previous methodological

Brumbach, "The Microeconomics of Southern Chipewyan Fur Trade History" in *The Subarctic Fur Trade: Native Social and Economic Adaptations*, ed. Shepard Krech III (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984), 147-83.

⁴⁶ See Devon Mihesuah's remarks about how the introduction of Indigenous groups invariably means the method will be different (and likely criticized). Devon A. Mihesuah, ed. *Natives and Academics: Researching and Writing about American Indians* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 13. For a helpful guide about deciding what methods to introduce and how to introduce them, various tools used to create an analysis, see Marc Bloch, *The Historians' Craft* (New York: Vintage, 1953). For a view about how excitement can jeopardize impartiality see Jill Lepore, "Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography," *Journal of American History* 88, no. 1 (2001): 129-144. Compare her skepticism to Giovanni Levi, "On Microhistory," in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, ed. Peter Burke (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1991), 93-113. Some debate about a microhistory's greater influence appears in a dialogue that developed after Natalie Zemon Davis decided to respond to a review of *The Return of Martin Guerre* by Robert Finlay. See Natalie Zemon Davis, "On the Lane," *American Historical Review* 93, no. 3 (June 1988): 572-603. Finlay's review appears just before Davis' response. See Robert Finlay, "The Refashioning of Martin Guerre," *American Historical Review*, 93, no. 3 (June 1988): 553-571. For expansive discussions of whether professional historians succeed in contributing to social debate, see Robert Weible, "The Blind Man and His Dog: The Public and Its Historians," *The Public Historian* 28, no. 4, (2006): 8-17; Enid H. Douglass, "Oral History and Public History," *The Oral History Review* 8 (1980): 1-5; Wendy Beck and Margaret Somerville, "Conversations Between Disciplines: Historical Archaeology and Oral History at Yarrowarra," *World Archaeology* 37, no. 3 (2005): 468-483; Susan Porter Benson, Introduction to *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*, eds. Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier and Roy Rosenzweig (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), xv - xxiv; Gerald George, "the Perils of 'Public' History," in *Public History: An Introduction*, eds. Barbara J. Howe and Emory I. Kemp (Malabar: Krieger, 1986), 20-28; "Heritage Ascendant," in David Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1-30; "The Presence of the Past," in Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 15-36. Thankfully, more Canadianist perspectives have appeared. See Ruth Sandwell, "History as Experiment: Microhistory and Environmental History," in *Method and Meaning in Canadian Environmental History*, eds. Alan MacEachern and Bill Turkel (London, ON, University of Western Ontario, 2009), 124-139. See also Blagovest Momchedjikova, "The Miniature Metropolis as Memory Palace," *Journal of American and Comparative Cultures* 25, no. 3/4 (September 2002): 312-315 for analysis about how a small place's story actually illustrates macro trends better than describing those trends themselves.

⁴⁷ Due to their expansive discussions about trends in microhistory, Elizabeth Furniss' *The Burden of History: Colonialism and the Frontier Myth in a Rural Canadian Community* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999) and William J. Turkel's *The Archive of Place* are more helpful when searching for modules of microhistorical methodology. In the more general area of "community studies," few examples exist: see Horak, *the Post-Communist City*; David Rayside, *A Small Town in Modern Times: Alexandria, Ontario* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991). W.H. Graham, *Greenbank: In the Country of the Past* (Toronto: Broadview Press, 1987) won

flaws as much as they lament the overemphasis of certain subjects. Both of those concerns can be aimed at discourse within and without historical focus. Given the geographical basis of most of these studies, those concerns could be launched with even greater verve at researchers writing about Anglo-American subjects.⁴⁸

Although it is definitely important to commend the effort behind these various historical emphases, what follows seems more *microhistorical* and Indigenous-focused for a number of reasons. First, I critique a large number of historical works because they completely omit the community, or when they do include it, they introduce significant inaccuracies.

“Best Regional History” for the Ontario area by the Canadian Historical Association in 1988. The CHA, however, does not award an overall award for a regional presentation – prizes are given for specific geographical areas instead of recognising ‘best area study.’ For example, Turkel’s book won for British Columbia in 2007. For a specific community, Esyllt W. Jones, *Influenza 1918: Disease, Death, and Struggle in Winnipeg* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007) won for the “Prairies,” and Robert B. Kristofferson, *Craft Capitalism: Craftworkers and Early Industrialization in Hamilton, Ontario 1840-1872* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2007) won for “Ontario” – each in 2007. Up until 1997, the topic of regional history was only considered one that should potentially win a Certificate of Merit. More information on prizes available at <http://www.cha-shc.ca/english>. Some efforts to rekindle microhistory have occurred in this country. For example, a roundtable session entitled “Canadian Microhistory: Does It Work?” was held at the Canadian Historical Association’s Annual Meeting in 2005. “*Final Programme of the 84th Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, 30-31 May and 1st June 2005*,” Canadian Historical Association, accessed July 9, 2015, <http://www.cha-shc.ca/english/what-we-do/annual-meeting/2005-cha-annual-meeting-london-university-of-western-ontario.html#sthash.7n5WNY7Z.dpbs>. For more observations about how specific communities, especially small communities made up of mainly Indigenous people, are under investigated, see Eve Mackey, *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), xviii. Numerous fictional works have included descriptions of specific communities’ evolution, such as Dan Needles’ *With Axe and Flask: The History of Persephone Township, from Precambrian Times to the Present* (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter & Ross, 2002). For an example of a study which introduces a larger geographic region and then a shorter time period than this presentation see Gerhard J. Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Métis in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996). Although about a similar era, Nicole St. Onge reaches different conclusions in *Saint-Laurent, Manitoba: Evolving Métis Identities, 1850-1914* (Regina: University of Regina, 2004). St. Onge explains how Manitoba experienced eastern migration to Saint-Laurent from Île-à-la-Crosse, and this quality suggests Métis identities existed earlier than the period described by Ens.

⁴⁸ Kynan Gentry, *History, Heritage, and Colonialism: Historical consciousness, Britishness, and Cultural Identity in New Zealand, 1870-1940* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2015), page 6.

As many microhistories explain, those works are as much about challenging historians as they are about challenging other disciplines.⁴⁹ Second, microhistories are particularly compelling when the group or place that is analysed is part of a larger subject matter that faces systemic exclusion. Given the village's ethnic makeup, Île-à-la-Crosse's story has even more in common with microhistories.⁵⁰ Third, my method here is not particularly loyal to any historical format. While some historical presentations have influenced me greatly, microhistories often detail how the very exclusion of a topic reflects both content and method issues. With this issue of systemic exclusion in mind, I have formatted data here in a way that hopefully suits the information rather than trying to mimic or complement earlier historical efforts that arguably left the data out in the first place.

Fourth, I consider microhistories often very helpful in triggering concern for certain modern circumstances that need immediate and significant attention. Particularly when finding that two of Île-à-la-Crosse's strongest qualities are sustainability and multiculturalism, and then recalling that those traits are deemed some of the most important conditions to protect in the contemporary world, it seems only helpful to breathe life into some topics' historic form so that we can realize achieving those qualities

⁴⁹ Amongst some of the views I wish to challenge, Liam Haggerty describes the village as an "outlying post." See "Métis Welfare: A History of Economic Exchange in Northwest Saskatchewan, 1770-1870," *Saskatchewan History* 61, no. 2 (2003): 14 and Katya MacDonald writes about "the nature of interactions with insiders and outsiders to the community" thereby giving the impression that outsiders do not become what she calls "insiders." See her "Community and Aboriginality in an Aboriginal Community: Relating to Histories in and of Île-à-la-Crosse," *Saskatchewan History* 61, no.2 (2009): 22.

⁵⁰ Compare my view to the argument about what a microhistory can be in Alexandra Havrylyshyn's "Troublesome Trials in New France: The Itinerary of an Ancien Régime Legal Practitioner, 1740-1743" (unpublished M.A. thesis, 2011). This thesis is about a non-Indigenous "praticien" of law in Montréal, Québec. Given the main character's gender and profession, I find the idea of considering it a microhistory less comfortable.

today is within our grasp.⁵¹ If we think reinforcing some norms is not easy due to their relatively new role, the social debate can instead pivot to a conversation about how to return to our ancestors' practices. Hopefully what follows helps reveal a history of norms that we desire today.

Fifth, many microhistories include analysis about influential legal systems, as it is in these systems that certain forgotten people get the attention of others (and their recordkeepers). Both the community's long history of sustainability and its residents' interests in the rule of law impacted external forces as much as outsiders influenced the village. This impact also interplayed with how we consider legal norms, environmentalism, and economies in both historic and modern ways. Coincidentally, and almost uniquely to Canada, these communal qualities may acquire constitutional recognition. Already, some scholars have observed how "traditionally, Aboriginal cultures were grounded in sustainable lifestyles."⁵² By introducing the Canadian legal system into this study, we can understand better how those lifestyles are likely worthy of legal protection.

As an extension of this focus on sustainability, it is important to highlight how the local sustainability became so renowned that it is emulated by non-Indigenous parties. This non-Indigenous acceptance also complicates how non-Indigenous laws are understood. As

⁵¹ Melanie Challenger, *On Extinction: How We Became Extinct from Nature* (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2012), 23. Challenger calls these moments of success failing to be known examples of historical "amnesia."

⁵² Yvonne Vizina, "Métis Traditional Environmental Knowledge and Science Education" (M.Ed. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2010), 16.

years passed, the pattern of all villagers reinforcing sustainability ensured higher economic profit and peaceful social relations for anyone there – regardless of ethnicity.⁵³ More than just a simple exchange economy,⁵⁴ Île-à-la-Crosse's past encourages a broader understanding of economic conditions, a recognition of efforts that protected sustainability and multiculturalism, and therefore very low rates of what Catherine Keys calls "energetic costs".⁵⁵ Prairie historian Gerald Friesen has theorized that the West's economy demonstrated more continuity and complex relations than any other part of Canada.⁵⁶ In building upon this view, I argue that self-sufficiency and rule-making easily and convincingly illustrate such complex relations in the village. Here, by highlighting it in an Indigenous-based community, it gives historical importance non-Indigenous institutions and legal norms.

Finally, a story about Île-à-la-Crosse also shares traits with other microhistories due to its cultural construction. Some studies devoted to Indigenous peoples might appear to parallel microhistories due to their focus on daily events (or what is called "annalism"),⁵⁷ but what makes a story about Indigenous peoples an example of microhistory is mainly in *how* the story is told. With many errors still appearing in studies about Indigenous peoples, such

⁵³ Haggerty, "Metis Welfare," 14.

⁵⁴ Bruce Alden Cox, "Prospects for the Northern Canadian Native Economy," in *Native People, Native Lands: Canadian Indians, Inuit and Métis*, ed. Bruce Alden Cox (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1988), 260.

⁵⁵ Catherine Key explains how parties determine what she calls the "energetic costs," which is when individuals and groups determine how to simultaneously encourage the use and reproduction of resources over a long time period. See "The Evolution of Human Life History," *World Archaeology* 31, no. 3 (February 2000): 332 and 342.

⁵⁶ Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 27.

⁵⁷ For an example of a study that has more commonalities with annalism than recent works of microhistory, see Leanna Parker, "Re-Conceptualizing the Traditional Economy: Indigenous Peoples' Participation in the Nineteenth Century Fur Trade in Canada and Whaling Industry in New Zealand" (unpublished Ph.D. diss., University of Alberta, 2011).

as not realizing Métis people are considered “Aboriginal,” challenging what and how Indigenous stories appear is pivotal to improving the occurrence and quality of Indigenous peoples’ histories.⁵⁸ Here, the village’s less familiar reputation combined with its Indigenous history make it a suitable contribution to what microhistory meant and does mean.

This idea – that microhistorical efforts are arguably more helpful for this project’s form – compares well to a concern made recently by a leader within the historical community. In 2012, the American Historical Association’s president William Cronon titled his presidential address “Professional Boredom.” In this talk, Cronon called for different sources, different techniques, and more stories about the most forgotten. He also challenged his profession to realize its own interest in history had rarely led to the results it claimed were most relevant to his colleagues: to make more non-historians concerned about the past. Until historians care more about those not interested in history, those who have felt excluded in previous historical tracts, and those who invent new methods based on previously unfamiliar sources, historical research will not contribute to society in the way it could and should.⁵⁹ Cronon is not alone in his views. But that Cronon decided he must still remind his colleagues of this point means little has truly changed amongst historians trying to reach beyond their departments and campuses. In the meantime, those places most forgotten and marginalized have likely suffered most from this

⁵⁸ A very recent publication that focuses on the village and ironically attempts to promote the history of Métis peoples while simultaneously not considering the Métis a type of Aboriginal is Liam Haggerty, “Métis Welfare,” 15.

⁵⁹ See the “from the President” column of the March 2012 issues of *Perspectives on History*. <http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2012/1203/Professional-Boredom.cfm> (last accessed 7 July 2015).

tardiness.⁶⁰ More than thirty years ago, researcher Robert Jarvenpa called for a “microanalysis” of Île-à-la-Crosse and a broader understanding of what “economic” means.⁶¹ A case study, with a more expansive understanding of what relationships and items had “value” to people, seemed vital to do for the community’s importance to become better considered. In agreeing with Cronon’s observations wholeheartedly, and in working to help improve historical circles’ influence, this project is framed as a response to Jarvenpa’s specific challenge.⁶²

Before shifting to details about how this study is structured, one more point about previous works is helpful to note: arguably, all the efforts about Canadian history and

⁶⁰ See Laura Peers and Carolyn Podruchny, “Introduction: Complex Subjectivities, Multiple Ways of Knowing” in *Gathering Places: Aboriginal and Fur Trade Histories*, eds. Carolyn Podruchny and Laura Peers (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010). Also for a view of justifying different methods and explaining local circumstances, see generally Natalie Zemon Davis, “Polarities, Hybridities: What Strategies for Decentring?” in *Decentring the Renaissance: Canada and Europe in Multidisciplinary Perspective, 1500-1700*, eds. Germaine Warkentin and Carolyn Podruchny, 19-32 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

⁶¹ Robert Jarvenpa, *The Trappers of Patuanak: Toward a Spatial Ecology of Modern Hunters* (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1980), 165.

⁶² Some works have provided particular inspiration. See John Wood Sweet, “Introduction” in *Envisioning an English Empire: Jamestown and the Making of the North Atlantic World*, eds. Robert Appelbaum and John Wood Sweet (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 2. An examination of one place over a long period which also deserves positive attention is Jeff Keshen and Nicole St-Onge, eds., *Construire une Capitale* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2001). For views about the systemic absence of histories including Indigenous peoples see Alan D. McMillan and Eldon Yellowhorn, *First Peoples in Canada* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2004), 240. For inspiration about what issues to deliberate, see Richard Brown, “Microhistory and the Post-modern challenge,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 23, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 1-20. See Robert Utley’s comments about how the capacity to describe a longer period of time also suggests that period had a constant quality of peace. Utley, *The Indian Frontier*, 271. While I did not originally intend to prove such a theory, I consider the story here supports Utley’s view. For remarks that suggest a work that mentions Indigenous peoples invariably has a methodology that differs significantly, see Joan Weibel-Orlando, *Indian Country*, 73. Julie Cruikshank pushes this idea further by challenging academic circles for not being receptive enough to the possibility that an innovative study will necessarily introduce new analytical norms. See Cruikshank’s “The Social Life of Texts: Editing on the Page and In Performance,” in Murray and Rice, 117. In determining how exactly to construct this presentation, I take heed from Amartya Sen who uses “A Classical Distinction in Indian Jurisprudence” to found his entire study about Western understanding of fairness and law. See Sen’s *The Idea of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 20.

many other topics are based on the assumption that historians should study change.

Certainly, the village's form does not stay static. Indeed, Île-à-la-Crosse illustrates many shifts over time. However, and just as evident, the community's *ability to adapt is a constant* and, as well, people there worked tirelessly to perpetuate many village conditions. Because of its consistent traits, Île-à-la-Crosse had the ability to ensure more stable kinship and economic relations than other places. Historians intentionally or inadvertently ignored the place because it did not correlate with studies about tension, violence, or unfairness. Due to this critique about the emphasis on studying conflict, the idea that my method will be different is, as Gerald Friesen contends, inevitable because it is about a location in Canada's west and inhabited by Indigenous peoples.⁶³ Some historians, such as Margaret MacMillan, call on colleagues "to challenge and even explode national myths".⁶⁴ In using Macmillan's observation as a challenge, I end up taking on her (and others') starting point – I want to encourage the recognition of short and longer-term continuity. When learning how other writers have called for more studies about the

⁶³ Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 23, 26 and 35.

⁶⁴ The quote is from Margaret MacMillan, *The Uses and Abuses of History*, 39. See MacMillan's comments about the importance of noticing change in an interview with George Mason University's History News Network: Aaron Leonard, "The Uses and Abuses of History: An Interview with Margaret MacMillan," *George Mason University's History News Network*, August 30th, 2009, accessed 8 July, 2015: <http://hnn.us/article/114785>. J. R. McNeill, writes, "historians are mainly interested in change," see J. R. McNeill and Paul Kennedy, *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth Century World* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2000), xxv. Northrop Frye's "garrison mentality" contributed much to the starting point that, even in understanding the weather, people living in Canada have faced struggles. Moreover, some writers have argued further that those who focus on western Canada also notice that "fighting the elements" is part of Western Canadian mentalities. Northrop Frye, "Conclusion to a Literary History of Canada" in *The Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination*, ed. Northrop Frye (Toronto: Anansi, 1975). See also generally Margaret Atwood's *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 1972) and the helpful analysis of this point in W.F. Garrett-Petts, "Exploring an Interpretive Community: Reader Response to Canadian Prairie Literature," *College English* 50, no. 8 (December 1988): 921. I am supportive of the view that discussions about weather happen frequently, but whether we try to fight against it any more than other parts of the world remains to be substantiated, particularly when Indigenous perspectives are evaluated.

prairies,⁶⁵ “a more minute study of Saskatchewan,”⁶⁶ and more emphasis about multiculturalism and peaceful relations,⁶⁷ writing about Île-à-la-Crosse seems even more important. When a community resident explained the village’s economy by observing “it is not our way to be competitive; we share,”⁶⁸ studying that sharing cannot help but seem oppositional to studies about the historical relevance of wars, political divides, and trauma such as works by those focusing on efforts considered “political” or “military” in nature.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 460. He also chastises political scientist Roger Gibbins for claiming to present regional studies but only revealing “half the story,” Friesen, 454. See also Ted Regehr, *Remembering Saskatchewan: A History of Rural Saskatchewan* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan Extension Division, 1979), 7. A respectable – albeit incredibly nostalgic – more modern effort is John Conway, ed., *Saskatchewan: Uncommon Views* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2005) where a question influencing all the contributors is the nature of Saskatchewan’s uniqueness. An apparent debate exists that swings between the uniqueness originating from distinctiveness features or, alternatively, the unusualness is sourced from how many others do not realize Saskatchewan has the “most Canadian” qualities of any part of Canada: Conway, 133.

⁶⁶ Arthur Silver Morton, *A History of the Canadian West to 1871; being a History of Rupert’s Land (the Hudson’s Bay Company’s Territory) and of the North-West Territory (including the Pacific Slope)* (London: T. Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1939), 699.

⁶⁷ For efforts identifying locations and people enforcing harmony, see Sid Fiddler, “Regaining the Harmony,” in *Three Hundred Prairie Years: Henry Kelsey’s “Inland Country of Good Report,”* ed. Henry T. Epp (Regina, SK: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1993), 190 and Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 461 and 466; Kerry Abel, *Drum Songs, Glimpses of Dene History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1993), 265; Julie Cruikshank, “The Social Life of Texts: Editing on the Page and in Performance,” in *Talking on the Page: Editing Aboriginal Oral Texts*, ed. Laura J. Murray, 117; Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories* (Toronto: House of Anansi, 2003), 3.

⁶⁸ Dolores T. Poelzer, and Irene A. Poelzer, *In Our Own Words: Northern Saskatchewan Métis Women Speak Out* (Saskatoon: Lindenblatt and Hamonic Publishing, Inc., 1986), 4.

⁶⁹ One of the best pieces to describe the links amongst these fields is Donald McCloskey’s “Does the Past Have Useful Economics?” *Journal of Economic Literature* 14, no. 2 (June 1976): 434-461. See also Jerzy Topolski, “Towards an Integrated Model of Historical Explanation,” *History and Theory* 30, no. 3 (October 1991): 324-38. Szonyi argues a study considered a local history will invariably introduce economic history as well. See Szonyi, *Practicing Kinship*, 10. A work which illustrates the parallels between historical trends and the investigation of economic events in a particular community is Carlo Ginzburg and Carlo Pontì, “The Name and the Game: Unequal Exchange and the Historiographic Marketplace,” in *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe*, eds. Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero, 1-10 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991). Some scholars have argued that any presentation about Métis history is, by effect, a study about economic history. See page 71 of Bev Cardinal, “Drawn to the Land: An Urban Métis Woman Makes Her Connection,” in *Plain Speaking: Essays on Aboriginal Peoples and the Prairies*, eds. Patrick Douand and Bruce William Dawson, 69-76 (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2002).

I. 3. A Path from Here

Now, after arguing this presentation is a microhistory that will have fewer familiar sources and a less typical format, this section provides a description of the study's structure. After gathering every government document that mentions the village, finding all other records from various parties located in Île-à-la-Crosse, and constantly noticing the disappearance/reappearance of the village over time within the records,⁷⁰ it became vital to know about the community's physical space before shifting into analysis about human relations. As a result, Part II of this study, "The Site," introduces Île-à-la-Crosse's physicality. It covers the longest time period,⁷¹ and has sources that might seem the most unusual for a historical project. But not only was this information interesting, its fundamental qualities appeared again when learning about the living patterns of those who were situated there. The human reinforcement of these qualities was no accident; Île-à-la-Crosse's residents believed the established patterns assured stable, peaceful relations and successful economic circumstances. In other words, the community's longevity is due to how locals pattern their life ways after how the land naturally functions. In order to see this theory in its fullest, it seems only proper to organize all parts of the equation and start by first explaining the nature of the geography whose traits

⁷⁰ I have examined all records possessed by the Hudson's Bay Company pertaining to Île-à-la-Crosse. Because of the merger and due to the company's specific activities in the village, HBC records often include other documents that are not necessarily about the company's efforts. As well, I have examined a number of records controlled by the Roman Catholic Church pertaining to the village. Unfortunately, due to its view about disclosing information and residential school litigation the Church has changed its position about whether such records will be accessible to the public. I have also examined all documents about Île-à-la-Crosse acquired by Library and Archives Canada.

⁷¹ A great example of contextualizing physical structures with historic human activities, and doing so over the longest time frame possible, is S. J. Gould's *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History* (London, UK: Hutchinson Radius, 1990).

are subsequently reinforced by living actors.⁷² Already, some other historians such as Ted Binnema have contended that “the importance of understanding a region’s environment in order to appreciate that region’s human history.”⁷³ In other words, learning about the land is a necessity rather than an impressive “alternative.”⁷⁴ Due to the value of natural conditions acting as what W. J. Turkel has called “indexical signs” of the past that “that might have been obscured if the analysis was limited to a single time scale,”⁷⁵ this information also suggests how physical conditions could even be *more* important than data about people due to that data’s value in predicting future social activities. Earlier, some scholars such as Hilda Neatby and E. E. Rich called for more mention of physical landscapes by historians.⁷⁶ Unfortunately, data about the environment still appear too

⁷² For a work that provides important emphasis on physical geography, see Ted Binnema’s *Common and Contested Ground: A Human and Environmental History of the Northwest Plains* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

⁷³ The quote is from Ted Binnema, *Common and Contested Ground*, 18. Binnema also cites Douglas Bamforth’s *Ecology and Human Organization on the Great Plains* (New York, Plenum Press: 1988) as another scholarly template for how to create a study which uses more methods and documents than typical historical studies include. For the “archive” understanding, see Turkel, *Archive of Place*, 14 and Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (Toronto: Random House, 1995), 14. See also Donald Worster, “Ice Worms, and Dirt: The Power of Nature in North American History,” in *Method and Meaning in Canadian Environmental History*, eds. Alan MacEachern and William J. Turkel (Toronto, ON: Nelson Education, 2009). For a different methodological technique to address how historians underrate social trends by ignoring the earth’s physical qualities, see David Christian’s *Maps of Time: An Introduction to Big History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004). I disagree with David McNab who asserts that scholars who ultimately want to argue for the superiority of European ways typically use references to nature to justify their view that Indigenous cultures are simplistic. See McNab, *Circles of Time*, 3.

⁷⁴ For remarks about how being non-linear with geographical descriptions should not be maligned as ‘alternative,’ see Peter L. Storck, *Journey to the Ice Age: Discovering an Ancient World* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), xix.

⁷⁵ W. J. Turkel, *The Archive of Place*, 70.

⁷⁶ See the introduction in Hilda Neatby’s *Quebec: The Revolutionary Age 1760-1791* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1996), the first pages of E. E. Rich, *The Fur Trade and the North West to 1857* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967). See also Claire Elizabeth Campbell’s remarks: “to date...most environmental history has *not* been place-based.” “Shaped by the West Wind: Nature and History in the Eastern Georgian Bay”, (Ph.D dissertation, the University of Western Ontario, 2001), 10. Also note that her remark is, unfortunately, still relevant more than a decade later.

infrequently. This shortcoming, even more sadly, is especially evident in histories about Indigenous peoples.⁷⁷

Part III is about the arrival of people at Île-à-la-Crosse whose experience is subtitled “The Situations.” Within this Part, certain subjects such as the fur trade or the arrival of newcomers will be familiar to anyone who has studied Canadian history.⁷⁸ But other unusual themes arise as well, and those unfamiliar trends also have their own specific version in Île-à-la-Crosse. This mix of qualities that exist elsewhere accompanied by unique traits is observable due to the years used to divide this Part into smaller sections. The divisions, sharing much in common with works considered examples of “biohistory,”⁷⁹ show a remarkably high amount of intermingling and sustainability while also illustrating the years’ extraordinary events.

⁷⁷ As an example see page vi of J. Douglas Leighton’s, “The Development of Federal Indian Policy in Canada, 1840-1890” (University of Western Ontario Ph.D. dissertation, 1975). Although not focusing on the link between natural conditions and social activities as much, Leighton’s effort is an example of having a small reference to physical geography. Notably, recent commentary suggests that not much change has appeared since Leighton’s presentation. See Jeff O’Brien, “Geology has a tendency to interrupt our lives,” *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, 7 July 2012, E8. An apologetic note for the failure to appreciate natural conditions appears in John H. Wadland, “Great Rivers Small Boats: Landscape and Canadian Historical Culture,” in *Changing Parks: The History, Future and Cultural Context of Parks and Heritage Landscapes*, eds. John Marsh and Bruce W. Hodgins (Toronto: Natural Heritage/Natural History Inc., 1998), 20-21. For remarks about how a presentation including Indigenous peoples must have a strong emphasis on geography, see Renee Pualani Louis, “Can You Hear Us Now? Voices From the Margin: Using Indigenous Methodologies in Geographic Research,” *Geographical Research* 45, no. 2 (June 2007): 130-139.

⁷⁸ For a more lengthy explanation of how certain subjects actually explain economics and therefore help strengthen my view of this presentation’s strong economic bent, see Paul A. David, “Path Dependence, Its Critics and the Quest for ‘Historical Economics,’” (working paper, Department of Economics Stanford University, California, 2000). See also McCloskey, “Useful Economics.”

⁷⁹ Examples illustrating a more obvious biographical style that are about a person rather than a place include Denis Bayley’s *Londoner in Rupert’s Land: Thomas Bunn of the Hudson’s Bay Company* (Chichester, England: Moore and Tillyer, 1969) and also Peter Edwards’ *One Dead Indian: The Premier, the Police and the Ipperwash Crisis* (Toronto: Stoddart, 2001). For an explanation of the term, “biohistory,” which is supposed to help the “need to understand interrelationships between human societies and the underlying processes of life on which they

With Part III's first section devoted to introductory remarks, the second section contains analysis of the years that the historical profession typically has labeled 'pre-contact' times. But given how the complex matter of 'contact' shows itself around the village, and how this idea is often accompanied by the term 'newcomer,' neither of these concepts provides enough accuracy to observe the evolution of human relations in Île-à-la-Crosse.⁸⁰ The place's fundamental history is about hosting visitors and not having one culture excluding others, especially during the eighteenth century with the increased presence of Métis people.⁸¹ Moreover, the idea of a fluid existence that respectfully welcomed people is the very reason those typically considered 'newcomers' arrived in the first place. When Henry Frobisher and Alexander Henry ventured to the village in 1776, it was because of instructions rather than guesses. In that way, those same newcomers had a strong potential to shift into the category of 'locals' very quickly – so long as they respected the community's inherent functions. While 1776 is used to end the second section, it is neither the beginning of 'contact' nor the birth of a community; that year simply

depend," see Stephen Boyden, "Nature, Society, History, and Social Change," *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research* 14, no. 2 (2001): 103 - 116. Explaining a process similar to biohistory, but calling it "Evolutionary History" instead see Russell, "Evolutionary History." For a work of fiction that has, in my view, a methodological technique that could be emulated by more academics, see Needles, *With Axe and Flask*. The importance of inventing better argumentative processes is described in David Hackett Fischer's *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970).

⁸⁰ In comparison, a very new contribution to discourse about the North West includes the use of the concept "pre-history" which arguably distinguishes Indigenous histories from non-Indigenous peoples further because of how it intimates Indigenous activities prior to contact were not 'historic'. See Merle Massie, *Forest Prairie Edge: Place History in Saskatchewan* (Winnipeg, University of Manitoba Press, 2014), 27.

⁸¹ Gerald Friesen laments how *any* synthesis about the North West during the eighteenth century has yet to appear. Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 35. See Paul Voisey's *Vulcan: The Making of a Prairie Community* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) for a study that does not include the eighteenth century. Another example of Friesen's concern is Michael B. Katz's *The People of Hamilton, Canada West: Family and Class in a Mid-Nineteenth-Century City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975).

represents when outsiders confirmed Île-à-la-Crosse's bountiful resources and met peaceful people interested in extending their exchange processes further afield. 1776 can be understood as when Île-à-la-Crosse suddenly appeared on more maps, but the village was already part of many peoples' memories as illustrated by Frobisher and Henry's experience.⁸²

The third section of Part III I analyzes Île-à-la-Crosse's times between 1776 and 1821. Despite the shortness of this period, this era of Île-à-la-Crosse's life introduces some of the most influential forces in the village's evolution. During this time, Île-à-la-Crosse became the busiest locale in Canada's North West. As its reputation grew amongst those interested in the fur trade, so did the number of people who arrived to see the village for themselves. Sometimes, these visitors' attitudes and behaviours contrasted with local perspectives. More often, these same visitors adjusted their ways to complement, or even imitate, village processes. Since the location's reputation was built mainly on the fact that villagers had profound economic success, those visitors interested in trade had to decide whether the potential of more profit might make their original values more disposable

⁸² Other works help explain how western Canada was well known long before the village's official year of establishment. See Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*; and Ray, *The Canadian Fur Trade*; Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*; Brown, *Strangers in Blood*; and Glyndwr Williams, *Voyages of Delusion: The Quest for the Northwest Passage* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003). For some important contributions about Métis histories before 1776, see Marcel Giraud, *Le métis canadien: son rôle dans l'histoire de l'Ouest* (Paris: Institut d'ethnologie, 1945); George F. G. Stanley, *The Birth of Western Canada: A History of the Riel Rebellions* (London, UK: Longmans, Green and Co., 1936); A. A. den Otter, *Civilizing the West: The Galts and the Development of western Canada* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1982). Fictional works revealing similar subjects include Wallace Stegner's *Wolf Willow: A History, A Story and a Memory of the Last Plains Frontier* (New York: Viking Press, 1962); Frederick Philip Grove, *Settlers of the Marsh* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1925); Robert J. C. Stead, *Grain* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969); Robert Kroetsch, *Gone Indian* (Toronto: New Press, 1973); Rudy Wiebe, *The Temptations of Big Bear* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973); Guy Vanderhaeghe, *The Englishman's Boy* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1996).

than they had originally imagined. Because many “outsiders” showed they were amenable to local ways, and locals had a long history of welcoming visitors, those same outsiders could transform into “insiders” as quickly as the seasons changed. By 1821, when the two major fur companies merged into one entity, the village’s form showed little evidence that local Indigenous ways had waned. This ability (or necessity) for visitors to shift or abandon their original perspectives does much to challenge historical works such as those by Creighton that presume “colonial” forces in Canada’s North West overtook social and political forms that pre-existed the arrival of outsiders.⁸³

So during this era, not only did colonial “norms” appear absent, local concepts often took their place and grew in strength. This theme, very much apparent in the third section of Part III, illustrates how the (largely) non-Indigenous visitors did not do much to reinforce non-Indigenous legal or political frameworks when they arrived (and potentially stayed). Whether observable in the failure of the Hudson’s Bay Company (the “HBC”) in Île-à-la-Crosse, the increased influence of Métis families, or even how women influenced decision-making, the European fur trade did not overtake the community despite being part of a huge international trading system. In fact, residents arguably had outsider forces fighting each other for villagers’ attention, and that fighting ensured Île-à-la-Crosse’s autonomy would be strengthened. By the time a ‘merger’ occurred between the North West Company and the Hudson’s Bay Company, it was impossible to notice much dominance at

⁸³ Duane Champagne calls such an ability a quality of a “multinational state,” and this type of state is what Champagne argues must develop for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to interact peacefully and to keep to a democratic rule of law. See Champagne’s “Rethinking Native Relations with Contemporary Nation-States” in *Indigenous Peoples and the Modern State*, eds. Duane Champagne, Karen Jo Torjesen, Susan Steiner (Walnut Creek, CA: Altimira Press, 2005), 5.

all from forces considered colonial in nature. Besides challenging some Creighton-esque historical stereotypes about dependency and the reach of 'Empire,' these years also do much to challenge what Trudy Nicks calls the "Red River myopia" amongst historians regarding the location and the beginning of Métis histories.⁸⁴ By 1821, Île-à-la-Crosse was one of the "true bastions of Métis culture",⁸⁵ and such a role means that any historical focus about Métis "ethnogenesis" starting in the nineteenth century seems less applicable when learning about the North West.⁸⁶

The fourth section of Part III focuses on the time period from 1821 to when that same company lost much of its authority due to early "Canadian" nation-building in 1870. During these years, even more outsiders arrived in Île-à-la-Crosse. They wound up at the village partly based on a concern about their own weak existence. As Brenda Macdougall has concluded, these outsiders rarely had the energy to overtake Île-à-la-Crosse's

⁸⁴ J.R. Miller, "From Riel to the Métis," *Canadian Historical Review* 69, no. 1 (March 1988): 14 and Trudy Nicks and Kenneth Morgan, "Grand Cache: The Historic Development of and Indigenous Alberta Métis Population," in *The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America*, eds. Jacqueline Peterson and Jennifer S. H. Brown (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1981), 163-183. Sadly, Nicks and Morgan thought this 'myopia' was on the wane, and Miller then lamented such a hope did not transpire. He also notes the overemphasis upon Manitoba again nearly twenty years later in J. R. Miller, *Reflections on Native-Newcomer Relations*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 54.

⁸⁵ Gregory Marchildon and Sid Robinson, *Canoeing the Churchill: A Practical Guide to the Historic Voyageur Highway* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2002), 28.

⁸⁶ For views that reinforce a much later starting date for Métis culture, see J. Elizabeth Sperry, "Ethnogenesis of the Metis, Cree and Chippewa in Twentieth Century Montana," (Master's thesis, University of Montana, 2007), and David Burley's "Creolization and Late Nineteenth Century Métis Vernacular Log Architecture on the South Saskatchewan River," *Historical Archaeology* 34, no. 3: 27-35. In comparison, see Brenda Macdougall and M. Teresa Carlson, "West Side Stories" in *Contesting Knowledge: Museums and Indigenous Perspectives*, ed. Susan Sleeper-Smith (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 156-191. Even the most cynical (and pro-Crown) anthropologist understood Métis to exist around the village during the early 1700s. See V. F. Valentine, "Some Problems of the Métis in Northern Saskatchewan," *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* 20, no. 1 (February 1954): 89-94.

fundamental form.⁸⁷ Since some of these internationally based institutions did well elsewhere, struggling in Île-à-la-Crosse was unexpected. So any question about whether the community succeeded despite colonialism arguably shifts to the question of whether Île-à-la-Crosse actually did well *because* of outsiders' arrival. From moments when missionaries needed roofs and food, and company workers wanted some personal acquaintanceship, we are reminded that community power (and visitor dependency) was not confined to financial stability alone. Even when a new national government paid greater attention to local conditions in the North West,⁸⁸ and locals learned of some concept called "Confederation" with its legislation entitled the *British North America Act*,⁸⁹ efforts by researchers such as Chester Martin suggest that none of these issues mattered much to the locals in Île-à-la-Crosse.⁹⁰

The fifth section of Part III ventures into years from the early 1870s to the summer of 1906. This era is what some previous historians have labeled as "post-Confederation."

However, as Gerald Friesen argues, the years actually show what he calls Western

⁸⁷ The most persuasive presentation about an Aboriginal community's autonomous condition is Brenda Macdougall's "Socio-Cultural Development and Identity Formation of Métis Communities in Northern Saskatchewan, 1776-1907," (PhD dissertation, University of Saskatchewan, 2005). Compare Macdougall's views to John Webster Grant's argument about how the Métis culture dissipates over time due to its incapability to cope with "radically new and aggressive approaches to nature." See John Webster Grant's *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter Since 1534*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 110.

⁸⁸ In law, the North West was still not part of Canada's official jurisdiction until *Rupert's Land and North-Western Territory – Order of Her Majesty in Council admitting Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory into the union*, 33 Vict. (1870).

⁸⁹ *The British North America Act*, 30-31 Vict., c. 3. (1867).

⁹⁰ I support Chester Martin's observations that much of the "Post-confederation" conditions did not exist in western Canada until much past 1867. See Chester Martin, *The 'Dominion Lands' Policy*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), 226. As a result, Île-à-la-Crosse's story fits many "pre-confederation" qualities until 1907. This idea, that "pre-confederation" qualities surface beyond 1867 is suggested in James Douglas Leighton's "The Development of Federal Indian Policy in Canada, 1840-1890".

Canada's "different rhythm."⁹¹ With confrontational events in other places such as the Métis-populated communities of Fort Garry and Batoche, and circumstances leading to various politicians inventing the province of "Saskatchewan," Île-à-la-Crosse residents continued to develop their own distinctive ways of surviving.⁹² Demonstrating strong kinship and renewable land use patterns,⁹³ residents remained supportive of each other and guaranteed that the community remained intact as a peaceful and economically viable location.⁹⁴ This trait of adjusting small processes to continue an overarching set of macro-conditions represents a strong example of what Natalie Zemon Davis calls a "back and forth" process.⁹⁵ But as an effect of its being autonomous and not particularly insurgent, external institutions also decided that Île-à-la-Crosse was neither problematic nor

⁹¹ Gerald Friesen uses this phrase for describing Indigenous activities in the prairies. I consider its form at Île-à-la-Crosse particularly strong. See Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 23.

⁹² Reasons for highlighting ordinary and repeated activities are described in Brad Gregory's, "Is Small Beautiful? Microhistory and the History of Everyday Life," *History and Theory* 38, no. 1 (1999): 100-110. For a view about how Saskatchewan's ordinariness is so unique this quality becomes the most important characteristic to highlight, see Krzysztof M. Gebhard, "Introduction," in *The Saskatchewan Oral History Conference 1981 – Proceedings*, ed. Krzysztof M. Gebhard (Regina: Saskatchewan Archives Board, 1981), xi. Read David Carpenter's view that instead of asking what occurred we should instead wonder "what does a place provide for our delight?" Carpenter, *Courting Saskatchewan* (Vancouver: Greystone Books, 1996), 8.

⁹³ An analysis of Indigenous kinship relations with particular attention to the families living in and close to the village appears in Macdougall's *One of the Family*. See page 242 in particular for especially helpful commentary regarding the interweaving of family, economic and geographic conditions together to make kinship stronger.

⁹⁴ For a more extensive description of this point, see Gerald Hodge and M. A. Qadeer, *Towns and Villages in Canada: The Importance of Being Unimportant* (Toronto: Butterworths, 1983), 163. For a work that deftly challenges the historical process of searching for change and, instead, argues that we should introduce examples of continuity over longer periods of time, see Judith Bennett's *History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007). A more Canadian example of a "long durée" is Clinton Evans' *The War on Weeds in the Prairie West: An Environmental History* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2002). Robert Allan Warrior challenges those who think contributions about Indigenous peoples are increasing in number in *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Tradition* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), xix. Warrior argues, "The lack of historical engagement is even more pronounced, especially engagement that seeks to bring the concerns of different periods together into some kind of cohesive sense." Studies that stretch over many era, Warrior believes, are greatly needed.

⁹⁵ See Natalie Zemon Davis' interest in the "back and forth" of a region in France in *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 10. Iris Marion Young calls a relationship of this kind as a moment of "give and take" politics." Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 3.

suitable for their larger goals.⁹⁶ So while ignored, the community's base form actually strengthened. Whether locals enjoyed exclusion depended on the specific matter in question. But one point remained evident: as Île-à-la-Crosse was left alone and had the developmental space to strengthen its own internal qualities, the community was subsequently more able to resist outsider concepts when they did arrive. So as time passed, the village's dependence upon Crown functions did not grow but made the Crown's presence dubious, "if not nonsense" altogether.⁹⁷ By 1906, when Canada and Saskatchewan were faced with the legal reality that their claim to the North West did not meet the legal standards such a claim required, villagers were so well-placed to negotiate with the Crown that they arguably received the best arrangement of any Métis peoples in Canada's history.⁹⁸ As this phase of the village's life has such impact, these years' previous absence from historical interpretation justifies Miller's claim about a "willful neglect" shown by previous and current historians toward Métis communities.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Cole Harris' "How Did Colonialism Dispossess? Comments from an Edge of Empire," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 94, no. 1 (March 2004): 167 helps challenge views about the use of conflict to enforce colonialism and the question of whether colonialists ever borrowed survival techniques from those considered colonized.

⁹⁷ Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 33. Friesen proposes scholars be skeptical of those, such as E. E. Rich in his *The Fur Trade and the Northwest to 1857*, who cite certain events as illustrations of major economic and political shifts which make Aboriginals seemingly more influenced by non-Aboriginal attitudes and actions. I also agree with Friesen when he argues too many historians used 1821 as a division to presume a pre-colonial/Post-colonial paradigm. See Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 23.

⁹⁸ See Brian Joubert and Debra J. Davidson, "Mediating Constructivism, nature and dissonant land use values: The case of the northwest Saskatchewan Métis," *Human Ecology Review* 17, no. 1 (Summer 2010): 1.

⁹⁹ Miller, *Lethal Legacy*, 18. For more radical observations about this point, see Susan D. Dion, *Braiding Histories: Learning from Aboriginal Peoples' Experiences and Perspectives*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), 55 and more generally Chris Andersen, "Moya 'Tipimsook ('The People Who Aren't Their Own Bosses'): Racialization and the Misrecognition of 'Métis' in Upper Great Lakes Ethnohistory," *Ethnohistory* 58, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 37-63. For comments about how methods' very structure omits Métis, see page 27 of Mohan B. Kumar et al, "Trends in Métis-related Health Research (1980-2009): Identification of Research Gaps," *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 103, no. 1 (Jan/Feb 2012).

Part IV of this project, entitled “Aftermath,” is the concluding portion for this study. Besides making a review of earlier commentary, these pages have the potential to impact some modern issues and legitimize my view that this presentation is a microhistorical one. Particularly due to how a specific lawsuit that impacts Île-à-la-Crosse and its residents, and due to standards recently developed by the Supreme Court regarding subjects the lawsuit contains, the role of historic events at Île-à-la-Crosse and historical methodology can be seen to have a direct impact on how litigation about Île-à-la-Crosse (and other places) ensues.¹⁰⁰ In the final chapter of his *Honor and Violence in the Old South*,¹⁰¹ Bertram Wyatt Brown and Carlo Ginzburg argue that a legal case has the ability to crystallize all the subjects a historian has previously conveyed.¹⁰² I agree completely with Brown’s argument, but arguably even better than Brown’s story, Part III is contextual, predictive and potential evidence for litigation. Part IV can give context for an occurrence so well put by Turkel: “Aboriginal people were now expected to conform to a new place in

¹⁰⁰ See *Morin et al v. Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada and Her Majesty the Queen in Right of the Province of Saskatchewan*. [1994] Q.B. No. 619 of A.D. (Statement of Claim). www.usask.ca/nativelaw/factums/view.php?id=504. Hereinafter, *Morin et al v. Her Majesty* (Statement of Claim). The statutory reference from the right originates from S.35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, which reads: “35. (1) The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed. (2) In this Act, “aboriginal peoples of Canada” includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada”. I have found K. J. M. Smith’s and J. P. S. McLaren’s “History’s Living Legacy: An Outline of ‘modern’ historiography of the common law,” *Legal Studies* 21, no. 2 (2006): 251-324 a helpful study about this point. For remarks about how “Canadian Legal History,” as a subfield, has improved, see Philip Girard, “Who’s Afraid of Canadian Legal History?” *University of Toronto Law Journal* 57 (Fall 2007): 727-753.

¹⁰¹ See Bertram Wyatt-Brown’s “The Anatomy of a Wife-Killing” on pages 462-496 of *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983). He argues by observing law and then “minding social stability” happening during the legal norms’ implementation, scholars understand the social standards more accurately, as they observe a society’s most predominant features that influence whether people decide to keep to laws.

¹⁰² See generally Carlo Ginzburg, “Checking the Evidence: The Judge and the Historian,” *Critical Inquiry* 18, no.1 (Autumn 1991): 79-92.

society, to submit to a new rule of law.”¹⁰³ Notice that Turkel explains how the rule of law existed in Indigenous communities before the British/Canadian form arrived. Part IV documents the way Métis families in particular struggled (and struggle) to challenge Canada’s failure to implement the rule of law while at the same time believing that their own regulatory regime deserved protection. Part IV is constructed as a way to introduce forgotten people, think about how historical research can be used as a tool by both historians and other professions and provide concluding thoughts about the project as a whole. As an additional quality, this Part can become part of discussions that remind us of the link between standard Canadian legal procedure and the history various peoples claim has occurred.

4. Before Setting Out: Tools, Terms, and Starting Points

In this presentation data from every public record and every accessible private source that mentions Île-à-la-Crosse was compiled and analysed. As an effect of that analysis, some starting points have subsequently developed and should be mentioned before going further. First, regarding the matter of what type of history this presentation represents: I have made much mention of the affinities I find with microhistorical studies, but I ultimately do not want to give this presentation any particular label. Due to the types of

¹⁰³ Turkel, *The Archive of Place*, 186. For dismissive observations about Indigenous laws with, instead, an emphasis on regulatory schemes by Indigenous peoples demonstrating “custom,” see Frances Widdowson, “The Political Economy of ‘Aboriginal Customary Law,’” paper presented at 2nd Biennial Conference of The Canadian Initiative in Law, Culture & The Humanities, Ottawa, Carlton University, 2007, Accessed July 12, 2015. <http://blogs.mtroyal.ca/fwiddowson/files/2009/10/The-political-economy-of-aboriginal-customary-law-widdowson.pdf>. Compare her views to Patrick Macklem’s argument that topics previously considered “customs” are actually examples of international law. Patrick Macklem, *Indigenous Difference and the Constitution of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 67.

tools I use from many different historical subfields, and that I am often presenting the theme of historic non-dominance, it seems inappropriate to boldly state that what follows is part of one particular historical genre.¹⁰⁴ Certainly, it would be possible to consider this presentation an “empirical” study due to the number of documents I have evaluated and the time period those documents explain.¹⁰⁵ Alternatively, the documents’ subjects share much with information typically considered part of “economic” or “cultural” research.¹⁰⁶ To make matters even more complicated for the issue of labeling, some sections have much in common with geographical presentations.¹⁰⁷ If anything, because many tools

¹⁰⁴ Clay Shirkey, *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2008), 122 and 192 is one of the most accessible descriptions of this point.

¹⁰⁵ For a primer on various empirical techniques, see Carolyn J. Heinrich and Lawrence E. Lynn, Jr., “Means and Ends: A Comparative Study of Empirical Methods for Investigating Governance and Performance,” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 11, no. 1 (Jan. 2001): 109-138. Some examples include Robert McGhee, *Ancient Canada* (Hull, PQ: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1984) and Ken Zeilig and Victoria Zeilig, *Ste. Madeleine: Community Without a Town* (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1987). A type of empirical study helps respond to potential criticisms about archival sources being “spotty.” Turkel, *The Archive of Place*, 225.

¹⁰⁶ See Ann Harper-Fender, “Discouraging the Use of a Common Resource: The Crees of Saskatchewan,” *Journal of Economic History* 41, no. 1 (March 1981): 164. She refers to Richard Posner, “A Theory of Primitive Society, with Special Reference to Primitive Law,” *Journal of Law and Economics* 23, no. 1 (April 1980): 4, 53 for a more expansive description of Indigenous communities’ cost of information and how ‘primitive’ societies are better than European groups in realizing this cost more quickly and accurately. As a result, the physical location of an Indigenous society creates the ‘transaction costs,’ and therefore the law ultimately mirrors the geography.

¹⁰⁷ Hilda Neatby’s *Quebec, The Revolutionary Age, 1760-1791* is one of the first works to bluntly (and properly) link geography to social trends. Ronald F. Williamson, ed., *Toronto: An Illustrated History of Its First 12, 000 Years*, Furniss’ *The Burden of History* and William J. Turkel’s *The Archive of Place* all contain strong analyses about one particular community. For another supportive view on using law in a non-law presentation as a way to determine the strength of social imperatives, see Pauline Marie Roseneau, *Post-Modernism and the Social Sciences: Insights, Inroads and Intrusions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 67. Bruce G. Miller, “Justice, Law and the Lens of Culture,” *Wicazo Sa Review* 18, no. 2 (2003): 138. Warnock, *Saskatchewan*, 197; MacMillan, *Uses and Abuses*, 57. Regularly cited as one of the strongest calls for activism among historians to notice how rules impact the environment is Lynn White Jr.’s “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis,” *Science* 155, no. 37 (Mar. 10, 1967): 1203-1207. The failure to explore a fundamental condition of interdependence is considered in David Clark, “Interdependent Urbanization in an Urban World: An Historical Overview,” *The Geographical Journal* 164, no. 1 (March 1998): 85-95. See also Rauna Kuokkanen’s concern that scholars do not study the social benefits of sharing enough in “Toward a New Relation of Hospitality in the Academy,” Special Issue: Native Experiences in the Ivory Tower, *American Indian Quarterly* 27, no. 1/2 (Winter-Spring 2003): 285. See J. R. Miller’s observations about how people claim they want historical efforts to influence current public policy, but then fail to use data about the past

employed here are not historical, and the story is constructed by keeping Île-à-la-Crosse as the focus rather than people or a theme per se,¹⁰⁸ my analysis is more an example of what Peers calls historical “layering” of information rather than particular historical methodology.¹⁰⁹ With an appreciation for what Kerry Abel has constructed in her works such as *Changing Places* with their challenges to how we mention the land,¹¹⁰ I also demand that the “layer” about physical features be even thicker so that comparisons to natural and human forms be less difficult to do. With my argument about such a part existing in this presentation, my affinity to microhistories seems the most strong due especially to its challenge to earlier methods.

Second, certain labels will appear that are not necessarily employed by historical/geographical/ economic research. For example, I use “First Nation” as a way to introduce Indigenous peoples who are not Métis and were likely referred to as “Indians.” As well, based on my observation that “Dene” has now gained more familiarity as the Chipewyan word for “Chipewyan,” I use the term “Nihyaw” to identify those previously labeled as “Cree.”¹¹¹ Regarding the concept “Métis,” I do not differentiate between English or French

because of an obsession with politics, law, or social strata. See J. R. Miller, *Lethal Legacy*, vi. He puts particular blame upon historians for this situation.

¹⁰⁸ For some works presented by those part of other scholarly fields besides history, see generally Parker and Frank Tough, “From the ‘Original Affluent Society’ to the ‘Unjust Society’: A Review Essay on Native Economy in Canada,” *Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development* 4, no. 2 (2005): 40. Some works include a very assertive argument that a community absolutely impacts macro relationships. See Sharon Doyle Driedger’s *An Irish Heart: How a Small Immigrant Community Shaped Canada* (Toronto: Harper Collins Canada, 2010).

¹⁰⁹ Laura Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada: 1780-1870* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1994), 210.

¹¹⁰ Kerry Abel, *Changing Places: History, Community, and Identity in Northeastern Ontario* (Montréal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2006).

¹¹¹ Notably, David Thompson called the Cree of the village “Nihaway” after he learned the Cree language. See David Thompson, *David Thompson’s Narrative, 1784-1812*, ed. Richard Glover

backgrounds within the Métis population unless community members did so. These decisions about labels for Indigenous peoples are done partly for consistency, but also to build upon discussions regarding Indigenous self-identification.¹¹² Even if an outsider wanted to use the term “country-born” (for British heritage) to label a local, the community’s evolution suggests that doing so happened less as more time passed and, in fact, was counter to the emphasis placed upon community affinity, kinship and social-economic stability.¹¹³ Although they may not sit well with everyone, I hope that my choices contribute to views about how all researchers should make an Indigenous community’s form available in a way that shows that community’s understanding of itself as well as possible. Just as other marginalized groups have argued that a historic term has a derogatory connotation that cannot be completely separated from the term even if used to avoid committing presentism,¹¹⁴ I believe Indigenous peoples in Canada deserve the same treatment.

(Toronto: Champlain Society, 1962), 79. So using the term can also be considered more historically accurate according to non-Indigenous sources as well.

¹¹² See for example, Adam Gaudry, “The Metis-ization of Canada: The Process of Claiming Louis Riel, Metissage, and the Metis People as Canada’s Mythical Origin,” *Aboriginal Policy Studies*, 2 (2): 64-87 and Chris Andersen, “*Métis*: Race, Recognition and the Struggle for Indigenous Peoplehood” (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2015).

¹¹³ For more information about the term “Country born” see Yvonne Vezina, “Métis Culture,” on the “Our Legacy” site organized by Saskatchewan Archives and the University of Saskatchewan Archives to host Indigenous contributions to the access of knowledge. http://scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/exhibit_metisculture#_edn3.

¹¹⁴ For commentary regarding the negative prejudicial effect a historic term can have upon a group’s modern places, see generally Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, “The Inventions of African Identities and Languages: The Discursive and Developmental Implications,” in *Selected Proceedings of the 36th Annual Conference on African Linguistics: Shifting the Center of Africanism in Language Politics and Economics Globalization*, ed. Olaoba F. Arasanyin and Michael A. Pemberton, 14-26 (Sommerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project, 2006).

On the point of what to do when considering non-Indigenous peoples, I regularly use the term “outsider” instead of “explorer” or “newcomer” for those who visit Île-à-la-Crosse. As I argue later on in greater detail, the community’s history of ‘contact’ is one of the most fluid examples in Canada, and as the years reveal, the ability of visitors to transform into what locals consider ‘residents’ happens repeatedly. Indeed, the years show how a non-Indigenous person had the ability to become a ‘local’ as much as a member of a First Nations family. Certain newcomers become not so new over time, and they arguably could be as much a part of Île-à-la-Crosse as someone without European heritage. In how I have understood events, the outsiders stay outsiders because they do not abandon the norms they brought with them. When helpful, any insiders who are non-Indigenous will be identified as such to give more accurate context for the scene in question. When necessary, cultural labels are used for the outsiders, but I suspect the idea that they are not Indigenous will be easily understood.

Third, when making reference to physical geography, I almost always refer to the main waterway for the village as the Churchill River instead of Lac Île-à-la-Crosse. As Part II describes, the area that outsiders regularly called a “lake” was actually the widest part of the river. As well, for consistency I refer to the body of as the “Churchill River” instead of the “English River.” Definitely, the latter name appears in older records. Still, that term is not a local label either in the same way as “Indian”, “Cree” or “Chipewyan” are outsider terms. When I was trying to choose how to label one of the most influential factors about the community’s life, an Île-à-la-Crosse villager told me “neither one of those terms (“Churchill” or “English”) is our name, so why do I care what you call it? I know what it is

already!”¹¹⁵ Most often, I simply call the water body “the river” and hope that such a description allows understanding for its impact upon local and more distant conditions.

On the pages that follow, we will venture to where the Churchill River is its widest, picks up speed, and has provided shelter for many men and women who met there, visited for a time, and sometimes even decided to stay. We will learn about what J. F. C. Wright called “one of the best known and best-ordered of the northern settlements” that demonstrated great “self-adaptation”¹¹⁶ and “progressive partnerships.”¹¹⁷ When visiting this place and looking to the trees, water, and animal (including human) life, we will appreciate how Île-à-la-Crosse’s “anonymous masons” “self-assembled” to find ways in order for survival and even substantial profit to happen.¹¹⁸ Edward McCourt told his readers that peoples found it “a hasty retreat,” an excellent “taking off point,”¹¹⁹ Ray observed that it was a place where no one seemed particularly concerned with creating dominance,¹²⁰ and Philip Spaulding considered it a location to fend off “strong contradictory pressures from the outside.”¹²¹ Whether it happened for explorer Alexander Henry, literary writer McCourt,

¹¹⁵ Source to author, speaker asked to remain anonymous, 16 June 2012.

¹¹⁶ J. F. C. Wright, *Saskatchewan, The History of a Province* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1955), x.

¹¹⁷ Carter, *Botany Bay*, 13.

¹¹⁸ Noticing the historical absence of a group and then attempting to reveal this group’s conditions which continued despite being forgotten is called “mentalité history” by Robert Darnton. He defines this self-created subfield as “the intellectual history of non-intellectuals as an attempt to reconstruct the cosmology of the common man or, more modestly, to understand the attitudes, assumptions, and implicit ideologies of specific social groups.” See Darnton’s “The History of Mentalités: Recent Writings on Revolution, Criminality and Death in France,” in *Structure, Consciousness and History*, eds. Richard Harvey Brown and Stanford M. Lyman, 106-137 (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1978). Ginzburg also agrees when he observes scholars need to know about the “anonymous masons.” Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 1. For the “self-assemble” term see Shirkey, *Here Comes Everybody*, 21.

¹¹⁹ Edward McCourt, *Saskatchewan* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1968), 196.

¹²⁰ Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, xi.

¹²¹ Spaulding, “The Métis of Île-à-la-Crosse,” 139.

politician Stéphane Dion, or a graduate student like me from Western University, something strong yet unconfirmed intrigued many different people over many years.

Now, it is my hope that what is here can help illuminate what makes it so intriguing.¹²²

This microhistory, based on empirical data and interacting with information coming from history, geography, Indigenous studies and economic analysis, is my contribution to learning about this space's fascinating life.

Ekwa maka!¹²³

¹²² See generally James C. Scott's *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010) as an example of a group forgotten by scholars and global society. On a personal note, I found a handwritten note by A. S. Morton to someone called "RLG" on 24 December 1935. I found it in a file folder with loose documents called "Archives Folder – Ile-a-la-Crosse," in the Manitoba Archives. It reads: "I have received valuable communication... which goes far to unravel the tangle about the sites of the various Posts there." After researching dates a bit, I learned just before writing this note Morton had retired from his work as a professor of history at the University of Saskatchewan. I have yet to find any other writer who makes reference to this small faded piece of paper. Morton did not publish any writings about the village after this note was written, and he died a decade later.

¹²³ Michif for "let's go" in Vince Ahenakew, *Nehiyawewin Mitataht: Michif ahci Cree* (Saskatoon: The Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research, 2009), 29.

PART II

The Site

II. 1. Introduction

In this Part, Île-à-la-Crosse's physical state is discussed. Certainly, people have an impact on natural surroundings but just as much (if not more so), a landscape directly influences human activities. As such, those surroundings should be better appreciated so that all the sources of social activities can be recalled but also considered for their complementary or contradictory form to natural non-human processes. In creating this Part about what happened "millions upon millions of years ago," I hope it acts as what Jonathan Spence called a "memory palace".¹²⁴

Before moving into the specific details,¹²⁵ some preliminary observations are helpful.

First, the region is a land mass with large numbers of different species determining ways

¹²⁴ The first quoted phrase appears in James Michener's *Hawaii* (New York: Random House, 1959), 1. I thank Michael Lynk, Associate Professor at the University of Western Ontario's Faculty of Law, for showing this reference to me and discussing the impact such a statement has at the beginning of a study. For remarks about appreciating "a living Earth" first before moving to arguments about history, politics, and law, see John Borrows' "Living Law on a Living Earth: Aboriginal Religion, Law and the Constitution," in *Law and Religious Pluralism in Canada*, ed. Richard Moon (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 161. For a scholarly monograph detailing how events far back in time impact modern human times see Stephen Jay Gould's *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History* (London, UK: Hutchinson Radius, 1990).

¹²⁵ Some good examples of an introductory chapter appear in John J. Bukowczyk et al, eds., *Permeable Border: The Great Lakes as Transnational Region, 1650-1990* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005); Donald Worster, *Rivers of Empire*; Samuel Hay, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959); Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1967); Hilda Neatby, *Quebec: the Revolutionary Age, 1760-1791*; Stephen J. Pyne, *The Ice: A Journey to Antarctica* (Ames, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1986). The conceptual benefits of having a separate section are explained in Richard White, "American Environmental History: The Development of a New Historical Field," *The Pacific Historical Review* 54, no. 3 (August 1985):

to co-exist. Second, the physical features of Île-à-la-Crosse have coincidentally been as understudied as the histories about the region's residents. How the absence of research about physical geography impacts research about human activities is impossible to confirm in a complete way. Still, knowing that the land is as un-researched as the people seems important to mention. Given that historians such as Simon Schama have argued that linking geographical data and social lives is essential for social history to be accurate,¹²⁶ it seems only reasonable to note this double absence. When we decide to learn about "the way the land moved,"¹²⁷ and find that doing so means searching much further and wider than expected, it seems even more important to provide commentary about the setting – regardless of how difficult it might be to do so.¹²⁸

297. In my view, the best example of how to intertwine human endeavours with a region's geographical functions remains the first chapter of Arthur J. Ray's *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1996), called "The Land as History Book." An example which creates a 'social geography,' albeit of a different region, and contains the combination of physical features with intercultural interaction is David Meyer's and Paul C. Thistle's "Saskatchewan River Rendezvous Centers and Trading Posts: Continuity in a Cree Social Geography," *Ethnohistory* 42, no. 3 (Summer 1995): 403-444.

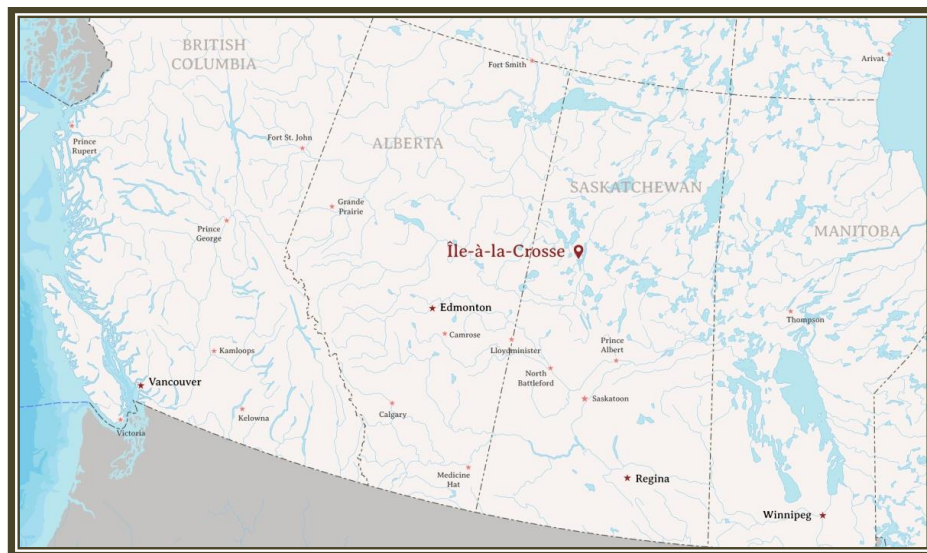
¹²⁶ See Schama's description of "it awaited him somewhere beyond the academy: in the landscape itself." Simon Schama, *Dead Certainties (Unwarranted Speculations)* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 50.

¹²⁷ On page 11 of *The Return of Martin Guerre*, Natalie Zemon Davis calls for more studies to illustrate this point.

¹²⁸ Said considers these comments especially important if an audience will not visit the region. See Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 49. Olena V. Smyntyna, "The Environmental Approach to Prehistoric Studies: Concepts and Theories," *History and Theory* 42, no. 4 (2003): 59: "It has always seemed to me very curious that, although our book-shelves are heavily weighed by histories of countries of the world, it is seldom that we find in them a single chapter on a country as an area of land. That is something that has been forgotten by the historians. Even if they did not forget or overlook it, they did not conceive it as necessary; and yet the history of our countryside is an essential part of our history. Therefore, because of this lapse it has tended to be the work of historical geographers and a definition of their craft might be 'the history of the countryside.'" Richard Muir documented how such a call came out long ago, and it has gone largely unheeded. Richard Muir, "Geography and the History of Landscape: Half a Century of Development as Recorded in the Geographical Journal," *The Geographical Journal* 164, no. 2 (Jul., 1998): 148. See also W. G. East's 1951 "The Changing English Landscape: Discussion" *Geographical Journal* 117, no. 4 (December 1951): 397-8. For examples of recent projects see Elizabeth Furniss, *The Burden of History: Colonialisms and the Frontier Myth in a Rural Canadian Community* and W. J. Turkel, *The Archive of Place*. Sadly, modern studies exist where the authors claim to be concerned with geography but then only



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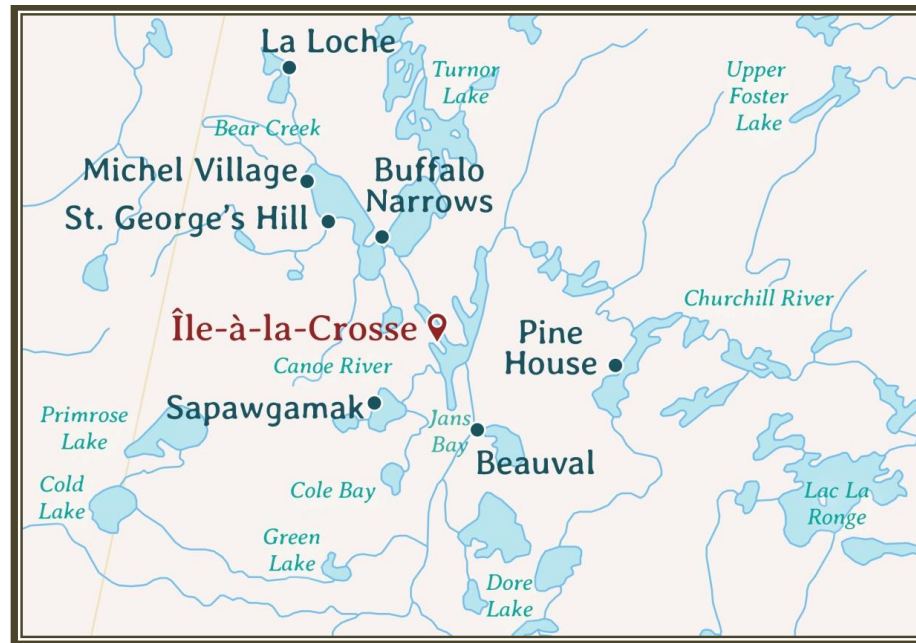


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present a scant amount of detail themselves. As an example, see Margaret Conrad and Alvin Finkel, *Canada: A National History* (Toronto: Longman, 2003), 2-4.

¹²⁹ Figure 1 - Signa Daum Shanks, "Île-à-la-Crosse and Canada," 2015. At 55.4500° North and 107.8833° West, Île-à-la-Crosse's location is easily understood as located within "northern Canada" or more specifically Canada's "North West."

¹³⁰ Figure 2 - Signa Daum Shanks, "Île-à-la-Crosse and western Canada," 2015. Within western Canada, Île-à-la-Crosse is located in the province of Saskatchewan. It is 478 kilometres north of the province's largest city (Saskatoon) and is 735 kilometres north of the provincial capital of Regina.



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II. 2. Geomorphology

The study of geomorphology, which focuses on Earth's inner layers, teaches us much about the past. The layers have their own histories, and those histories make this planet's very top crust (the landscape) function the way it does.¹³² The inner crusts have both moved across the planet and developed changes within themselves while moving. The movements, more commonly known as "tectonic shifts," have meant each layer has acquired its own specific qualities that are a product of where and when the shifts

¹³¹ Figure 3 - Signa Daum Shanks, "Communities near Île-à-la-Crosse," 2015. Regionally, Île-à-la-Crosse is amongst a number of communities with similar population sizes and peoples with similar cultural backgrounds. While not currently the largest place (Buffalo Narrows) or the closest to larger communities (Beauval), Île-à-la-Crosse remains the community with the greatest longevity and stable population number. The communities on this map are often dubbed part of northern Saskatchewan's "West Side."

¹³² Richard J. Chorley's *Geomorphology and General Systems Theory* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1962) remains one of the most helpful general presentations about geomorphology for non-geologists. For a Canadian perspective see Alan Trenhaile, *Geomorphology: A Canadian Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

happened. For further clarity when studying the shifts, geomorphologists have called these different layers “Provinces.” Geomorphologists then date the Provinces, document which Provinces make up current continents on the planet, and then research the specific modern nature of each Province.¹³³ Within the area now known as Canada, seventeen Provinces exist. Île-à-la-Crosse is located in what is called “Churchill Province.”¹³⁴ Churchill Province’s characteristics suggest it is actually a consequence of (at least) two other Provinces colliding, creating a “crack” because of this collision, and then triggering the development of a younger Province (Churchill) around this crack.¹³⁵ Named after the crack’s acquired river name,¹³⁶ Churchill Province has developed as many of its own characteristics as the two Provinces (the Slave and the Interior Platform) that created it when they collided.¹³⁷

¹³³ Surprisingly, few succinct studies about Canada’s geological “provinces” exist. For a helpful presentation about the nature of provinces, see Thomas J. M. Schopf’s “The Role of Biogeographic Provinces in Regulating Marine Faunal Diversity Through Geologic Time,” in *Historical Biogeography, Plate Tectonics, and the Changing Environment*, (eds.) Jane Gray and Arthur J. Boucot (Oregon State University Press, Corvallis, 1979).

¹³⁴ Sources still debate the exact location of various Provinces’ boundaries. For sources that favour understanding the village in Churchill Province, see http://www.usask.ca/hydrology/reports/CHRp01_Hydrology-Water-Resources-Sask_Feb05.pdf, <http://esask.uregina.ca/management/app/assets/img/enc2/PDF/51BDF440-1560-95DA-43C27F4AB5F620471.pdf>, and <http://esask.uregina.ca/management/app/assets/img/enc2/PDF/51BF8964-1560-95DA-43B62382520909F81.pdf>. These researchers disagree with the recently re-published effort by the Government Canada that has different boundaries (and subsequently classifies Île-à-la-Crosse in the “Interior Platform”). See http://atlas.nrcan.gc.ca/data/english/maps/geology/geological_provinces_map.pdf. Very notably, Canada uses 1997 research for its continued understanding of Île-à-la-Crosse’s location, while the Province of Saskatchewan uses data from 2005.

¹³⁵ For descriptions of the sub-provinces view, see John F. Lewry and Thomas I. I. Sibbald, “Thermotectonic evolution of the Churchill Province in northern Saskatchewan,” *Tectophysics* 68, no. 45 (September 1980): 45-82. In this view, Churchill Province is made up of the Wyoming, Hearne, Rae, and Burrell sub-provinces.

¹³⁶ Sadly, research about the Churchill River continues to appear rarely. Fortunately, Greg Marchildon and Sid Robinson, *Canoeing The Churchill* has recently appeared. See also the “foreword” by Peter Jonker, in Peter Jonker, ed. *The Churchill: A Canadian Heritage River* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan Extension Division, 1995), 1. As notably, a general study about water systems in western Canada did not appear until E. R. Reinelt, A. H. Laycock, and W. M. Schultz, eds., *Proceedings: Symposium on the Lakes of Western Canada* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Extension Division, 1973).

¹³⁷ Peter L. Storck, *Journey to the Ice Age*, 10.

Fortunately for researchers interested in the Churchill Province, the modern river acts as a more open venue to evaluate the histories contained within. Various underwater rocks and the riverbed's inner strata document how the Province contains huge swaths of "mineral ribbons" evident within the Slave and Interior Platform Provinces. But with those ribbons, other new layers were formed. When the collision stabilized, little room remained for all the mineral types to escape or dissipate.¹³⁸ Extending for miles, and particularly at the river's widest part, the younger ribbons reveal that no one type of bedrock dominates Churchill Province.¹³⁹ In the river around Île-à-la-Crosse, particles in some ribbons help identify the "Paleozoic crust" commonly linked to the Slave Province with an age of approximately between 250 and 600 million years and containing mainly limestone and dolomite.¹⁴⁰ Slightly younger ribbons interspersed with these Paleozoic particles, and labeled as part of the Interior Plain's "Mesozoic crust," formed between 53 and 250 million years ago contain sandstone, silt, shale, and some coal.¹⁴¹ Amongst these Paleozoic and Mesozoic ribbons, other, younger swaths appear that contain what are considered part of the Churchill Province's fundamental components.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ Klaus K. E. Neuendorf et al., *Glossary of Geology*, Fifth Edition (Alexandria: Virginia, American Geological Institute, 2005), 554.

¹³⁹ J. Howard Richards, *Saskatchewan: A Geographical Appraisal* (Saskatoon: Division of Extension and Community Relations, University of Saskatchewan, 1981), 40.

¹⁴⁰ For a helpful analysis for non-geologists of how mineral ribbons develop, see M.B. McClenaghan et al, "Till Geochemical and Indicator Minerals Methods in Mineral Exploration," in *Proceedings of Exploration 97: Fourth Bicennial International Conference on Mineral Exploration*, ed. Arnis G. Gubins (Toronto: Prospectors and Developers Corporation of Canada, 1997), 233.

¹⁴¹ See Figure 2.6 of "Bedrock Regions" in Richards, *Saskatchewan*, 40 and 42.

¹⁴² Richards, *Saskatchewan*, 50-51.

Besides considering what the crack contains, the crack can also be examined for its protrusion. Around Île-à-la-Crosse, the crack is at its highest altitude with a slight downward slope going immediately north, and then jutting east. During eras commonly referred to as part of the “Ice Age” (or “Ice Ages”),¹⁴³ this altitude change meant most water that built up during an ice thaw left Canada’s North West easterly via the crack. But given that runoff might have come suddenly, and since the slope at the crack’s start is not extreme, some runoff also left Île-à-la-Crosse’s space in both southeasterly (close to what is now called the Beaver River) and northwesterly directions eventually to Lake Athabasca.¹⁴⁴ So as a result of the runoff combined with less severe altitude change all around, the village’s space is within the area of three “watersheds”. Although the Churchill River remained the primary form for water removal, Île-à-la-Crosse’s potential for multiple runoff routes means the location is an example of “dual drainage” and “border lakes.”¹⁴⁵ Notably, some modern maps place the village’s location on a lake edge (Lac Île-à-la-Crosse). Yet when this issue of drainage is studied more closely, calling the area a lake underrates that space’s influence upon what happens to the Churchill River and all of the space considered part of Churchill Province. Such a point is even better ascertained when research reveals how Île-à-la-Crosse’s river space completely replenishes itself every nine

¹⁴³ Along with debates about how to identify Provinces and the village’s exact location in those Provinces, different views about Ice Ages reveal how scientific research can be interpreted as much as qualitative analysis. J. A. Percival et al, “Orogenic Framework for the Superior Province: Dissection of the ‘Kenoran Orogeny’” (Paper from LITHOPROBE Celebratory Conference: From Parameters to Processes – Revealing the Evolution of a Continent, Ottawa: Geological Survey of Canada, 2002); Ruth Millar, “Morris ‘Two-Gun’ Cohen: A Life of International Adventure and Intrigue,” in *Saskatchewan Heroes and Rogues*, 67-86 (Regina, SK: Coteau Books, 2004), 71.

¹⁴⁴ The Beaver River also helps the area’s surplus water leave the region. See D. S. Rawson, “Limnological Comparison of Twelve Large Lakes in Northern Saskatchewan,” *Limnology and Oceanography* 5, no. 2 (1960): 197.

¹⁴⁵ Edward C. Cabot, “Dual-Drainage Anomalies in the Far North,” *Geographical Review* 36, no. 3 (July 1946): 474.

months.¹⁴⁶ This ability to hold and release water, along with a greater capacity for overflow to leave via other exits, means the land base's wildlife has access to more temperate conditions as well. With such capability, Île-à-la-Crosse's geomorphological space is considered as distinctive as conditions in a tropical maritime region attached to a mountain range – arguably the locations on earth presumed to be the most diverse.¹⁴⁷

II. 3. Terrain and Climate

The village's top layer (or its "terrain") illustrates the patterns evident further below about colliding regions and a newer region developing as a result. As already mentioned, water in the area can leave in one of three directions, but mostly departs by way of the Churchill River. With three watersheds, the village's surface has developed a huge variety of habitats that include many lakes, dry areas with high water tables, and then sudden drier spots with an almost sand-like form.¹⁴⁸ These

¹⁴⁶ This quality also makes the water shore by the village an example of what water specialists often label an "irregularity." See A. Okubo, "Effects of Shoreline Irregularities on Streamwise Dispersion in Estuaries and other Embayments," *Netherlands Journal of Sea Research* 6, no. 1-2 (April 1973): 213-224. Regarding whether the Churchill River "starts" at the village, see Senate Papers, 51 Vict. A. (1888), Appendix No. 1, 85; page 483 of John Thomas Howell's "Studies in Phacelia-Revision of Species Related to P. Douglasii, P. Linearis, and P. Pringlei," *American Midland Naturalist* 33, no. 2 (March 1945): 460-494; Greg Marchildon and Sid Robinson, *Canoeing the Churchill*, 2 and M.H. Synge, "Proposal for a Rapid Communication with the Pacific and the East, via British North America," *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 22, (1852): 183. Rawson argues the beginning of the Churchill River makes it "the most elaborate basin" in North America. Moreover, Lac Île-à-la-Crosse is also labeled a "river lake." Rawson, "A Limnological Comparison," 208. For consistency, I will refer to the area that makes up Lac Île-à-la-Crosse as the start/beginning of the Churchill River as it is this wider area that the research in this Part explains. Regarding the replenishing, see Rawson, "A Limnological Comparison," 197. See also Rawson, "A Limnological Comparison," 202 and 208, where details explain how what some researchers call Lac Île-à-la-Crosse has the lowest percentage of bottom fauna because of its flushing time period.

¹⁴⁷ Farley Mowat, *Canada North* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), 26.

¹⁴⁸ For one of the most detailed examinations of the glacial melt's impact, see J. Burr Tyrrell's "An Expedition through the Barren Lands of Northern Canada," *The Geographical Journal* 4, no. 5

great differences can be understood as an effect of the mineral ribbons' qualities coming to the surface. The ribbons' characteristics permit different living plants to exist, so Île-à-la-Crosse's ground can go from a granular sediment soil to tall grasses, to rocky, to black dirt with no stones whatsoever, to a vast forest area, with all types all within a short distance of each other.¹⁴⁹

The variety of conditions does not stop on the ground: air quality and moisture levels also illustrate diversity. Like much of the North West, Île-à-la-Crosse's area has a winter that is twice as long as any other season.¹⁵⁰ But because the Churchill River is such a dominant water feature, Île-à-la-Crosse's humidity is higher than other parts of the North West experiencing this long winter – even when compared to nearby locations.¹⁵¹ As a result, the village's "freeze up" days during winter

(November 1894): 437-450. I hope to avoid focusing on the issue of how many melts happened. With that said, many writers support Tyrrell's conclusion that more than one melt happened, and therefore more than one "Age" happened as well. Marchildon and Robinson, *Canoeing the Churchill*, 65-66.

¹⁴⁹ Fig 3.4 in "Dominant soils." Richards, *Saskatchewan*, 71. This combination of mineralized land and boggy areas makes this area, according to Mitsch, "one of the most important wetland regions in the world." William J. Mitsch and James G. Gosse, *Wetlands* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2007), 63. Rawson describes the forests and swamps interspersed between each other. Rawson, "A Limnological Comparison," 197. See J. Dewey Soper, "History, Range, and Home Life of the Northern Bison," *Ecological Monographs* 11, no. 4 (Oct., 1941): 354, from 354-371 for analysis of how botanical research about the area did not commence until the 1920s. On page 372 Soper describes how the swampy ground is attractive to buffalo since the region is also part of the "flood plains" with willows, alders, sedge, and grasses. This quality also impacts how deep the soil becomes frozen. See J.H. Lefroy, "Report upon the Depth of Permanently Frozen Soil in the Polar Regions, its geographical limits, and relations to the present poles of the greatest cold," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography* 8, no. 11 (1886): 743.

¹⁵⁰ See Dr. Richardson (no first name given), "Note on the Best Points, in British North America, for Making Observations on the Temperature of the Air; And Also for the Height of the Station above the Level of the Sea," *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 9, (1839): 123. This region has approximately 90 to 100 frost-free days. See fig 2.3 in Richards, *Saskatchewan*, 31.

¹⁵¹ Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 16.

season are fewer.¹⁵² So in comparison to other locations' statistics for winter days, Île-à-la-Crosse actually does not have as long a winter season as many places much further south (such as Saskatoon).¹⁵³ Because of its less arduous winter, and considering how far north and very inland the village is, Île-à-la-Crosse is understood as the most "humid continental" community furthest from a coastline in all of North America.¹⁵⁴ With its "moist subhumid" conditions even during its coldest days,¹⁵⁵ Île-à-la-Crosse's terrain and climatic conditions also create the most "maximum marine influence" for any non-maritime community.¹⁵⁶ Although the village's location on a map begs it to be considered a part of Canada's west (and possibly its north), its traits actually have more in common with more southerly and more ocean-located communities.

¹⁵² Rawson, "A Limnological Comparison," 197. This area is considered a type of taiga with "moist subhumid" tendencies and a low level of moisture required for plant life to grow.

¹⁵³ See Richards, *Saskatchewan*, 31 (Figure 2.3).

¹⁵⁴ The region is in the centre of the highest combination of the "humid continental" and subarctic. Richards, *Saskatchewan*, 67 (Figure 3.1.). As a result, Île-à-la-Crosse's area demonstrates immense local climatic differences. Richards, *Saskatchewan*, 77. C.S. Brown describes the area as a northern location with the climate of southern Saskatchewan. C.S. Brown, "A Geographic Survey and Analysis of the Buffalo Region of Northern Saskatchewan," (unpublished report for Saskatchewan's Department of Natural Resources, 1952), 12. Jim Wright argues the north is between one-third and one half water Jim Wright, "Saskatchewan," *Canadian Geographical Journal* 34, no. 3 (March 1947): 113.

¹⁵⁵ This term is from Rawson, "A Limnological Comparison," 197.

¹⁵⁶ C.S. Brown, "A Geographic Survey and Analysis of the Buffalo Region of Northern Saskatchewan," 15.



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4. Vegetation and Fauna

A significantly high diversity continues with creatures and plant life.¹⁵⁸ Where the sandy points surface, coniferous trees such as pine and spruce grow.¹⁵⁹ If the soil is less rocky, leaf-bearing trees such as aspen, willows, alders, sedge, and white birch thrive.¹⁶⁰ Because some berry bushes like cranberry and chokecherry can also grow in either soil, they rise up en masse in all areas. As well, the shade these species

¹⁵⁷ Image 2 - View from village's shoreline to land form known as "Big Island." Photo courtesy of Elisabeth Poscher.

¹⁵⁸ C.S. Brown, "A Geographic Survey and Analysis of the Buffalo Region of Northern Saskatchewan," 25.

¹⁵⁹ See Richards, *Saskatchewan*, 71 (Figure 3.3).

¹⁶⁰ Richards, *Saskatchewan*, 75. Irwin M. Brodo, "I. Lichenes Canadenses Exsiccati: Fascicle II," *The Bryologist* 79, no. 4, (Winter 1976): 401; Soper, "History, Range and Home Life," 354. Soper also details how no researcher collected botanical data until after the 1920s.

provide allows leaf-shedding trees and evergreens also to find a way to live there. As winds let up at the Churchill's headwaters,¹⁶¹ and because the area's water table varies significantly depending on specific place, plant seedlings also have an easier time when they start to germinate.¹⁶² Amongst these plants, a number of species such as the tomato, ground cherry, lichen and sneezeweed have even developed varieties unique to Île-à-la-Crosse.¹⁶³

Along with the plant life, a large number of animals live there which also show a great ability to adapt. Underwater, ciscoes make up about 50 per cent of the fish population, swimming with pike (about 13 per cent), White sucker (14 per cent), and a few pickerel and Whitefish.¹⁶⁴ On the ground, foxes, marten, and moose exist in substantial numbers¹⁶⁵ as do badgers, squirrels, and chipmunks.¹⁶⁶ The larger wood buffalo and caribou also have a history around Île-à-la-Crosse.¹⁶⁷ In the trees,

¹⁶¹ For details about how the winds are less strong see C. S. Brown, "A Geographic Survey and Analysis of the Buffalo Region of Northern Saskatchewan," 13.

¹⁶² August J Breitung, "Annotated Catalogue of the Vascular Flora of Saskatchewan," *American Midland Naturalist* 58, no. 1 (July 1957): 71.

¹⁶³ Brown, for example, noticed how locals harvested tomatoes until mid-October, and the variety of tomatoes they harvested had developed a noticeable distinctiveness. C.S. Brown, "A Geographic Survey and Analysis of the Buffalo Region of Northern Saskatchewan," 17. Breitung called these developed varieties "edemic races." See also Breitung, "Annotated Catalogue," 10. For more analysis about the potential of region-specific varieties see Howell, "Studies in Phacelia-Revision of Species Related to P. Douglasii, P. Linearis, and P. Pringlei," 471. Breitung's details about large White-flowered ground-cherry which, at Île-À-la-Crosse, can be located "in sandy pines." For an example, see August J. Breitung, "Annotated Catalogue of the Vascular Flora of Saskatachewan," 54. See also his comments about the Sneeze-Weed at 64.

¹⁶⁴ C. S. Brown, "A Geographic Survey and Analysis of the Buffalo Region of Northern Saskatchewan," 203.

¹⁶⁵ Soper, "History, Range, and Home Life," 389.

¹⁶⁶ Charles Long, "Taxonomic Revision of the North American Badger, *Taxidea taxus*," *Journal of Mammalogy* 53, no. 4 (November 1972): 744.

¹⁶⁷ Robin Karpan and Arlene Karpan, *Northern Sandscapes: Exploring Saskatchewan's Athabasca Sand Dunes* (Saskatoon, SK: Parkland, 1998), 123. See also Ed Theriau as told to Patricia Armstrong, *Lost Land of the Caribou* (n.p.: 1980), 77; Soper, "History, Range, and Home Life," 371 and details about how swampy ground is very attractive to buffalo, see Soper, "History, Range, and Home Life," 372. The village is part of the "flood plains" with flood and dry up, and

the area around Île-à-la-Crosse hosts an abundance of singers, carnivores, and high flyers, including eagles, ravens, crows, and magpies.¹⁶⁸ In fact, the village's region hosts between fifty and eighty per cent of all North America's bird types every year.¹⁶⁹ Certain combinations, such as caribou and buffalo having a history of using the same space, the high numbers of pelicans and loons, and the interaction of crows and ravens, illustrate how the region has animal life that does not cohabit elsewhere.¹⁷⁰

Because of the landscape and biology, and the fact that the region's geological form has existed for at least 12 000 years,¹⁷¹ John Storer concludes that living things in the village's area have been "together in communities of a sort we could not find

such a condition encourages the growth of willows, alders, sedge, and grasses. Soper, "History, Range and Home Life," 389. For commentary about the co-existence of moose and bison see R-5940- R-5942, Accession no. R81-216 (May 31 1980) Joe Bag, Chipewyan and Metis People of La Loche Oral History Project, SAB, 070, Tape 3, Side B. Memories of caribou coming to Île-à-la-Crosse in the same area of the buffalo also appears in Theriau, *Lost Land of the Caribou*, 77. As well the swampy ground is very attractive to resting buffalo. Soper, "History, Range and Home Life," 372. The combination of buffalo and caribou is considered an impossibility in other parts of Canada.

¹⁶⁸ C. Stewart Houston, "The Life: Bird Observations," in *Three Hundred Prairie Years: Henry Kelsey's "Inland Country of Good Report,"* ed. Henry T. Epp (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1993), 27; John Smith Dexter, "Notes on the Birds of the Beaver River Valley in Saskatchewan," *The Auk* 39, no. 2, (April 1922): 270; Karpan and Karpan, *Northern Sandscapes*, 121; Joseph Dion, *My Tribe the Crees*, (Calgary, AB: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1996; first published 1979), 54; T. E. Randall, *Kazan Lake*, (unpublished report for Ducks Unlimited, 1942), 30-31. An observer wrote of shock when seeing a ruby-throated hummingbird. See Ernest Thompson Seton, "Bird Records from Great Slave Lake Region: A Preliminary List of Birds Observed by My 1907 Expedition into the Arctic Barren-Grounds of Canada," *The Auk* 25, no. 1 (January 1908): 69.

¹⁶⁹ Waiser, *Saskatchewan: A New History*, 25. See also Mitsch and Gosse, *Wetlands*, 63. Mitsch, in fact, argues that this area is more optimal for birdlife than any area around the Great Lakes, including Point Pelee. See Mitsch and Gosse, *Wetlands*, 68.

¹⁷⁰ Daniel Anderson and James C. Bartonek, "Additional Observations on the Status of North American White Pelicans," *The Condor* 69, no. 3 (May-June 1967): 311-313.

¹⁷¹ Jeff O'Brien, "Geology has a tendency to interrupt our lives," *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, 7 July 2012, E8.

anywhere [else] now.”¹⁷² The vast number of species, the interaction amongst these species, and the subsequent varieties that have developed out of this interaction have made an example of what is called “interdigitating,” and the example is even more prolific since it has occurred for at least three millennia.¹⁷³

General descriptions about Canada often remark on the country’s diversity. Given what information appears above, Île-à-la-Crosse could act as a noteworthy example of such a national characteristic.¹⁷⁴ Yet these data about the village’s space also reveal that knowledge of Île-à-la-Crosse’s wildlife is relatively new. In fact, even when the few remarks about overlapping conditions and the higher amount of species did appear, it is likely that these observations were speculations and deductions rather than a result of completed research. Indeed, until the term “Parklands” made its way into research about the earth’s natural features, various researchers did little to provide examples of complexity, and so earlier remarks that likely apply to the village are worth an investigation as well. What can help the paucity and quality of information, however, is an exploration of the concept “Parklands”. Not only does this term apply to Île-à-la-Crosse’s form, its evolution as

¹⁷² John E. Storer, “Life and Landscape: Origins and history”, in *Three Hundred Prairie Years*, Henry T. Epp, ed., 46.

¹⁷³ F.M. Atton, “The Life: Fish and Water,” in *Three Hundred Prairie Years*, Henry T. Epp, ed. 19.

¹⁷⁴ Wright, *History of a Province*, 2. Peter Storck argues that geographers still do not admit openly how much their knowledge is based on approximations. Strictness about their beliefs has created numerous errors that are then perpetuated by others. Storck, *Journey to the Ice Age*, 319. See also his text’s epilogue entitled “Approximations of the Past.” For the claim that Île-à-la-Crosse’s area is the most complicated of the complicated Parklands condition, see J.E. Howell, “Reconnaissance Survey of Ile a la Crosse area, Saskatchewan,” (senior undergraduate thesis, University of Western Ontario Department of Geology, 1950), 12.

a concept helps give greater context to the absence of the village's intriguing and understudied features.



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5. Identifying a Parkland

Today, it might seem ridiculous to imagine how a study about Canada's North West could exclude the Churchill River. But until certain researchers argued for more in-depth analysis about what they called the "Parklands," such was the case. Given that trend, Île-à-la-Crosse in particular went largely ignored – even by those claiming an interest in Saskatchewan.¹⁷⁶ Although some analyses of the North West appeared

¹⁷⁵ Image 3 - Parkland space in northwestern Saskatchewan in the autumn. Photo by Karol Dabbs and courtesy the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

¹⁷⁶ Marchildon and Robinson, *Canoeing the Churchill*, 24.

at the end of the nineteenth century, undertaken by men such as J. B. Tyrrell,¹⁷⁷ years passed before others built upon these investigations to include Saskatchewan or the Churchill River in their findings.¹⁷⁸ As if to reinforce this ignorance within scholarly research, many corporate entities that regularly completed their own investigations about natural resource exploitation also chose to ignore the North West's conditions.¹⁷⁹ Such a lack of research¹⁸⁰ has led modern commentators to argue that the absence of information along with popular and uninformed generalizations actually reinforced 'frontierist' attitudes about the West's relevance within the rest of Canada.¹⁸¹ It seems geographical efforts did as much to strengthen

¹⁷⁷ The annual reports from the Geological Survey of Canada, started in 1888, helped determine general trends in all parts of the country. When examining treatment in these reports of the west, however, it becomes evident that the GSC did not think it as important to get annual information about the West compared to central Canada. J. B. Tyrrell and D.B. Dowling, "Report on the Country Between Athabasca Lake and Churchill River", in *Geological Survey of Canada Annual Report* 8 (1896): 1D-120D. For another example of some interest in Île-à-la-Crosse see J. B. Tyrrell, "An Expedition through the Barren Lands of Northern Canada," 437.

¹⁷⁸ As an example of the academy's slowness to learn about the North West more fully, read the following remarks and notice its date: "To the south of it is an area of 4,000 square miles at present a complete blank on the map, while to the north of it lays a region covering 73,000 square miles, totally unexplored by White men." F. J. Alcock, "The Churchill River," *American Geological Society* 2, no. 6 (December 1916): 433. Another effort is in Murray James Frarey, "Reconnaissance Geology of Ile a la Crosse Area, Saskatchewan, Canada," (Master's Thesis, University of Michigan, 1950): 3-10. A. Inglis, *Northern Vagabond: The Life and Career of J. B. Tyrrell* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978), 2 also contains mention. Despite having received visitors for more than fifty years previous, the area's botanical qualities were not recorded until Franklin did so during his 1825-1827 travels. Soper, "History, Range, and Home Life," 354.

¹⁷⁹ Robert Jarvenpa and Hetty Jo Brumbach, *Ethno Archeological and Cultural Frontiers: Athabaskan, Algonquian, and European Adaptation in the Central Subarctic* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 208; F. J. Alcock, "The Churchill River," 433.

¹⁸⁰ For one of the more significant descriptions of the Parklands that subsequently received little attention from later writers, see Richards, *Saskatchewan*, 90 and Nevin M. Fenneman, "Physiographic Divisions of the United States," *Annals of Association of American Geographers* 18, no. 4 (December 1928): 261-353. For an earlier discussion about the debates regarding the Parklands, and how it applies to the North West, see Jim Wright, "Saskatchewan," 110. Whether ironic or typical, the article's map shows how Île-à-la-Crosse can be forgotten. The map has a dot where Île-à-la-Crosse is located, but it is the map's only dot that is not given a name. See Wright, *Saskatchewan, the History of a Province*, 130-131.

¹⁸¹ J. M. S. Careless, "Frontierism, Metropolitanism and Canadian History," *Canadian Historical Review*, 35 (1954): 1. See Kerwin Lee Klein's observations about how not noticing the complexity of the Parklands is an unsurprising extension of "Frontierist" principles in Klein, *Frontiers of Historical Imagination: Narrating the European Conquest of Native America, 1890-1990*

Creighton's Laurentien thesis as Creighton did himself. So while the concept "Parkland" has acted as a tool to identify complex regions, its very appearance also represents a challenge to many earlier researchers' fundamental premises because of how it had to be invented as a response to overly simplistic analysis.

The term is considered the label to use for areas including wetlands, and using the label also means realizing that those wetlands' boundaries themselves must be understood as inherently porous and shifting. With such a tendency within the term's physical form, "Parklandists" (my term) argue the macro-boundaries of Parklands (or sometimes called "ecotone") regions – and then its adjacent regions – change at the micro level and in overall form.¹⁸² As an effect of determining that the concept has this quality, Parklandists critique other researchers for their apparently overly-dependent mention of precise borders for any geological, geographical, or even social boundaries.¹⁸³ Just as Parklands contain creatures and conditions that shift shape repeatedly and easily, Parklandists argue academics should demonstrate the ability to shift views as well. Because scholars have failed to do so, Parklandists

(Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), 113-115. See also Peter J. Usher, "Traditional Ecological Knowledge In Environmental Assessment and Management," *Arctic* 53, no. 2 (June 2000): 183-193 and Deborah McGregor, "Coming Full Circle: Indigenous Knowledge, Environment and our Future," *American Indian Quarterly* 28, nos. 3 and 4, (Summer/Fall 2004): 385-410.

¹⁸² Compare this view to the one presented in a map found in Richards, *Saskatchewan*, 9.

¹⁸³ A more recent presentation claims to interpret Saskatchewan as having a certain "dividing line" between southern and northern parts of the province. I feel uncomfortable noticing such a line in can appreciate the hope that such a line is aimed at highlighting- that something between the Shield and Plains surely must exist. See Massie, *Forest Prairie Edge*, 10.

often conclude those not appreciating the Parklands have unfortunately created untrustworthy presentations about many geographical subjects.¹⁸⁴

When searching for how the province of Saskatchewan correlates to “Parklands,” the term’s application makes the commonly used Great Plains/Canadian Shield paradigm beyond inadequate. More than half the province becomes Parklands and Saskatchewan is no longer a place considered only full of wheat fields in the south and coniferous trees in the north.¹⁸⁵ When a Parklandist perspective is applied to Île-à-la-Crosse in particular, the village becomes in the heart of a large Parklands swath. As a result, the issue of having Île-à-la-Crosse in a Plains/Shield setting becomes even more problematic- especially when the use of that technique has placed the village in both categories.¹⁸⁶ As an idea, “Parklands” provides a more refined understanding of Saskatchewan and the village. But at the same time,

¹⁸⁴ Carter, *Sea of Destiny* (New York, Greenberg, 1940), 19; Howell, “Reconnaissance Survey of Ile a la Crosse area, Saskatchewan,” 10.

¹⁸⁵ David Carpenter’s *Courting Saskatchewan* (Vancouver: Greystone Books, 1996), 79 promotes the value of studying the Parklands. In comparison, note J. Lewis Robinson’s contention that noticing “forested interior plains” is sufficient. Robinson, *Concepts and Themes in the Regional Geography of Canada* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1990), 190. As Clifford Knight provides great details about the Parklands, and his work appeared in 1965, it is important to critique modern studies for not mentioning Parklands data. Clifford B. Knight, *Basic Concepts of Ecology* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965), 337-347. Some observers have provided remarks about how binaries of any kind, including the issue of only two geographical regions, impair our analysis when searching for the holistic/organic nature of social and cultural relations. See Rita Dhamoon, *Identity/Difference Politics: How Difference is Produced and Why It Matters* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), 30.

¹⁸⁶ For even newer examples that do not introduce relevant data about the location of Parklands see Robert Bones’ *The Geography of the Canadian North* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992) and Figure 6-1 in R. Cole Harris’ *Reluctant Land: Society, Space and Environments in Canada Before Confederation* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009). In Harris’ map, Île-À-la-Crosse appears to be located in the Great Plains. See also J.M.S. Careless, *Canada: A Story of Challenge* (Toronto: Stoddart, 1991), 6-7. J. Howard Richards, *Saskatchewan, a geographical appraisal* (Saskatoon: Division of Extension and Community Relations, University of Saskatchewan, 1981) also has a general map with Île-À-la-Crosse in the Great Plains. In comparison, Frarey considers Île-À-la-Crosse part of the Canadian Shield. Frarey, “Reconnaissance Geology,” 12. See also Ted Regehr, *Remembering Saskatchewan*, for a more recent study still using the Shield/Plains paradigm.

Parklands discourse illustrates how yet another subfield reinforced Île-à-la-Crosse's absence or inaccurate place in scholarship over the past century.

6. Shifting to Situations

In summary, several themes have emerged within this Part. First, regarding Île-à-la-Crosse's features, the community's space has a high quantity of determinative physical characteristics, a high rate of interaction amongst those characteristics, and a set of other components that has developed out of that interaction. The subsequently complex evolution has illustrated a multi-sided balance that is considered uncommon and even sometimes nonexistent elsewhere.

Second, the community's landscape has been largely ignored by the disciplines that focus on studying geological, geographical and biological data. As a result, scholars have made generalizations about the North West that often contained errors, and that misinformation was then frequently reinforced when other subfields took the data as accurate. Particularly due to the theories reinforced by those who decided to mention the "Great Plains" and "Canadian Shield", Île-à-la-Crosse's form became either excluded or mislabeled. This binary understanding of Saskatchewan has characterized writings for many years and, unfortunately, still impacts current analysis about the West.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁷ Jennifer Brown concludes that physical history about western Canada is still tragically "limited and spotty." Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 18. Notably, a number of scholars regularly made this point but few researchers decided to address it. See J. Dewey Soper's concern in "History,

Finally, the development and use of the term “Parklands” has improved understandings and then writings about the West, Saskatchewan, and Île-à-la-Crosse. With its application, the village becomes a great example of the concept as the community’s space shifts on a daily, seasonal, and yearly basis.¹⁸⁸ When looking for examples of complex scapes that also illustrate deep-rooted “harmony,” the Île-à-la-Crosse community provides an example to learn about how multi-faceted conditions achieve stability despite preconceptions about their incompatibility.¹⁸⁹ In Part III, we meet the people who have inhabited these physical surroundings and have determined how to interact with that stability.¹⁹⁰

PART III

THE SITUATIONS

Range, and Home Life,” 354, and Tyrrell’s remarks in “An Expedition through the Barren Lands of Northern Canada,” 437.

¹⁸⁸ Richards, *Saskatchewan*, 95 for how the topic of Parklands is “just touched upon”.

¹⁸⁹ For a full description of this “harmony’s” appearance around the Churchill River, see August J. Breitung, “Canadian Floral Emblems,” *Canadian Nature* 16, no. 2 (March – April 1954): 42-47 and C. S. Brown, “A Geographic Survey and Analysis of the Buffalo Region of Northern Saskatchewan,” 5. See also Karpan and Karpan, *Northern Sandscapes*, 105. Compare my view about harmony to John Warnock, who writes: “from the beginning, Saskatchewan was born of discontent,” Warnock, *Saskatchewan*, 95. Warnock’s view of what “beginning” means can be challenged by works such as Willow Barton, “The Gift the Loon Gave,” *Saskatchewan Sage* 4, no.3 (December 13 1999): 14.

¹⁹⁰ Richards provides blunt descriptions of how the process of a mixture of geographical content at Île-À-la-Crosse’s is also evident in the mixed cultural existences at the time of European contact. Richards, *Saskatchewan*, 9 (Figure 1.4).



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¹⁹¹ Images 4 & 5 - Opposing aerial views of Île-À-la-Crosse's main road, June 2001. Photos courtesy of Brenda Macdougall.

III. 1. Introduction: Building Upon “Site”

[W]here natural lines are so imprecise and the ranges of
so many species of wildlife so extensively *overlapped*...
[i]t is not surprising, then, that human occupation
of this region is similarly complex.¹⁹²

The above quotation, by author and anthropologist Hugh Brody, appears in Brody's positively received book *Maps and Dreams*. As reviewers have noted, Brody's effort to compare natural conditions to human actions had (and has) immense appeal to those interested in environmentalism and multiculturalism.¹⁹³ As already mentioned, the very idea that a landscape influenced human activities has not received enough scholarly attention, so Brody definitely hit an important nerve. Too often, scholarship has focused on how people achieved their goals of overcoming adversity over the land's supposedly harsh – even unjust – elements. In *Maps and Dreams*, Brody issued a loud and important call to remember the correlation between landscape and human activities. Moreover, he called on all of us to stop putting our own aspirations above the land's capacity to provide what we need to survive.

¹⁹² Hugh Brody, *Maps and Dreams: Indians and the British Columbia Frontier* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1981), 20. Italics are mine.

¹⁹³ For some examples of responses to Brody's work, see Joan Ryan, “Aboriginal Peoples in Canada - a review of *Making Canadian Indian Policy: The Hidden Agenda 1968-1970* by Sally M. Weaver *Home and Native Land: Aboriginal Rights and the Canadian Constitution* by Michael Asch, *Pathways to Self-Determination: Canadian Indians and the Canadian State* edited by Leroy Little Bear, Menno Boldt and J. Anthony Long, *The Quest for Justice: Aboriginal Peoples and Aboriginal Rights*, edited by Menno Boldt and J. Anthony Long, *Without Surrender without Consent: A History of the Nishga Land Claims* by Daniel Raunet, *Maps and Dreams* by Hugh Brody, *Village Journey* by Thomas R. Berger and “Civilizing the West: The Galts and the Development of Western Canada” by A. A. den Otter, *American Indian Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (Autumn, 1987): 315-323; T. R. Berger, “Review of *Maps and Dreams* by Hugh Brody,” *B.C. Studies*, no. 54 (Summer 1982): 115-17.

The theory in Brody's book deserves attention. Yet it is important to wonder whether a study about British Columbia, and the location he used to illustrate the overlapping conditions of people and place, should be the most significant example we have to remember the progressive equation Brody wants us to recall. As a jurisdiction, and as a topic of both scholarly and anecdotal conversations, British Columbia is not unknown to residents of Canada and people beyond Canada's borders. West of the Canadian Rockies should not be ignored, yet whether Brody's effort should be considered an example of what overlaps can mean everywhere is a question worth asking. If Brody wished to contribute to knowledge about British Columbia, *Maps and Dreams* did so. But as the years described in this Part illustrate, the situations in Île-à-la-Crosse have the ability to reveal relationships in a form so complex that they are a remarkable example of what the phrase "extensively overlapped" can mean.

In this Part, the *human* study of Île-à-la-Crosse's space is presented. This Part illustrates the nature and scope of overlapping circumstances in ways that act as both a response and a challenge to Brody's proposition. This Part is chronological, and it was constructed after an examination of all documents that mentioned Île-à-la-Crosse dated to approximately 1906. During these years, certain individuals regularly recorded events or were apparently more prone to retain a memory about community evolution and are mentioned more frequently than others. As a result, some individuals' names are cited more times than other people. When introducing

the circumstances these documents mention, historic guideposts important to the village help categorize those details. Sometimes, these years correlate with dates already worked into previous understandings about Canada's past. But just as frequently, these dates help illustrate Île-à-la-Crosse's own inner components that complement or challenge trends originating elsewhere.

Section 2 of this Part is devoted to the years between the community's earliest known times to the point when many parties began to label Île-à-la-Crosse as an actual "village." Just as pre-human times illustrated examples of co-existence, peoples' attitudes and efforts during this era reveal a concern with encouraging and then protecting complicated but productive interaction. From its earliest days, the human community illustrated how the pursuits of group cooperation and individual aspirations acted in tandem. Europeans learned about this balance and its effects, and it is those effects that inspired the original white traders to arrive in Île-à-la-Crosse in the first place.

Sections 3 through 5 of this Part introduce the years where community insiders and visiting outsiders met, each determining various means to survive on their own, but also improving those circumstances by encouraging a high rate of interaction. Sometimes labeled as the "post-contact" years, Île-à-la-Crosse's times after Europeans arrived illustrate how a cut-and-dried understanding of events erases continuity. The place was famous for its fluid socializing. That quality brought more people who happened to be what we would call "newcomers" today using typical

historical concepts, and these newcomers participated in the community's strong historic mechanisms for trade and peaceful times. As does any place, Île-à-la-Crosse demonstrates shifts in form and function over time. But while those shifts become apparent, so too do the consistent traits and the overall stability that helps the village's residents survive both helpful and less positive changes.

Tawnshi wiwawow? Miyoiyawuk.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ Michif for "How were those people there? They turned out pretty good."

III. 2. The Peoples' Space to 1776

III. 2. a. The Creator Creates, the Trickster Teaches, and the People Inhabit

Long ago the Creator looked out over the perfect world he had made, at the oceans, mountains, plains, deserts, lakes and rivers and he was pleased. He looked upon the plants and trees and was happy at what he saw. Still he felt there was something missing. There was no movement, nothing to enjoy the beauty he had created. So he created the animals, birds, Nihiyawpers, and fish. He made them in all sizes, forms, colors and shapes.

Many moons passed and one day the animals, birds, Nihiyawpers, and fish called out to their Creator: "We thank you for all that you have given us, for all the beauty that surrounds us; however, everything is so plentiful that we have nothing to do but wander here and there, with no purpose to our lives."

The Creator gave great thought to their request. After a while he showed himself again to his creations. He told them he would give them a weaker creature to take care of, to look after and teach. This creature would not be so perfect as his other creations. It would come upon Mother Earth weak, small, and knowing nothing. So the Creator made man and woman and all his other creations were happy. Now they truly had a purpose in life: to care for these helpless humans; to teach them how to find food and shelter, and to show them the healing herbs.

The humans under the care of all, multiplied and grew to be many. Still the animals, birds, Nihiyawpers, and fish took care of them. As the humans became stronger, they demanded more and more from their brothers. Finally there came a day when a human man demanded more food than he needed, and the animal would not grant him his request. The man, in great anger, picked up a rock and killed the animal. From the dead animal the man discovered that he could use the meat to feed himself and the skin to cover his body. The bones, claws, and teeth would be his trophies to show the other humans that now he was as smart as the animals.

When he showed these things to the other humans, in their greed to have all that he had, they started killing all of their animal brothers around them.

The Creator watched them all: humans, animals, birds, Nihiyawpers, and fish. The Creator told them (the non-humans) that he had decided to take them all to his spirit home and leave the humans to rule over Mother Earth for a period of time; until they recognized the error of their ways.

*The animals, knowing that the humans could not survive without them, begged the Creator to take pity on their human brothers and sisters. Because the animals showed compassion and pity for ones weaker and less wise than themselves, the Creator listened to their pleas....*¹⁹⁵

The above story originates from a family with heritage from present-day northern Saskatchewan. As with most Creation stories, the tale details many subjects including religious beliefs, geography, survival techniques, and even economic activities.¹⁹⁶ But besides these topics, it contains a method that we should also notice. Indigenous stories are often constructed so listeners are reminded about the positive interaction humans must have with each other, with non-human creatures, and with their physical surroundings.¹⁹⁷ Whether explained by the wind, an animal, or the Creator her/himself, the stories regularly contain the theme that survival occurs because of how different relations emerge rather than how singular bravery

¹⁹⁵ From Muskeke Iskew, "Grandmother's Creation Story," *Indians.org, Indigenous People's Literature Index*, accessed July 12, 2015. <http://www.indians.org/welker/whitwolf.htm>

¹⁹⁶ For analysis by a non-Aboriginal about these Indigenous themes, see M. Rossignol, "The Religion of the Saskatchewan and Western Manitoba Cree," *Primitive Man* 11, no. 3/4 (July-October 1939): 67-71.

¹⁹⁷ For another example see John M. Cooper, "The Northern Algonquian Supreme Being," *Primitive Man* 6, no. 3/4 (July-October 1933): 41-111.

or individual “smarts” saved the day.¹⁹⁸ Techniques are used to ensure this theme is never missing from a tale.

Traditional stories also sometimes introduce another character to help illustrate the tales’ themes. Frequently referred to as the “trickster,” s/he acts like a human in many ways, but can also shift into the role of a messenger for the Creator. When a story about a trickster pertains to the area now part of northwestern Saskatchewan, the trickster’s name is typically “Wisakechak”:

A long time ago, there was no moon. There was only the sun. The Creator had messengers who helped him in his work. One of these was the Caretaker of the Sun. He had two children, a boy and a girl. All three lived in the Sky World. They were very happy.

The daughter looked after the camp. She kept it clean and tidy. When she shook the feather bedding, the feathers would fall to the earth as snow. The son hunted and fished. When he hung his nets to dry, droplets fell to earth as rain. The father would be away. All day he kept the great fire burning on the sun. He was very old. Soon he would leave his children, never to return. He said to them, "When I die, you must keep the fire burning, or else the people and animals on earth will die."

One day when the fire was low on the sun, the father came home tired. He said, "Children, my children, my children. I have to go. I

¹⁹⁸ For an example of a story with one particular animal, read the following: “Earth’s creation began when Muskrat retrieved a speck of dirt from the primordial sea. Muskrat drew a cross on the water’s surface, and the cross provided the starting point for a set of paths carved in the land. Swan transformed creatures from beyond the sky into earthly forms, and each took up residence along particular pathways. For humans, dependent upon other species for their subsistence, knowledge of the trails that led to animals was essential to survival. This knowledge came from following the necessary rituals intended by the Great Spirit and the spirits of the animals.” See Robin Ridington, “Technology, World View and Adaptive Strategy in a Northern Hunting Society,” *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue canadienne de sociologie* 19, no. 4 (1982): 474-75. Whether such a story compiled by a non-Indigenous person follows traditional Indigenous protocols is subject to debate. For myself, I was taught (most) stories are told in the winter and I do not have permission to write them down. Justice Murray Sinclair, “The Inagural Wunusweh Lecture in Aboriginal Law,” (lecture, College of Law, University of Saskatchewan, October 1, 2012, on file with author).

will never return." The children cried and mourned. They knew he would die.

In the morning, it was time to start the sun's fire. The children began to quarrel over who would do the task. "I will tend the fire, I am older," said the sister. "No, I am the man, I will do it," said the brother. They yelled thus to each other.

The people on earth began to worry, saying, "Why is the sun so late? It should be up by now!" Wisakechak went to the sun to see what was the matter. When he arrived, the boy and his sister were still quarrelling. Wisakechak was angry. "The People and animals will perish," he said to them. "It is up to you! You keep the fire burning," he told the boy. "Your name from now on will be Pisim." To the sister he said, "You, too, will work as hard as your brother. You will keep the fire in another place. You will work at night. You will be Tipiskawipisim, the Moon. The two of you did not get along. As a punishment, you will see each other once a year. For all time, you will see each other from across the sky."

And so it happened. Even now it is so.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁹ Revised version of Eleanor Brass's *The Origin of the Moon*, Presented in "Storytelling: The Art of Knowledge," temporary exhibit (Gatineau, QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization (now Canadian Museum of History) 1997). This story was used by the Canadian Museum of Civilization (now the Canadian Museum of History) as a source to illustrate trickster stories from the Canadian prairies. I was taught to pronounce the Cree word for "trickster" as 'why-sack-ee-chack'. The word has different spellings.



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Trickster stories do not represent the only way to explain physical conditions, nor do Indigenous leaders always introduce the trickster to illustrate morals. But as scholars who study trickster storytelling contend, the combination in trickster stories of geography, human norms, and especially humour can rarely be found in non-Indigenous storytelling.²⁰¹ In that way, the stories remain a feature that distinguishes Indigenous cultures from newcomers' ethnicities. Even more distinctively, many Indigenous scholars believe modern times compel storytellers to strategize more than non-Indigenous storytellers about what stories they tell and when they tell them. John Borrows explains how the struggle to reinforce cultural heritage while also being sensitive to communities' circumstances means

²⁰⁰ Image 6 – A scene in the “Summer/Autumn” section of *Stories from the Seventh Fire* directed by Greg Coyes and co-written by Gerri Cook and G. Coyes, Green Planet Films (2002). Notice Wisakechak has both human and non-human qualities, including the ability to speak with non-human animals.

²⁰¹ For details about how trickster stories are especially helpful to articulate a community's qualities if that community is considered a form of “inbetweenness,” see Arnold E. Davidson, Priscilla L. Walton and Jennifer Andrews, *Border Crossings*, 176. Regarding the issue of humour see Neal McLeod, “Nêhiyâwiwin and Modernity,” in *Plain Speaking: Essays on Aboriginal Peoples and the Prairie*.

Indigenous storytellers put significant thought into how they present information as much as they think about what to present. It is this perception about the need for a flexibility in method – even to be sometimes uplifting or entertaining while introducing dire accounts – that makes Indigenous scholars such as Borrows care about and demonstrate a certain *sui generis* (the legal term used to mean “unique”) understanding about the role of Indigenous fables.²⁰²

When learning about stories from the Île-à-la-Crosse region, another point becomes evident: tales from both Dene and Nihiyaw peoples tell stories about the village’s space.²⁰³ Regarding the Dene, this nation’s families are located across an area running from western Alberta to Manitoba, up into Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut, and down as far south as the Churchill River. In comparison, Nihiyaw families claim their culture can be linked to a large part of modern-day Canada, going from the eastern border of Alberta all the way to Labrador and up to where the Churchill River flows. With such a great expanse, the Nihiyaw nation has at least eight dialects. In the West, and around the village in particular, Nihiyaw have their

²⁰² John Borrows, “Frozen Rights in Canada: Constitutional Interpretation and the Trickster,” *American Indian Law Review* 22, no. 1 (1997-1998): 37-64; John Borrows, “Reliving the Present: Title, Treaties and the Trickster in British Columbia,” Supplemental Nisga’a Treaty Issue, *B.C. Studies* 120 (1998/1999): 98-108; John Borrows, “The Trickster: Integral to a Distinctive Culture,” *Constitutional Forum* 8, no. 2 (Winter 1997): 27-32. Gerald Vizenor, in fact, contends “the trickster is a comic liberator in a narrative and the sign with the most resistance to social science monologues.” See Gerald Vizenor, “Trickster Discourse: Comic Holotropes and Language Games,” in *Narrative Chance: Postmodern Discourse on Native American Indian Literatures*, ed. Gerald Vizenor (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1989), 196. He also explains the trickster “is the original translator of tribal encounters; the name is an intimation of transformation....” Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Post Indian Warriors of Survivance* (London: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 15. For another explanation, see Margery Fee and Jane Flick, “Coyote Pedagogy: Knowing Where the Borders Are in Thomas King’s ‘Green Grass, Running Water,’” *Canadian Literature* 161/162 (Summer 1999): 132. See also generally Lewis Hyde, *Trickster Makes This World: Mischief, Myth, and Art* (New York: North Point, 1998).

²⁰³ Hetty Jo Brumbach and Robert Jarvenpa, “Ethnoarchaeology of Subsistence Space and Gender: A Subarctic Dene Case,” *American Antiquity* 62, no.3 (July 1997): 427.

own distinctive language and have often been referred to as the “Bush Cree” or “Woodlands Cree.” Less the followers of the buffalo than their southern distant relatives, these Nihyaw resided (and still reside) across a region of Parklands and the Canadian Shield that runs from the Rockies to Hudson Bay. Both the Dene and Nihyaw nations have their own exclusive regions, but each culture has had members who have known Île-à-la-Crosse’s area. As will be explained later, this bicultural view of the village has its own implications. But first, it is helpful to know what makes each nation its own separate cultural entity.

Amongst the Dene, stories often include references to the caribou. As a gift from the Creator, the caribou helped families acquire clothing, meals, and shelter. As well, the animals helped family members make predictions about a region’s annual climatic and meteorological conditions.²⁰⁴ Technological advances, food consumption, travelling patterns, religious practices, and gender divisions pertaining to labour all appear when learning how individuals and families used the knowledge and products from this large animal.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴ Eric Ross, *Beyond the River and the Bay: Some Observations on the State of the Canadian Northwest in 1811 with a View to Providing the Intending Settler with an Intimate Knowledge of that Country* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 116.

²⁰⁵ See generally Veronica Cranston-Smith, “Chipewyan Hunting: Scientific Research and State Conservation of the Barren-Ground Caribou, 1940-1970,” (master’s thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1995) and Signa A. Daum Shanks, “Who’s the Best Aboriginal? An ‘Overlap’ and Canadian Constitutionalism,” in *The “Place” of Justice*, ed. Law Commission of Canada (Halifax, NS: Fernwood, 2006), 148-76.

Besides regularly describing the activities of caribou, stories also often focus on the technique of adaptability.²⁰⁶ Regardless of sudden weather changes, different migratory patterns of caribou herds, and even changes to the physical terrain, people in the stories show how the Dene regularly modified their own patterns without much (if any) notice.²⁰⁷ Many scholars argue that the Dene people have demonstrated the most adaptability of any Indigenous culture located in the part of North America now known as Canada.²⁰⁸ In the tales' repeated theme of explaining this strong capacity to change, adaptability is often considered the most evident amongst the more southerly Dene families located close to the Churchill River.²⁰⁹

In comparison to Dene tales, stories from northern Nihiyaw include information about living in the bush, cohabitating with a number of animals, and having a less expansive migratory pattern than the Dene or southern Nihiyaw.²¹⁰ Just as Dene stories describe understandings of Dene sovereignty in various parts of Canada, Nihiyaw Creation and trickster stories also detail perspectives about cultural

²⁰⁶ Henry Sharp, "Introducing the Sororate to a Northern Saskatchewan Chipewyan Village," *Ethnology* 14, no. 1 (January 1975): 81.

²⁰⁷ Brumbach and Jarvenpa detail how Dene have moose hunts, done by both men and women at the northern tip of Lake Île-à-la-Crosse in their "Ethnoarchaeology of Subsistence Space and Gender," 427.

²⁰⁸ Alan D. McMillan and Eldon Yellowhorn, *First Peoples in Canada*, 244. For longer projects that have a general theme of Dene capability see the works of Abel, *Drum Songs: Glimpses of Dene History*; Patricia Alice McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan and the Shaping of Canadian History, 1788-1920s: "We Like to Be Free in This Country"* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010); Lynda Holland and Mary Ann Kkailther, *The Dene Elders Project They Will Have Our Words*, vol. 2 (La Ronge, SK: Holland-Dalby Educational Consulting, 2003). Brumbach and Jarvenpa, "Ethnoarchaeology of Subsistence Space and Gender," 427 conclude Dene interaction was based on a very high acceptance of the need for flexibility and changes in leadership. Changes could even occur in gender roles in important activities such as the moose hunt.

²⁰⁹ Robin Karpan and Arlene Karpan, *Northern Sandscapes*, 72; Cranston-Smith, *Chipewyan Hunting*, 50-57.

²¹⁰ M. Rossignol, "Property Concepts among the Cree of the Rocks," *Primitive Man* 12, no. 3 (July 1939): 63; Alan Morantz, *Where is Here? Canada's Maps and the Stories They Tell* (Toronto: Penguin, 2002), 29.

dominance and legal mechanisms in one area.²¹¹ Regarding regions and animals, northern Nihiyaw stories mention other creatures besides the caribou (such as the moose and buffalo), and they describe land space similar to southern Parklands and northern Plains rather than the Denes' Canadian Shield and Arctic references.²¹²

Given their adjacent territories, and since each nation also understood itself to have sovereignty over their respective territories, tales also sometimes revealed the dynamic of each nation knowing about the other's dominance in a particular area. Notably, one particular story about concepts pertaining to sovereignty is well known and told by both cultures within their respective family circles.²¹³ Long ago, a Dene woman named Thanadelthur roamed into Nihiyaw territory. After Nihiyaw hunters captured her, these men concluded she knew full well that she needed permission to enter Nihiyaw territory.²¹⁴ Because Thanadelthur's entry into

²¹¹ Even Samuel Hearne was willing to notice this possibility. See Samuel Hearne, *A Journey from Prince of Whale's Fort in Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean in the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, and 1772* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1911), 289; René Fumoleau, *As Long as This Land Shall Last: A History of Treaty 8 and Treaty 11, 1870-1939* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975), 151. For a description of marriage laws enforced by Cree when they were located at Île-à-la-Crosse, see M. Rossignol, "Cross-Cousin Marriage among the Saskatchewan Cree," *Primitive Man* 11, no. 1/2 (January-April 1938): 26-28. See also the explanation of how Indigenous property rights preceded North American state rights in Vernon L. Smith, "Economy, Ecology, and Institutions in the Emergence of Humankind," in *The Other Side of the Frontier: Economic Explorations into Native American History*, ed. Linda Barrington (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1999), 70.

²¹² Rossignol, "Property Concepts among the Cree of the Rocks," 62 where Rossignol writes "and they are sole masters of the Snake Lake country as far as Île à la Crosse." See also the explanation of Cree languages not describing boundary issues of Île-à-la-Crosse, in T. Michelson, "A Report on a Linguistic Expedition to James and Hudson's Bays," *American Anthropologist New Series* 38, no. 4 (October – December 1936): 686.

²¹³ Victor P. Lytwyn, *Muskegowuck Athinuwik: Original People of the Great Swampy Land* (Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press, 2002), 71. A Dene example includes Holland and Kkailther, *The Dene Elders Project*. See also R-5940- R-5942, Accession no. R81-216 (May 31 1980) Joe Bag, Chipewyan and Metis People of La Loche Oral History Project, SAB.

²¹⁴ Regions just south of the Churchill River were aggressively defended by the Cree. See Ila Bussidor and Ustun Bigen-Reinhardt, *Night Spirits: The Relocation of the Dene* (Winnipeg, MB:

Nihiyaw land was not accidental, the hunters decided to confine her and then contacted her family about the confinement. For her to be released, the captors told her family it had to compensate the Nihiyaw for both her unlawful entry and the cost of detaining her after the entry occurred.²¹⁵ Not only did this story help Dene and Nihiyaw peoples to understand their respective territorial limits, but both Dene and Nihiyaw people told this tale to non-Indigenous explorers when they arrived in the North West. The story allowed outsiders to learn more about each culture. Moreover, the tale also ensured those same outsiders realized that inter-Indigenous relations reinforced the rule of law.²¹⁶

University of Manitoba Press, 2002), 12. A peace arrangement devised by Matonabee permitted Dene to hunt south of Churchill. Mackenzie, *Voyages from Montreal, on the River St. Lawrence, through the Continent of North America, to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans; In the Years 1789 and 1793: With a Preliminary Account of the Rise, Progress and Present State of the Fur-Trade of that Country* (London: T. Cadell, 1801), lxxxi.

²¹⁵ When describing these norms, Rossignol writes: "They could not give away their territory to non-members of the tribe, without becoming traitors to their blood. This simply could not be done. It would have meant war.... Force decided in cases of dispute, and punished wrongs. There was no tribunal of justice, but the chief or leader of the group with his principal associates would talk over and discuss the case and would express their view in the matter. This expression of view was equivalent to a verdict and had the force of law." Rossignol, "Property Concepts among the Cree of the Rocks," 65. Fumoleau also describes laws about gaming and over trapping in *As Long as This Land Shall Last*, 122.

²¹⁶ Viscount William Fitzwilliam Milton and Walter Butler Cheadle, *The North-West Passage by Land: Being the Narrative of an Expedition from the Atlantic to the Pacific, Undertaken with the View of Exploring a Route Across the Continent to British Columbia through British Territory, by One of the Northern Passes in the Rocky Mountains* (Toronto: Prospero Books, 2011; first published 1865, London: Peter Cassell and Galpin), 140-41, 318, 319. Citations refer to the 2011 edition. Arthur J. Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, 91; Rossignol, "Property Concepts among the Cree of the Rocks," 62. See Arthur S. Morton's details of the Cree and Dene as "mortal enemies" when contesting issues of territoriality in Arthur S. Morton, *A History of the Canadian West*, 7.



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The two cultures' history of exclusivity and sovereignty helps illustrate how specific land use policies and regulatory schemes existed prior to newcomers' arrival in the West. But these histories also give context for Île-à-la-Crosse's form due to the fact that the location does not get included in either nation's self-understanding about its respective sovereignty, either. On the cusp of each nation's controlled regions, the village's location served many specific functions: it gave reprieve from harsh

²¹⁷ Image 7 - This interpretation of Thanadelthur is entitled "Ambassadress of Peace" and painted by Franklin Arbuckle in 1952. The Hudson's Bay Company commissioned Arbuckle to complete this painting for the HBC's 1953 annual calendar. Image use courtesy of Manitoba Archives.

weather elsewhere, provided amenities for daily and longer term survival, and had some of the most beautiful surroundings a traveler could hope to see in one place.²¹⁸ Land south of the Churchill River was generally known as Nihiyaw and north of the waterway as Dene-dominated.²¹⁹ But members of each culture also knew they could function within Île-à-la-Crosse without fearing a challenge from the other nation. Evidence suggests the two nations allowed for “occup[ying] the same territory at different seasons” due to what each hunted and trapped.²²⁰ This allowance of sharing a space meant the two groups were not always in the same space at the same time, but neither culture challenged the other’s use.²²¹

²¹⁸ John Montgomery Cooper, “Catholics and Scientific Research,” *Primitive Man* 2, no. 1/2 (January-April 1929): 19-20; Penard, “Land Ownership and Chieftancy among the Chippewayan and Caribou-Eaters,” *Primitive Man* 2, no. 1/2 (January – April 1929): 20.

²¹⁹ HBC officials believed this understanding of the Churchill River. See Sir William Schooling, *The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson’s Bay during Two Hundred and Fifty Years, 1670-1920* (London: Hudson’s Bay, 1920), 40. See also Frederick J. Alcock, “The Churchill River,” *Geographical Review* 2, no. 6 (December 1916): 446, “The Indians belong to two separate tribes, the Crees and the Chipewyans, and in a general way the Churchill River forms a boundary between their territories, the Crees living to the south and the Chipewyans to the north. All those who come to trade at Split Lake are Crees, those that come to Fort Churchill are all Chipewyans.” Rossignol, “Property Concepts among the Cree of the Rocks,” 61-70. On page 63 he writes: “At the beginning of June, after the hunt, all these various groups of the same region got under way, left their winter quarters, and converged towards a single place of assemblage which had been decided upon the preceding summer. Here all the groups held a feast together, offered sacrifices, and talked over the events of the year. At the end of some weeks, the assemblage broke up, and each group, made up of pretty much the same members as during the preceding winter, though sometimes with a family more or less, took the trail towards its winter encampment. Since the whole territory, thus divided up amicably among the various groups, was very extensive relatively to the total population of the band, each group had in its possession a vast extent of wooded territory.” See Milton and Cheadle, *The North-West Passage by Land*, 339. A specific explanation about the Churchill River appears in Bussidor and Bilgen-Reinhart, *Night Spirits*, 12. See also McMillan and Yellowhorn, *First Peoples in Canada*, 131. Michael Bliss accepts this premise as well, in *Northern Enterprise*, 34.

²²⁰ Joseph F. Dion, *My Tribe, The Crees*, 72.

²²¹ Philip M. Wagner, *Looking North in Canada* (Baltimore, MD: Sun, 1953), 8 where he explains the area acted as “[t]rapping ground for the Cree and Chipewyan”.

But besides the matter of mutually approved separate use, archaeological data reveal how the Dene and Nihyaw traded with each other at Île-à-la-Crosse.²²² With the area's natural conditions,²²³ and the established understanding that the area was not subject to one culture's unilateral control,²²⁴ peoples from both nations clearly had the opportunity to trade easily and frequently.²²⁵ In commenting about their history of trade, Robert Jarvenpa wrote that the Dene and Nihyaw around Île-à-la-Crosse "can be considered as cultural populations engaged in competitive and co-operative relations within a regional ecosystem, and it is appropriate to begin by analyzing those transactions that involve some degree of mutual benefit."²²⁶ The mutual benefit triggered the development of an "intertribal trade network that

²²² See Todd Paquin, "The Kisis Complex: Implications of Historic Marriage Practices for Selkirk Ware in Northwestern Saskatchewan," *Canadian Journal of Archaeology/Journal d'Archéologie* 22, no. 2 (1999): 99-114. Jarvenpa, *The Trappers of Patuanak*. On pages 35-36 and 45, Jarvenpa describes the Cree pottery found where Dene visited and how, as a result, trade between the two nations occurred there. In fact, explorers noticed how Dene and Nihyaw cooperated more than other cultures that intermingled. See generally John C. Ewers, "Intertribal Warfare as the Precursor of Indian-White Warfare on the Northern Great Plains," *Western Historical Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (October 1975): 397-410. On page 400 Ewers cites La Vérendrye as his source: Pierre La Vérendrye, *Journals and Letters of Pierre Gaultier de Varennes de la Vérendrye and His Sons: With Correspondence between the Governors of Canada and the French Court, Touching the Search for the Western Sea*, ed. Lawrence J. Burpee (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1927).

²²³ Arthur J. Ray, "Diffusion of Diseases in the Western Interior of Canada, 1830-1850," *Geographical Review* 66, no. 2 (1976): 141.

²²⁴ Bliss, *Northern Enterprise*, 34, concludes that inter-Indigenous trade between Cree and northern nations can be confirmed as existing 1400 A.D. and even earlier. See also James G. E. Smith, "The Western Woods Cree: Anthropological Myth and Historical Reality," *American Ethnologist* 14, no. 3 (August 1987): 445.

²²⁵ Although a 'Post-contact' source, Eric Ross, *Beyond the River and the Bay*, 115 cites Sir Alexander Mackenzie, *Voyages from Montreal*, lxxxi to support his point that the intercultural interaction happened at Île-à-la-Crosse during pre-contact times. See also Martha McCarthy, *From the Great River to the Ends of the Earth: Oblate Missions to the Dene* (Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta Press, 1995), 14.

²²⁶ Robert Jarvenpa, "Intergroup Behaviour and Imagery: The Case of Chipewyan and Cree," *Ethnology* 21, no. 4 (October 1982): 290. Jarvenpa goes so far as to argue few negative forms of interaction existed, and that organized labour and medicinal co-operation regularly instilled a sense of support for the cultures' overlapping tendencies.

crisscrossed the northern interior.”²²⁷ Located in what Meyer and Friesen call the core of (current) Saskatchewan’s “transitional forest,”²²⁸ the regular cultural “overlap become[s] even more likely.”²²⁹ Indeed, the overlap that occurred and inspired trade can be confirmed to have started as early as 700 C.E.²³⁰ The Churchill River can be understood as a type of boundary for nations’ greater form. But the village’s space acted as a place of fluid and cooperative interaction.²³¹ By learning the Indigenous names for the Île-à-la-Crosse area – “Sakitawak” in Nihyaw and “Kwoen” in Dene- this social overlapping and development of economic ties is even easier to imagine.²³² Since “time immemorial,” Île-à-la-Crosse has had calm water,

²²⁷ Susan Giannettino, “The Middleman Role in the Fur Trade: Its Influence on Interethnic Relations in the Saskatchewan-Missouri Plains,” *The Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology* 7, no. 4 (1977): 22-33. For more descriptions about inter-nation interaction see Waiser, *Saskatchewan: A New History*, 22-24; Harold Cardinal and Walter Hildebrandt, *Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan: Our Dream Is That Our Peoples Will One Day Be Clearly Recognized as Nations* (Calgary, AB: University of Calgary Press, 2000); Smith, “The Western Woods Cree: Anthropological Myth and Historical Reality,” 438.

²²⁸ David Meyer’s chapter entitled “People before Kelsey: An Overview of Cultural Developments,” in *Three Hundred Prairie Years: Henry Kelsey’s “Inland Country of Good Report,”* 70.

²²⁹ Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 14.

²³⁰ James Smith describes how Cree-Dene marriages epitomize how arrangements could be made to illustrate how differences about religion, home life and land-use can ultimately be respected and trade would have occurred if all of these other functions developed. See James G. E. Smith, “The Emergence of the Micro-Urban Village among the Caribou-Eater Chipewyan,” 43; Gabriel Dumont, *Gabriel Dumont Speaks*, rev. 2nd ed., trans. Michael Barnholden (1993; Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2009), 34. More details about migration of both nations to the area appear in Ed Theriau, *Lost Land of the Caribou*, 2. Bussidor and Bigen-Reinhardt, *Night Spirits*, 14. See the description given by The Rev. A. G. Morice about the intermingling of Denes and Crees at Île-à-la-Crosse and how the “division” between cultures was mutually understood to exist just south of the village. Rev A. G. Morice, *History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada, From Lake Superior to the Pacific (1659-1895)* 2 vols. (Toronto: Musson Book, 1910), vol. 1: 197.

²³¹ Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 16; Abel, *Drum Songs*, 139; David Thompson, “The Nahathaway and Chipewyan,” in *The Middle of Nowhere: Rediscovering Saskatchewan*, ed. Dennis Gruending (Saskatoon, SK: Fifth House, 1996), 19; Tom Shardlow, *David Thompson: A Trail by Stars* (Montreal, QC: XYZ, 2006), 90.

²³² The Dene word means “a place where people stay” or “village.” The Cree word means “where the rivers meet” and, as a result, where people from different places meet. I have also learned the word “Sakitawak” is most regularly used by Métis locals as well, hence the name of this entire study. David McLennan, “Île-A-La-Crosse,” in *Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan* (Regina, SK: Canadian Plains Research Center, 476. See also Greg Marchildon and Sid Robinson, *Canoeing the Churchill*, 143. See the Village of Île-à-la-Crosse’s home page explanation: “Today,

much wildlife, and both spontaneous and planned intercultural contact.²³³ With a place offering prosperity to many, it is no small wonder that outsiders decided they should investigate Île-à-la-Crosse.²³⁴

III. 2. b. Confirming the Obvious

It did not take long for exploring Europeans visiting North America to learn about Île-à-la-Crosse's reputation for protection from the elements, peaceful interaction with locals, and access to the Churchill River allowing for easier transport of traded goods. Yet despite its reputation, Île-à-la-Crosse remained elusive to adventurers interested in making their mark in the North American fur trade. The main institution going West, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC),²³⁵ took its time to gather data about the village and to take advantage of the community's conditions.²³⁶

Why did the HBC fail to venture to a place whose qualities spoke to the very purpose of the Honourable Company's existence? Today, it seems difficult to understand the

Sakitawak...is extending an invitation to you all, to come and visit and paddle where many voyageurs paddled, to camp and enjoy the peace, scenery, and the breathtaking beauty of our northern forests, rivers, lakes, and streams." Even the village council's home page, where this quotation is from, uses the name: <http://www.sakitawak.ca>.

²³³ Peter Bakker, *A Language of Our Own: The Genesis of Michif, the Mixed Cree-French Language of the Canadian Métis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 127.

²³⁴ For more analysis about sovereignty and conflict resolution for this part of Canada, see generally Robert Jarvenpa, "Symbolism and Inter-Ethnic Relations among Hunter-Gatherers: Chipewyan Conflict Lore," *Anthropologica* New Series, 24, no. 1 (1982): 43-76.

²³⁵ See *The Royal Charter for Incorporating the Hudson's Bay Company*, 22 Char. II (1670). In 1670, Prince Rupert, a cousin of the King of England, signed this Charter granting the British Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) all the rights and privileges in all lands in the drainage basin of the Hudson Bay.

²³⁶ See generally Dale Miquelon, "Canada's Place in the French Imperial Economy: An Eighteenth-Century Overview," *French Historical Studies* 15, no. 3 (Spring 1988): 432-443; W. J. Eccles, "The Fur Trade and Eighteenth-Century Imperialism," *The William and Mary Quarterly* Third Series 40, no. 3 (1983): 341-362.

HBC's intentional decision not to contact an already existing and peaceful trading locale. But given the organization's deeply held beliefs about Indigenous peoples during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, this decision makes more historical sense. Within the HBC's highest management and among the company's lower "Honourable Servants," distrust of Indigenous peoples was the norm –even if a Servant had yet to meet a First Nations person. As the HBC attempted to build permanent trading posts in the area referred to as "Rupert's Land" (as of 1670), its workers struggled to know how to interact with the people who supposedly had both the ability to be smart enough to deceive but not intelligent enough to be interested in acting more "civilized".²³⁷

By the mid-1700s, the HBC had established its presence along the west side of Hudson Bay by building a few posts along the coast. A combination of factors – such as a basic fear of the geography and its people and an overestimation of Indigenous interest in European products ²³⁸ – meant these posts sent little profit back to the company's headquarters. Along with Honourable Servants' (the term used to label the employees) erratic commitment to inland exploration, the HBC's role as a

²³⁷ See chapter 2 of Ann M. Carlos and Frank D. Lewis, *Commerce by a Frozen Sea: Native Americans and the European Fur Trade* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010) and E. H. Oliver, ed., *The Canadian North-West. Its Early Development and Legislative Records. Minutes of the Councils of the Red River Colony and the Northern Department of Rupert's Land* (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1914), 54. While the HBC had "shareholders" akin to a private corporation, Frank Tough writes how the company's functions were equally organized to reinforce colonialism and British laws as much as they were imagined as the best ways to acquire the most profit. Frank J. Tough, "Aboriginal Rights Versus the Deed of Surrender: The Legal Rights of Native Peoples and Canada's Acquisition of the Hudson's Bay Company Territories," *Prairie Forum* 17, no. 2 (1992), 229.

²³⁸ Barbara Belyea, "The 'Columbian Enterprise' and A. S. Morton: A Historical Exemplum (North West Company a Long-Term Policy of Discovery and Economic Expansion from 1801 to 1811)," *BC Studies*, no. 86 (Summer 1990): 8,17.

indirect means for colonialism to grow was almost impossible to observe in the northwestern portion of British North America during the company's earliest years.²³⁹ But another factor impaired HBC success: the men who became known as the "coureurs des bois."²⁴⁰

As their name revealed, instead of waiting for those same trappers to arrive at a place where and when company Servants thought comfortable, these men typically went to where trappers lived. A type of "vertical" entrepreneur, each coureur typically completed many stages of a trading relationship on his own. Meeting Indigenous trappers, creating a trusting relationship, proposing a trade, completing the trade, and then transporting the acquired fur to an Eastern Canadian market often took place due to singular efforts instead of relying upon one company's administration or a number of companies each specializing in one stage of trade.²⁴¹ Uninterested in becoming "Servants," these men showed their personal courage in going on the land sooner and more noticeably than any HBC workers during the same years. They met trappers close to the trappers' residences, maybe close to the

²³⁹ Ann M. Carlos and Frank D. Lewis, "Marketing in the Land of Hudson Bay: Indian Consumers and the Hudson's Bay Company, 1670-1770," *Enterprise and Society* 3, no. 2 (June 2002): 311-314.

²⁴⁰ For the purposes here, I have avoided using the term "voyageur" because it becomes used by more than one company and eventually does not necessarily depict cultural background. As a result, some academic references to voyageurs become difficult to use when describing the different nature of the HBC compared to the men who will eventually organize together and become the Honourable Company's main competitor. For a work that does a splendid job of differentiating the various stages of what the term can mean, see generally Podruchny, *Making the Voyageur World*.

²⁴¹ See generally George Colpitts, "'Animated Like Us by Commercial Interests': Commercial Ethnology and Fur Trade Descriptions in New France, 1660-1760," *Canadian Historical Review* 83, no. 3 (September 2002): 305-337.

fur trapping areas, and near a waterway whenever possible.²⁴² Although distinguishing themselves from HBC workers with their travelling ability, these men – sometimes dubbed “Canadiens” or “Pedlars” – still had the supposed obligation to abide by HBC regulations since the Honourable Company’s Charter gave HBC workers the authority to create and implement laws applicable to everyone in Rupert’s Land. But during the coureurs’ early efforts, and as more years passed, the anti-Servants rarely witnessed any HBC Servant either informing people of British law or keeping to those legal norms themselves.²⁴³ As a result, coureurs did whatever was necessary to meet their trading contacts, and that meant frequently following Indigenous practices and potentially abandoning European concepts altogether. Sometimes these choices violated the HBC Charter, but, as their efforts illustrated, the coureurs’ rule of law was aimed at making their pursuit of wealth and competitiveness against the HBC as good as possible.²⁴⁴

When the HBC first observed the coureurs’ activities from afar, and despite these observations, it still decided to maintain its rigid corporate style.²⁴⁵ After a hundred years passed in the HBC’s existence, and triggered by watching its competitors’

²⁴² Podruchny, *Making the Voyageur World*: 27-28 and 55-63.

²⁴³ Paul Craven, “Canada, 1670-1935, Symbolic and Instrumental Enforcement in Loyalist North America,” in *Masters, Servants, and Magistrates in Britain and the Empire, 1562-1955*, eds. Douglas Hay and Paul Craven (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 176. For consistency, I use the term “Pedlar” or “coureurs” in future references to these traders.

²⁴⁴ For information about the historic form the French fur trade took, via a point of sale in Montréal with men holding the monopoly of trade as approved by the King, see Frank E. Ross, *The Fur Trade in the Western Great Lakes Region*, (St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society, 1938), 271 and Claiborne A. Skinner, *The Upper Country: French Enterprise in the Colonial Great Lakes* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 30. For remarks about the larger context of the trade system, see generally Richard Saunders, “The Emergence of the Coureur de Bois as a Social Type,” *Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association* 18, no. 1 (1939): 22-33.

²⁴⁵ E. E. Rich, *Hudson’s Bay Company 1670-1870*, 3 vols. (McClelland and Stewart, 1960): 126.

success, the Honourable Company's management finally proposed a slight shift in strategy. By admitting that relatively few First Nations opted to make their way to HBC posts, the HBC decided it could not avoid exploring Churchill River territory any longer. Even more radically, the HBC reluctantly concluded it would need to build a permanent post somewhere along this waterway as well. In 1773, management instructed Samuel Hearne to make his way up the river. By 1774 Hearne reached a riverbend deep in Swampy Nihyaw territory where he built a post and named the location "Cumberland House." At last, and after more than one hundred years of stubborn policy-making, the HBC had set up shop away from the coast.

As physically foreign as any HBC structure along the coast, and led by a manager who rarely ventured away from his station, the post building at Cumberland House hardly helped to revamp the HBC's strategy or, for that matter, improve profit margins. The newly minted "Chief Factor" had constructed the post as a military fort,²⁴⁶ and the Chief Factor seemed unable to overcome a strong inherent fear of Indigenous peoples. What with these characteristics of Cumberland House's form and function, and the reality that First Nations had no need to trade there,²⁴⁷ Hearne essentially just changed the physical location of a fixed coastal post while refusing to make the most of the implications such a move could have had.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶ Frederick J. Alcock, "Past and Present Trade Routes to the Canadian Northwest," *Geographical Review* 10, no. 2 (August 1920): 59.

²⁴⁷ J. B. Tyrrell, "Early Exploration of the Churchill River," *Geographical Review* 3, no. 5 (May 1917): 375.

²⁴⁸ Raffan argues Hearne failed to fully appreciate what relocating inland might provide. Rather than see his location as a way to learn about the region better, Hearne acted as if the fort was

Hearne's errors continued. For instance, his maps and journals contained significant mistakes about the region's terrain,²⁴⁹ and this record-keeping gaffe meant other HBC men had trouble reaching his post.²⁵⁰ On top of these problems, the HBC concluded that the rules Hearne created for the treatment of lower Servants and the method of fur value evaluation had "dubious legal validity".²⁵¹ But regardless of these foibles, the HBC did not take Hearne out of his role. Instead, management believed a change in the post's leadership would benefit any nearby coureurs. HBC management was right about the threat of its competitors. But what it did not fully realize was how those men watched Hearne to learn what did not work. The mere fact that Hearne stayed within walking distance of Cumberland House encouraged coureurs to explore even further west and north of him and his station. Likely due to unofficial visiting by men such as Louis Primeau,²⁵² these "Pedlars" knew of Île-à-la-Crosse, and locating someone there became a top priority of these men who became more jointly organized than ever before.

With the help of some investors such as Alexander MacKenzie, those coureurs who worked in a loosely cooperative way agreed in 1775 to sponsor Alexander Henry

located on the coast. Raffan, *Emperor of the North: Sir George Simpson and the Remarkable Story of the Hudson's Bay Company* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 2007), 71.

²⁴⁹ McMillan and Yellowhorn, *First Peoples in Canada*, 244.

²⁵⁰ David Chennells, *The Politics of Nationalism in Canada: Cultural Conflict Since 1760* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 67.

²⁵¹ Bliss, *Northern Enterprise*, 91.

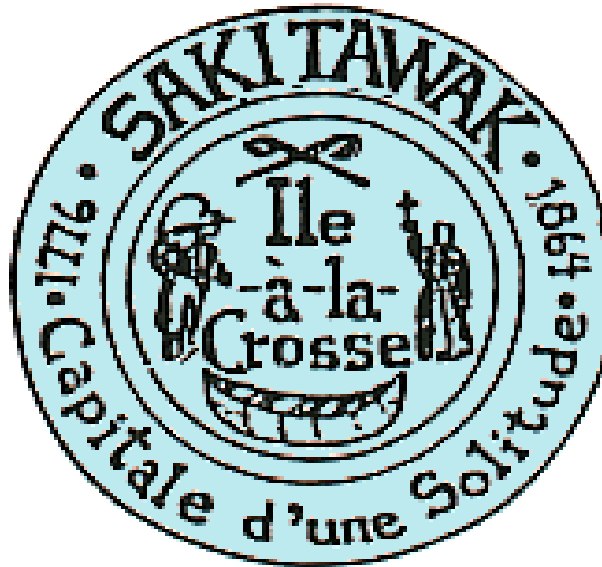
²⁵² While a number of sources describe these two men's "discovery" of Île-à-la-Crosse, their actions and preconceived notions about the place help support the view that Louis Primeau, a man involved with these two explorers and regularly in the village's vicinity after 1776 likely arrived at Île-à-la-Crosse as early as 1766. See Marchildon and Robinson, *Canoeing the Churchill*, 49, citing Morton, *A History of the Canadian West*, 267 and 275.

and Thomas Frobisher to travel to the community on their behalf. In the spring of 1776, Henry and Frobisher started up the Churchill River, went by Cumberland House, and continued on as if Hearne's station was only a midway point.²⁵³ When they arrived at the village, Frobisher and Henry concluded the place's reputation was well deserved. Even better, the two Pedlars learned locals had expected them and had no qualms in trading with them and the men they represented.²⁵⁴ Showing no signs of hostility, situated in a space that protected them from more severe weather conditions, and clearly experienced in preparing furs and discussing a product's value, those there to greet Henry and Frobisher confirmed the Pedlars' vision of Île-à-la-Crosse.²⁵⁵

²⁵³ Allen Ronaghan, "Reconstructing Kelsey's Travels," in *Three Hundred Prairie Years: Henry Kelsey's "Inland Country of Good Report,"* 90; Abel, *Drum Songs*, 71; Morton, *A History of the Canadian West*, 303.

²⁵⁴ By this time, the references to the men involved rarely use the label "coureurs du bois," Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, xii. This point is also in the Statement of Claim, where the plaintiffs explain how a network of trading relationships already existed because the establishment of Posts by non-Indigenous explorers permitted Métis people to continue these activities. See *Morin et al v. Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada and Her Majesty the Queen in Right of the Province of Saskatchewan*. Q.B. No. 619 of A.D. 1994 (filed 1 March 1994), 13-14.

²⁵⁵ See generally Edward L. Ullman, "The Role of Transportation and the Bases for Interaction," in *Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth*, ed. William L. Thomas, in collaboration with Carl O. Sauer, Marston Bates and Lewis Mumford (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), 862-880. See page 4 of James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985) for details about how places in North America were rarely "discovered" but instead re-visited later by a more official party.



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III. 2. c. New “Locals” Arrive in the “Capital of Solitude”

As revolutionary efforts by other “locals” unfolded during the late eighteenth century in North America’s “Thirteen Colonies” against British governance, a large group of local First Nations decided two individual British interlopers were *not* problematic. Despite a general inability of the visitors and those First Nations to comprehend each other linguistically, the Indigenous locals and their non-Indigenous visitors immediately found ways to speak the language of trade. In his own words about June of 1776 on the Churchill River, Alexander Henry explained how he and Thomas Frobisher

continued our voyage till the twenty-fourth, when a large opening being before us, we saw a number of canoes, filled with Indians, on their voyage down the

²⁵⁶ Image 8 - This emblem appears within the community’s two hundredth anniversary document. See Bicentennial’s committee’s *Sakitawak Bi-Centennial Ile-A-La-Crosse 1776-1796*, at www.jkcc.com/sakitawak.html. The hardcopy book appeared soon after celebrations ended.

stream. We soon met each other in the most friendly manner.²⁵⁷

While they kept to local standards regarding exchanges, Henry and Frobisher also paid attention to another village characteristic. As they had been informed before arriving, the men also knew about peoples known as “des bois brulés” or “Métis” who traded there.²⁵⁸ Neither First Nations nor European, these people with parentage from both outsiders and original inhabitants resided close to their immediate First Nations relatives and had developed their own concepts with no (or hardly any) interference from Europeans as more years passed. In the meantime, these people often took on a variety of roles during trading activities, such as middlemen or translators. With more Métis descendants born as the years had gone by, this group’s own attributes had strengthened so that various speaking, hunting and land use ways were already noticeable. While their specific ways increased the amount of local information Frobisher and Henry needed to know in order to make

²⁵⁷ Alexander Henry, *Travels and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories between the Years 1760 to 1776*, ed. James Bain (Edmonton, AB: Hurtig, 1969), 328 and cited in Sakitawak Bi-Centennial Committee, *Île-à-la-Crosse, 1776-1976*. Meadow Lake, SK: 1977, 41. Peter Pond’s map also indicates that the two men reached Île-à-la-Crosse in the summer of 1776. It is also mentioned in Morton, *A History of the Canadian West*, 318. Of note, Tyrrell disputes the claim that Henry accompanied Frobisher. See Tyrrell’s remarks about how “Thomas Frobisher went up the Churchill River to Isle a la Crosse, where he established a trading Post,” in Tyrrell, “Early Exploration of the Churchill River,” 376. See also Lon Borgerson and SUNTEP Theatre, *A Thousand Supperless Babes: The Story of the Métis* (Saskatoon, SK: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2004), 9: “Frobisher reached Île-à-la-Crosse in 1776.”

²⁵⁸ The issue of Métis peoples appearing much earlier than most historians admit is a strong historiographical theme in David Hackett Fischer, *Champlain’s Dream: The Visionary Adventurer Who Made a New World in Canada* (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf Canada, 2008), 6-7. James Raffan argues enough evidence exists to show that Métis participated in the North West’s fur trade as early as 1763, which therefore means non-Indigenous men were located in Western Canada in the 1740s. Raffan, *Emperor of the North*, 70. In *Morin v. Her Majesty*, the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan’s Statement of Claim, explains details about “The Métis Nation Homeland from the 17th Century,” *Morin et al v. Her Majesty* (Statement of Claim), 12. Martin McLeod, “The Diary of Martin McLeod,” ed. Grace Lee Nute, *Minnesota History Bulletin* 4, no. 7/8 (August to November, 1922): 351-439. Minnesota Historical Society Press explains one of the last understandings of Métis as “runners of the woods” which appeared in 1837. The term waned after the HBC-NWC merger.

trading inroads, the Métis families appeared to make the possibility of trading less complicated in the long run.²⁵⁹ Having what historian Jennifer Brown calls an inherent “company familialism,”²⁶⁰ the rapid increase of the Métis population at Île-à-la-Crosse (and elsewhere) showed how trade was about an individual’s stability, but that same trade reinforced cultural traits that would challenge any ways Henry and Frobisher presumed were better simply because those processes were “British.”²⁶¹

Henry and Frobisher found the weather at Île-à-la-Crosse less harsh than they feared. But the village’s winter months still proved long and difficult for them; the men subsequently did not stay as long at Île-à-la-Crosse as originally planned.²⁶² Yet even with their less brave stance against the elements, Henry and Frobisher still impressed locals enough to establish positive and solid trading ties. These Pedlars decided to follow community standards about pelt values and respect the trading process used to acquire those pelts, and that placed them in good stead with or

²⁵⁹ This issue of children from a mixture of cultures has faced a lack of acceptance by earlier historians but clearly happened. See page 65 of Patricia A. McCormack, “Lost Women: Native Wives in Orkney and Lewis,” in *Recollecting: Lives of Aboriginal Women of the Canadian Northwest and Borderlands*, eds. Sarah Carter and Patricia A. McCormack (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2011).

²⁶⁰ Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 10.

²⁶¹ J. C. Yerbury, “The Post-Contact Chipewyan: Trade Rivalries and Changing Territorial Boundaries,” *Ethnohistory* 23, no. 3 (Summer 1976): 244 and James Knight, *The Founding of Churchill: Being the Journal of Captain James Knight*, ed. J. F. Kenney (Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1932), 55-56. For observations about the early 1710’s see Cardinal and Hildebrandt, *Treaty Elders of Saskatchewan*, 53. Compare my views and those of the elders in Cardinal and Hildebrandt to Kevin Gambell who writes “The Métis community was created after the Hudson Bay Company founded a fort along the English (aka Churchill) River in 1799.” See Kevin Gambell, “The Ile-a-la-Crosse Cemetery: A Regional Approach,” *Saskatchewan History* 61, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 44.

²⁶² Morton, *A History of the Canadian West*, 327-328.

without the ability to make it through a January on the Churchill.²⁶³ They might not have had it in them to build housing suitable for the winter, but Frobisher and Henry had whatever sense it took to be accepted as a local trader.

However, Frobisher and Henry still did not achieve everything they and their investors wanted. Besides learning about the village, investors had also heard of a region referred to as “Athabasca.” Much to the investors’ disappointment, Frobisher and Henry never quite reached this part of Rupert’s Land.

As did the village, Athabasca had a reputation for prosperous times. But unlike Île-à-la-Crosse, Athabasca still remained unconfirmed territory for the Pedlars (and then of course for the HBC).²⁶⁴ Slightly west and much further from “civilization” than the village, Athabasca was explained to the Pedlars by First Nations contacts as having its own river system with one link that could be accessed from the village. This access, however, was only erratically available. If a high level of precipitation and snow melt occurred during the spring, people in the Churchill *could* go there by water. But most likely, travel would need to happen by portaging instead. This difficult stage of travel was known as “Methye.” While based at Île-à-la-Crosse,

²⁶³ H. A. Innis, “A Note on Recent Publications on the Fur Trade,” *The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science / Revue canadienne d’Economie et de Science politique* 2, no. 4 (November 1936): 567: “In 1776 goods were scarce. James Bannerman, writing on June 23, 1776, stated: ‘Mr. Henry and others from Albany bought to the amount of 15,000 stg in merchandise sent from Montreal in sleds to Albany. So that Indian goods are very scarce in Canada...We are to have no goods this year (tant mieux) our friend Alexander the copper-smith is at the bottom of this disappointment.’”

²⁶⁴ Barry M. Gough, “Pond, Peter,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, Volume 5 (1801-1820), accessed July 6, 2015, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/pond_peter_5E.html.

neither Frobisher nor Henry appeared to even consider an attempt to make it through this arduous bog that led to even better trading times.

Approximately nineteen kilometres long and made up of seven major hills with a slight change in altitude, Methye had the capability to allow water to escape the area. But that ability would only show itself with severe overflow. So almost all the time, various parts of Methye might be a shallow creek one day, a series of sinkholes the next day, and then dry land shortly thereafter. Located just north of a lake to the north-west of the village, and reached after a short canoe trip up a calm river and small lake, Methye challenged any traveller's wits, physical strength, and perseverance.²⁶⁵ Perhaps secretly scared, maybe nervous about the accuracy of guidance they could acquire from locals, or just running out of time to solidify contacts at Île-à-la-Crosse, Frobisher and Henry apparently decided to leave a successful excursion across Methye to some future (and hopefully Pedlar) trader.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁵ Verlen Kruger and Brand Frenz, *The Ultimate Canoe Challenge: 28, 000 Miles Through North America* (Lincoln, NB: iUniverse, 2005), 95. Today, the more northwest lake is named "Peter Pond Lake", the river is the "La Loche River" and the small lake is Lac La Loche. At times another water body during the portage's space grows and is named "Rendezvous Lake".

²⁶⁶ Karpan and Karpan, *Northern Sandscapes*, 97.



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Regardless of their failure to reach Athabasca via Methye, Frobisher and Henry still provided great trading results for their investors. The two Pedlars established trust relationships with locals, and they documented information helpful for Pedlars who

²⁶⁷ Image 9 - George Back created this etching entitled "Vale of the Clearwater River from the Methye Portage," in 1828. Image used with permission from the Trustees of the British Museum.

followed them. Amongst that information, they recommended any trader interested in crossing Methye speak with both women and men of Île-à-la-Crosse. Given that Frobisher and Henry found female villagers knew as much about hunting, land conditions, and trade as their husbands, brothers, and sons,²⁶⁸ they believed it only followed that the mothers and aunties and grandmothers should be consulted as much about portaging as any man. Their data also included particulars about local laws regarding trapline placement, death ceremonies, and the recognition of different cultures.²⁶⁹ Frobisher and Henry provided accurate guidance to their own loosely-organized group of traders about community members' regulations and reprimands.

But perhaps most helpful to the Pedlars' efforts, Frobisher and Henry satisfactorily concluded it was possible to be welcomed as much as any visiting and unknown First Nations person. The key to such acceptance was to show respectful interaction and an interest in maintaining an adherence to local ordering, such as demonstrated

²⁶⁸ This point about New France, explained so well by Allan Greer, was much more prevalent than historians have often recorded. Allan Greer, *The People of New France* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 91.

²⁶⁹ Laws for determining domestic relations, warfare, health care, and even the regulation of death are described in Dion, *My Tribe, the Crees*, 7-8. Hearne also detailed how legal systems functioned prior to the arrival of newcomers. See Samuel Hearne, *A Journey from Prince of Wales Fort on Hudson's Bay*, 289. See also McMillan and Yellowhorn, *First Peoples in Canada*, 147. As well, see the anonymously written "Catholics and Scientific Research," *Primitive Man* 2, no. 1/2 (January-April 1929): 19-24; Penard, "Land Ownership and Chieftaincy," 22. I intentionally do not consider these concepts as examples of "customs," because I agree with Iain Stewart's argument that using the term "customary law" ultimately means believing a form of "law" is more stable with that law coming from an imperial source and that the "Customary law" is presumed to include a skepticism about the benefits of an overarching authority. See Iain Stewart, "Critical Approaches in Comparative Law," *Oxford University Comparative Law Forum* 4 (2002): 29, accessed July 10, 2015, <http://ouclf.iuscomp.org/articles/stewart.shtml#222> and Sally Engle Merry, "Legal Pluralism," *Law and Society Review* 22, no. 5 (1988): 875. For the importance of highlighting these regulations, see Axtell, *The Invasion Within*, 107.

in the respect for not over-hunting.²⁷⁰ Such adherence then created permission for a party to participate in the complex trading relationships already established there.²⁷¹ Since locals already appeared capable of making links to what the Pedlars called the “Eastern fur trade,”²⁷² all the Pedlars could really do was enhance that capability and do so by creating “[u]nions of convenience” rather than Pedlar-only profits.²⁷³ As Jarvenpa and Brumbach noted about Île-à-la-Crosse, its

structure constrained individual choice. People were compelled to coalesce and disperse at particular times and places, in keeping with a tradition of such behaviour. On the other hand, the socio-spatial organization itself was the product of a series of individually transacted decisions through history.²⁷⁴

Frobisher and Henry watched how the village hosted “commensalistic” relationships²⁷⁵ that were “fluid” enough to withstand a change in the weather or a shift in trading priorities.²⁷⁶ By deciding *not* to claim their own ideas as superior, the

²⁷⁰ Abel, *Drum Songs*, 71. Community members had already garnered a reputation for trapping and trading, realizing they were overhunting and then creating policies to help animal population reestablish itself. See also Hudson Bay Company Archives (hereinafter “HBCA”), B.89/e/1-21 (1822-1904). See also the HBCA’s “Île-a-la-Crosse Reports on Districts Files (1822), 1- 2. See also Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, 118 and Heidenreich and Ray, *The Early Fur Trade*, 8.

²⁷¹ Innis, “A Note on Recent Publications on the Fur Trade,” 562. The Northwest Company was formed at least as early as 1783 if not earlier and not in 1787 as speculated by some historians. Merk, *ibid.*, x. This formation could likely not have occurred as early or as well without this positive relationship in the village.

²⁷² Abel, *Drum Songs*, 66.

²⁷³ For a great description on the varieties of this term see chapter 3 of Arthur Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*. See also Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 27; Robert Jefferson, *Fifty Years on the Saskatchewan: Being a History of the Cree Indian Domestic Lifeland the Difficulties which Led to Serious Agitation and Conflict of 1885 in the Battleford Locality*. (Battleford, SK: Canadian North-West Historical Society, 1929), 37; Wright, *Saskatchewan, the History of a Province*, 38. See also Heidenreich and Ray, *The Early Fur Trade*, 8.

²⁷⁴ Robert Jarvenpa and Hetty Jo Brumbach, “Socio-Spatial Organization and Decision-Making Processes: Observations from the Chipewyan,” *American Anthropologist*, New Series 90, no. 3 (September 1988): 609.

²⁷⁵ This phrase is used by Jarvenpa. He also labels the people of Île-à-la-Crosse as “proto-cooperative.” Jarvenpa, “Intergroup Behavior and Imagery,” 293.

²⁷⁶ Jarvenpa and Brumbach notice a “fluid reshuffling of personnel through bilateral linkages.” See “Socio-Spatial Organization and Decision-Making Processes and Decision-Making Processes: Observations from the Chipewyan,” 612.

two newcomers achieved (almost all) their goals. The men established contact and confirmed trusting relationships with people interested in trading furs to markets farther away more effectively. At the same time, they learned how both the natural conditions and the people living in those conditions demanded flexibility rather than orthodoxy to some set of rigid principles. As the two men concluded, future Pedlars could prosper at Île-à-la-Crosse. But they had better be prepared to show some latitude in how they tried to find that good life for themselves.

III. 3. The “Cosmopolitan Trading Community” to 1821

III. 3. a. Introduction: Myths, Men, and the Urge to Monopolize

In 1776, the two freshly arrived Pedlars encountered peoples at Île-à-la-Crosse who were well experienced in intercultural and complex trading relationships. But while villagers demonstrated a strong ability to organize intricate trading processes themselves, these Pedlars ensured that local capacity stretched further. Thanks to Frobisher, Henry, and those whom the men represented, the multi-cultural and stable Île-à-la-Crosse soon had a presence around the world.

Although the meeting between locals and visitors improved the economic potential for everyone at Île-à-la-Crosse, it is also important to recall that this process of founding new links already existed. Frobisher and Henry did not need to convince anyone in Île-à-la-Crosse about the benefits of reaching out to more global contacts because the village already functioned like any marketplace in a port community further away or even across the Atlantic Ocean.²⁷⁷ Moreover, since the First Nations showed no signs of destitution, they would not accept any price for pelts and the Pedlars therefore had little say in how much profit would actually come the Pedlars' way.

²⁷⁷ Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, xv: “One major question that arises in fur trade social history is to define the relationships between the fur trade ‘society’ and the social spheres or systems centered outside it.” Brown helps give the fur trade communities a more complicated reputation as communities further east and in Europe have historically acquired.

This Section covers the years after the Pedlars' arrival to shortly after two major fur companies became one large corporation in 1821. During this period, different wares and different European/North America-based peoples ventured to Île-à-la-Crosse. In addition, many of these people hoped their own agendas and processes would succeed there. Like the locals, Frobisher and Henry hoped for a place to provide shelter from difficult natural elements, provide as many trading contacts in one spot as possible, which would lead to profit, and offer positive social mingling. But to achieve that set of conditions, the two men also realized their own *modus operandi* had to be malleable enough to fit into local ways. How others emulated this strategy will become clearer as this study continues.

Before venturing into these years, some points can be mentioned.²⁷⁸ For one, the village's form did not remain in some frozen state. The Métis population continued to grow –and at a significant pace. As well, a competition developed between multiple, visiting, non-Indigenous traders across the North West, and this competition's form showed many of its fundamental features in the village. So over time, the place certainly hosted different views. But rivalry amongst different parties regularly improved Indigenous peoples' conditions at Île-à-la-Crosse rather than damaging the village's inherent components. As a consequence of outsiders challenging each other, local ways and customs often flourished more strongly than

²⁷⁸ An example of the theory that this time period is the most influential upon modern Canada is Brown, xii. See also Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 122. See in general Robert S. Allen, *His Majesty's Indian Allies: Indian Policy in the Defense of Canada, 1774-1815* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1992) for analysis about how the fur trade helped create a loyalty that led to Great Britain being able to rely upon Indigenous forces during the War of 1812.

before those outsiders had arrived in the first place. Knowing how and what changed, or stayed the same, permits us to determine the consistency of the community's experience.

III. 3. b. A Touch of Pond: 1777 to 1783

No doubt, the men who organized and funded Frobisher and Henry's trip to Île-à-la-Crosse were pleased with their investment.²⁷⁹ Still, as rumours about Lake Athabasca's bounty continued to grow, these investors wanted someone to cross Methye on their behalf – and quickly, before the HBC managed to do so.²⁸⁰ As Frobisher and Henry seemed very capable of exploring other areas close and far away from Île-à-la-Crosse, partners deliberated about whom to send. How these investors learned of Peter Pond's interest in getting to the Athabasca region cannot be confirmed.²⁸¹ But when those same investors asked Pond if he had any interest in portaging on their behalf, Pond jumped at the chance and guaranteed that he would bring a Pedlar presence to Lake Athabasca quickly, easily, and in an acceptable fashion.²⁸²

²⁷⁹ Innis, *Peter Pond, Fur Trader and Adventurer* (Toronto: Irwin and Gordon, 1930), 79 and for even more details about how the success created an actual "trading Post" see Innis, *Peter Pond*, 80.

²⁸⁰ Innis, *Peter Pond*, 82.

²⁸¹ "Peter Pond's Search for Fortune: Peter Pond (c.1739-1807)," *Pathfinders and Passageways: The Exploration of Canada*, Library and Archives Canada, accessed July 10, 2015. <http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/206/301/lac-bac/explorers/www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/explorers/h24-1620-e.html>. Some other men might have mentioned an interest in exploring to Athabasca, such as Louis Primeau. Pond claimed, however, Primeau would not have crossed the portage. B.42/b/11 (1753-1780) Fort Churchill, Manitoba Correspondence Books, HBCA, n.d., 7.

²⁸² Harold Innis, "A Note on Recent Publications in the Fur Trade," 567.

Pond believed he knew full well why his two predecessors had not completed this task themselves. For one thing, Pond concluded, Frobisher and Henry did not prepare themselves well enough for Île-à-la-Crosse before they arrived at the village. As a result, they needed more time to establish trusting relationships when they got there and they ran out of time to learn about and then cross Methye. As a way to prevent this mistake himself, Pond decided he would stop at Cumberland House, and get information about Methye from Hearne or his successor without any HBC worker realizing Pond's actual reason for such chatter. Second, thought Pond, Frobisher and Henry did not establish useful relationships when they were in Île-à-la-Crosse. Their claim of good results was therefore an exaggeration. Pond would, he believed, be better from the get-go and show how Pedlars could achieve much more.²⁸³

Pond did stop at Cumberland House and he did apparently learn about Methye. While there, he believed that he learned information about Methye Frobisher and Henry should have ascertained.²⁸⁴ With such apparent resounding success even before getting there, Pond was adamant that the Pedlars' failure to get to Athabasca was self-induced, and sloppily so.²⁸⁵ With all this self-confidence about his own

²⁸³ Barry Gough, *The Elusive Mr. Pond: The Soldier, Fur Trader and Explorer who Opened the Northwest* (Madera Park, BC: Douglas and McIntyre, 2014), 84-85, 87 and 91.

²⁸⁴ In 1776, Pond had in fact visited Hearne soon after Frobisher and Henry continued on past Cumberland House. B.49/a/11 (1774-1784) Cumberland House, Saskatchewan Post Journals, HBCA, n.d., 81. Various views exist about how this interaction went. Morton, *A History of the Canadian West*, 303.

²⁸⁵ By discussing conditions with locals, Pond became aware Île-à-la-Crosse was used by "annual brigades" as their starting point for travelling across Methye. He claimed his predecessors did not understand this point. Ross, *Beyond the River and the Bay*, 116.

ability to achieve what his predecessors did not,²⁸⁶ Pond reached Île-à-la-Crosse beaming with ambition, a capacity to meet strangers and form bonds with them, and a great physical dexterity that would help him achieve much acclaim for himself personally and his employer.²⁸⁷

But a closer look at Pond's specific activities around Île-à-la-Crosse shows something else. With a tendency toward moodiness, over-confidence in his own abilities, and an under-confidence in Indigenous perspectives, Pond became the Pedlar who conquered Methye but at the same time the Pedlar who jeopardized his company's entire presence in the North West.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ Frederick J. Alcock, "Past and Present Trade Routes to the Canadian Northwest," 65, Innis, "A Note on Recent Publications in the Fur Trade," 571. In 1777 Pond arrived at Cumberland House on May 26 with five large canoes loaded with goods. Apparently Hearne wrote: "He is going to concentrate into the Athopuskow country as far as he can possibly go and there to stay this next winter."

²⁸⁷ Harold Innis wrote a helpful biography about Pond. See Harold A. Innis, *Peter Pond, Fur Trader and Adventurer*. A. S. Morton also started work on a biography, but the document only appeared in manuscript form. A. S. Morton, *Peter Pond* (Ottawa: Library and Archives Canada, 1930). See also generally David Chaplen, *Freshwater Passages: The Trade and Travels of Peter Pond*. (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2014).

²⁸⁸ Sir Alexander Mackenzie's *A General History of the Fur Trade from Canada to the North West* (London: publisher unknown, 1801) pinpoint is probably accurate since Mackenzie gained this information during the winter of 1777-8 with Pond in Lake Athabasca territory. Mackenzie's view reads: "The success of this gentleman (Thomas Frobisher in 1777 at Isle à la Crosse) induced others to follow his example and in the spring of the year 1778 some of the traders on the Saskatchewan river finding they had a quantity of goods to spare agreed to put them into a joint stock, and gave the charge and management of them to Peter Pond, who, in four canoes, was directed to enter the English river, so called by Mr. Frobisher, to follow his track, and proceed still further; if possible to Athabaska, a country hitherto unknown but from an Indian report. In this enterprise he at length succeeded, and pitched his tent on the banks of the Elk River by him erroneously called the Athabaska River "about forty miles from the lake of the Hills into which it empties itself."

During Pond's first attempt to portage, he came across "plateau after plateau," and stated he had "little awareness of this fact."²⁸⁹ This annoyance shows he had actually not consulted Frobisher and Henry's notes as he claimed, since both men had recorded this difficult feature of the portage. Moreover, it suggests Pond did not make any better contacts with locals that might have helped him overcome this challenge. Upon arrival back in the village, Pond blamed his failure upon his guides. Locals soon learned about how he did not succeed, and also got word of how the men who accompanied Pond either quit midway or were fired by the Pedlar himself.²⁹⁰ Despite his bombast, it was an inauspicious beginning.

A few weeks after the initial debacle, Pond attempted a second portage. During this effort, Pond used the maps he had made on his first attempt. Much to his frustration, Pond found them nearly useless. Showing little cartographic appreciation for how Methye changed and what natural fixtures stayed the same,²⁹¹ Pond regularly found himself lost and without much sympathy from a new set of guides for this second

²⁸⁹ Ross, *Beyond the River and the Bay*, 116. See also Lawrence J. Burpee, *The Search for the Western Sea: The Story of the Exploration of North-Western Canada* (London: Alston Rivers, 1908), 1: xxvii–xxix, 317–26; D.N. Sprague and R.P. Frye, *The Genealogy of the First Métis Nation: The Development and Dispersal of the Red River Settlement, 1820–1900* (Winnipeg: Pemmican, 1983), 19.

²⁹⁰ Edward J. McCullough and Michael Maccagno, *Lac La Biche and the Early Fur Traders* (Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute, 1991), 23.

²⁹¹ On this point of mapmaking, Gough considers criticisms of Pond often "harsh and ahistorical" and his maps instead "tributes to his time". However, if Pond's contemporaries succeeded to know more about Methye than Pond did in early stages, I consider criticism of Pond less historically inaccurate than Gough suggests. See Gough, *The Elusive Mr. Pond*, 5.

trip. No one was fired, and no records describe how any guides quit, but he returned again to the village without being able to say he had crossed Methye.²⁹²

Eventually, Pond did make it across the portage,²⁹³ but not until the late autumn of 1778, and it was more like a string of many short and exhausting junkets than one continuous trip.²⁹⁴ With his refusal to accept local guidance early and fully,²⁹⁵ it should come as no surprise that Pond's attitudes and actions damaged the Pedlars' reputation amongst original inhabitants with links to Île-à-la-Crosse.²⁹⁶ Although Pond wrote in his 1779 report that Henry was correct about Île-à-la-Crosse's

²⁹² Pond seemed less aware of the potential "hazards of early ice in the rivers and shortages of food" that could happen easily if underprepared at the start of a trip. See Marjorie Wilkins Campbell, *The North West Company* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1957), 8.

²⁹³ At the most northern end of the portage, a location became given the name "Portage La Loche" starting around 1778. Pond frequented this spot more than Île-à-la-Crosse after he crossed Methye. See Ernest Voorhis, *Historic Forts and Trading Posts of the French Regime and of the English Fur Trading Companies* (Ottawa: Department of the Interior, 1930).

²⁹⁴ Morton, *Peter Pond*, 303, 335. In Henry R. Wagner, *Peter Pond: Fur Trader and Explorer* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Library Western Historical Series, 1955), 37-38, Dorchester's letter regarding Pond explains: "Quebec 23rd November 1790....Mr. Pond proposing some advantage to himself from publishing it hereafter with a detailed account, had requested care may be taken to prevent its getting into other hands...I am told he has quitted this province somewhat dissatisfied with the Trading Company." This point is well detailed in Ken G. Brealey's "Mapping Them 'Out': Euro-Canadian Cartography and the Appropriation of the Nuxalk and Ts'ilhqot'in First Nations' Territories, 1793-1916," *The Canadian Geographer/Le Géographe canadien* 39, no. 2 (Summer 1995), 140-156. Perhaps one of the most inaccurate portrayals of Pond's mistakes appears in Ronald Searle and Kidare Dobbs' *The Great Fur Opera: Annals of the Hudson Bay Company, 1670-1970* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970), especially at 93. See also Library and Archives Canada, "Peter Pond's Search for Fortune: Peter Pond (c.1739-1807)" accessed July 10, 2015, <http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/206/301/lac-bac/explorers/www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/explorers/h24-1620-e.html>.

²⁹⁵ J. G. MacGregor, *Peter Fidler, Canada's Forgotten Surveyor, 1769-1822* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1966), 23, Brealey, "Mapping them 'Out'" 99, and Fred Anderson and Andrew Cayton, *The Dominion of War: Empire and Liberty in North America, 1500-2000* (New York: Penguin, 2005), xvii and 52.

²⁹⁶ Some historians also contend Pond must have taken credit for certain maps likely created by the Frobisher brothers which damaged his reputation within the NWC. See Lawrence Burpee, *The Search for the Western Sea*, 316. See the modern remarks that accompany, MIKAN no. 4125136 (March 1, 1785) "Copy of a Map presented to the Congress by Peter Pond, a native of Milford in the State of Connecticut," series 700 – General maps, Northwest Territories: Provinces and districts R12567-186-3-E, Library and Archives Canada, accessed July 10, 2015. http://collectionscanada.gc.ca/ourl/res.php?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&url_tim=2015-07-15T18%3A55%3A42Z&url_ctx_fmt=info%3Aofi%2Ffmt%3Akev%3Amtx%3Actx&rft_dat=4125136&rft_id=info%3Asid%2Fcollectionscanada.gc.ca%3Apm&lang=eng.

multicultural and peaceful state,²⁹⁷ and he agreed with his predecessors' recommendation that the village be the Pedlars' headquarters in Rupert's Land,²⁹⁸ he ultimately did not successfully reinforce the work Frobisher and Henry had done to create bonds of trust amongst those who could ensure the Pedlars' survival in the Île-à-la-Crosse fur trade.²⁹⁹ Thanks to Pond, and because he made the visitors' reputation worse, the Pedlars who followed him would need to work even harder than Henry and Frobisher had done to (re)establish trusting relationships that would solidify trading ties.

As Pond continued his sojourn in the North West, his trip's investors mulled over their options. Should they cease having any interest in the village unless or until the HBC reached Île-à-la-Crosse? Were they right to presume the village was indeed a key location? In 1783 when the Pedlars finally announced their official birth as a business called the "North West Company," they determined a permanent presence at Île-à-la-Crosse was an immediate necessity.³⁰⁰ But because of Pond's arrogance, the NWC had to strategize even more than would have been necessary before his activities there. The company needed someone entrepreneurial, diplomatic, and capable of determining exactly how deep Pond's damage had actually gone. With all these serious concerns in mind, the NWC hired the charismatic Patrick Small to

²⁹⁷ MacGregor, *Peter Fidler, Canada's Forgotten Surveyor, 1769-1822*, 28.

²⁹⁸ R. Jarvenpa, "Intergroup Behavior and Imagery," 285.

²⁹⁹ Residents were disappointed in Pond when he refused to help them organize responses to small pox in 1779 and 1781 – particularly because of their belief Pond's efforts likely contributed to the disease's spread. Yerbury, "The Post-Contact Chipewyan," 250.

³⁰⁰ Some evidence suggests the name "NWC" appeared earlier in 1779. Whether the coalition of men that formed that year can be described as an actual "company" depends upon a researcher's conclusion. Marchildon and Robinson, *Canoeing the Churchill*, 32-33.

venture to Île-à-la-Crosse, live there permanently, and re-build the trust Pond had destroyed.³⁰¹ With his own reputation as an intelligent politico and profiteer at stake, Small was eager to show his employer that he was perfect for the job.³⁰²

III. 3. c. A Small Business in a Big Village: the 1780s

As Small started his trip from Montréal, international fur prices had fallen to their lowest level since the 1760s. In the meantime, fur trade production costs had not decreased. As a result of these conditions, every fur trade company found itself determining how to slash its respective budget severely and lower the cost of getting pelts from the products' original trappers to market.³⁰³ While Small prepared to go out west, NWC senior manager Alexander Mackenzie strategized about how the Pedlars could respond to conditions in the global fur market. As Mackenzie helped manage the company's entire organization from the NWC's newly opened headquarters on Montréal's Vaudreuil Street, he made two recommendations. First, he suggested the NWC shut its doors during slower months. Second, he recommended the company investigate new markets in other parts of the world.³⁰⁴

³⁰¹ Pond claimed he returned to Île-à-la-Crosse in 1783. See Innis, *Peter Pond*, 99 and Gough, *The Elusive Mr. Pond*, 115.

³⁰² Innis, *Peter Pond*, 111.

³⁰³ Harold Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada* (University of Toronto Press, 1930), 264-265. See also Ann Carlos and Frank Lewis, "Economic History of the Fur Trade (1670-1870)," *EH.Net Encyclopedia*, March 16, 2008, accessed on October 25th, 2014, <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/the-economic-history-of-the-fur-trade-1670-to-1870/>.

³⁰⁴ Alexander Mackenzie, *A General History of the Fur Trade*, xii-xiii.

Other managers scoffed at both ideas. Senior officials told Mackenzie no man in the business could confidently predict which months were that much slower than other parts of the year, and that if a fur market existed anywhere else, Pedlars had already done all they could to reach it. With these ideas rejected, Mackenzie fell back on his faith in the role of Île-à-la-Crosse in the company's future. On this point, Mackenzie did get full support from all of the NWC's senior officials. Moreover, they also commended the choice of Patrick Small as their man for the job of making the village a hub for the company, keeping the HBC at bay during the process, and determining how to do so while recalling the possibility of significantly negative side-effects from Pond's own days there.³⁰⁵ In 1784 Small arrived at Île-à-la-Crosse prepared to build a home, learn more about local ways, and explain how his company's interests truly worked in tandem with villagers' own perspectives and efforts.

Upon arrival, Small surprisingly found himself in regular agreement with Pond's observations about Île-à-la-Crosse. For example, Small agreed that locals did not seem particularly welcoming, nor did they seem to comprehend the idea of trade emanating from a trusting relationship. Besides, as Pond also concluded, Frobisher and Henry's remarks about the village's more ideal weather conditions could not possibly be true.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁵ Innis, "A Note on Recent Publications," 569. As well, managers had faith in Small because "Small is said to have wintered on the Churchill in 1779, almost certainly with the support of McTavish."

³⁰⁶ Patrick Small to Simon McTavish, 24 February 1788 (repository not given) in Henry R. Wagner, *Peter Pond: Fur Trader and Explorer* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Library Western Historical Series, 1955), 34-35.

Yet as more time passed, Small found Pond's conclusions less and less accurate and more self-serving.³⁰⁷ Small soon surmised that Pond's difficulties with crossing Methye had more to do with his (im)patience and poor treatment of locals rather than either villagers' incompetence or the weather.³⁰⁸ Bad maps, broken promises, and skepticism about Indigenous knowledge – these factors hampered Pond more than community skepticism about the NWC or the first Pedlars' poor observation skills.

Already known for his savvy understanding about the link between making trusting relationships and then creating profitable arrangements, Small decided to inform locals how his own view of Pond had been transformed. Not only did such a change reveal his willingness to admit his own shortcomings quickly and completely, but it also showed an initiative to deflate social tension. Perhaps he already had gained the trust of locals before his epiphany, but whatever the case, after Small revealed his new understanding about Pond he also gained the approval of families to marry a local First Nations woman within his first year there. Not long after their marriage ceremony, Small and his wife welcomed their daughter Charlotte into the world on 1 September, 1785.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁷ Irene Tennier Gordon, *People of the Fur Trade: From Native Trappers to Chief Factors* (Victoria, BC: Heritage House Publishing, 2011), 98.

³⁰⁸ Harry Duckworth, ed., *The English River Book: The North West Company Journal and Account of 1786* (1989): xvi.

³⁰⁹ No record exists of Patrick's wife's name. John E. Kicza, *Resilient Cultures: America's Native Peoples Confront European Colonization, 1500-1800* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2003), 117. 1785 was definitely a year of change for Small, as Alexander MacKenzie arrived in Île-à-la-Crosse that summer to help him as well. MacKenzie stayed until 1787. See F. C. Swannell, "Alexander Mackenzie as surveyor," *Beaver*, 290 (Winter 1959): 20–25. Some views contend Mackenzie secretly worked for a group called Gregory, McLeod and Co. at the time. But if Mackenzie did have such a double-role, this smaller group was bought out by the

As he started his new life as a father, Small's professional role also changed. NWC management informed Small that he was to expand his supervisory role beyond the village's immediate confines.³¹⁰ Because it realized this expansion would mean more work for Small, the NWC also notified him that an assistant would soon arrive to help him with his larger trading territory.³¹¹ Since this expansion would also, as management explained, make the Île-à-la-Crosse post the "regional headquarters" for all of Rupert's Land, Small welcomed the news of an assistant manager with great relief. In 1786 William McGillvray arrived to take that role, quickly impressed Small with his ability to learn the finer techniques of post leadership, learn about how local ways made trade easier, and also be enthusiastic about the importance of learning Indigenous languages.³¹² Particularly since the NWC had learned of the HBC's intent to expand further west of Cumberland House, and when the NWC learned that the village's trading values prices were considered the most accurate

NWC in 1787. See Mackenzie's *Voyages from Montreal*, 4, 10-12. Any historical consideration of Charlotte as the first Métis person at Île-à-la-Crosse is, in fact, more an observation on the NWC's recognition of Métis people for their own records. See Brenda Macdougall, "The Comforts of Married Life': Metis Family Life, Labour, and the Hudson's Bay Company," *Labour/Le Travail*, 61 (Spring 2008): 9-39; Eccles, "The Fur Trade and Eighteenth-Century Imperialism," and Podruchny *Making the Voyageur World*. See also chapters by Heather Devine and Olive Dickason in *From Rupert's Land to Canada: Essays in Honour of John E. Foster*, ed. Ted Binnema, Gerhard J. Ens, and R.C. Macleod (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2001).

³¹⁰ Harry Duckworth, ed., *The English River Book*, xxxi. See also Marchildon and Robinson, *Canoeing the Churchill*, 415.

³¹¹ Village sources claim the company sent Alexander Mackenzie to confirm the need of an assistant manager. So impressed by the village's potential, some of these men would later help found the XY Company. *Sakitawak Bi-Centennial*, "The English River Department", *Ile-a-la-Crosse, 1776-1976*, accessed on August 10, 2015, <http://www.jkcc.com/english.html>.

³¹² Thompson, *David Thompson's Narrative*, xlv. Interestingly, the HBC apparently was well aware that NWC men "were of the opinion that colonisation would be disastrous to the prosperity of the fur trade," Hudson's Bay Company, 87.

prices in all of Rupert's Land, ³¹³McGillvray's role became even more pivotal as Small believed only more manpower would keep the Honourable Company away.³¹⁴

For an example of the strategies McGillvray and Small devised to offset HBC efforts, the two Pedlars recommended their post have what they called "short term" assistance for its traders. Such a policy would allow the fur company traders to establish a credit system aimed at strengthening existing relationships, but it would also encourage First Nations from elsewhere to trade with the Île-à-la-Crosse station rather than any new (or closer) HBC post. Small and McGillvray reassured their supervisors that any short term financial losses incurred would be reimbursed within the calendar year and would certainly increase profits in future seasons.³¹⁵ Management approved this proposal for assistance.

Within a few months of the policy's implementation, the post's profits had grown even more than Small and McGillvray predicted. Moreover, and as an unimagined side effect, the policy meant the two men had to travel less for trading contacts and could thus save the post money. Even more pleasing to Small and McGillvray, individual trappers explained to them how they had decided this policy merited

³¹³ Lloyd Keith, *North of Athabasca: Slave Lake and Mackenzie River Documents of the North West Company, 1800-1821* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 429.

³¹⁴ Tom Shardlow, *David Thompson, A Trail by Stars*, 51. For years, HBC senior official Humphrey Marten had called for a change in company policy about whether inland Posts could help the company's efforts. But because the HBC did not work on that issue, Small contended stronger inroads could be made at his post.

³¹⁵ Taking pity upon HBC men who seemed ill at ease with their own exploration efforts, Small permitted HBC men Philip Turnor, Peter Fidler and four other company employees safe haven at Île-à-la-Crosse throughout the 1790 winter. The men departed in May 1791 and Small still wondered whether they had acquired enough knowledge to survive on their own. See E. E. Rich, "Philip Turnor," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, accessed July 10, 2015, http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?&id_nbr=2193.

bringing in more pelts and ones of better quality.³¹⁶ With decreased travel costs, better quality furs and more of them, the NWC accounts soared even further into the black because Small took every opportunity he could to make the gap between the NWC and the HBC along the Churchill even bigger.

Within five years of Small's arrival, Île-à-la-Crosse had a permanent population of more than forty Indigenous residents and at least fifty non-Indigenous people – most of whom worked for the NWC.³¹⁷ Moreover, the community acted as an integral “contact zone” for Dene, Nihyaw, Métis, French, and English “primary producers” making it the most profitable post in Rupert's Land.³¹⁸ Indeed, as Jarvenpa has argued, the mixture of people, activities, and prosperity at Île-à-la-Crosse during Small's time made the community the most multi-cultural and socially advanced location in (what is now) western Canada.³¹⁹

With the village post acquiring such an enviable state, the HBC wondered what it could do in response. Contending that any NWC success was due to accident and weather more than business or social strategy, the HBC believed that if it simply refined some of its own existing policies, the Pedlars' influence would dwindle.³²⁰

³¹⁶ Jarvenpa, “Intergroup Behavior and Imagery,” 285.

³¹⁷ Ibid.: “By the 1790s Ile a la Crosse had become the major point of trade in this area, eliminating the need for local Indian groups to make the long trading journey eastward to Fort Churchill.”

³¹⁸ James G.E. Smith, “The Ecological Basis of Chipewyan Socio-territorial Organization,” in *Proceedings: Northern Athapaskan Conference*, 1971, ed. Annette McFayden Clark (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1975) 413.

³¹⁹ Jarvenpa, “Silot'ine: An Insurance Perspective on Northern Dene Kinship Networks in Recent History,” 166.

³²⁰ Ted Binnema, *Enlightened Zeal: The Hudson's Bay Company and Scientific Networks, 1670-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 109.

But even with such self-confidence, the Honourable Company conceded that it could not ignore the village.³²¹ So when the HBC concluded it must link with Île-à-la-Crosse, it also decided one Servant must be chosen to establish that connection in person. That Servant did make it to the village. But unfortunately for the HBC, the employee hired to establish the Honourable Company in Île-à-la-Crosse would appreciate the village in ways that would only hurt his original employer.

³²¹ The HBC's highest officials discussed the matter of improved corporate planning for the entire company. Edward Umfreville, *The Present State of Hudson's Bay*. (London: Printed for C. Stalker, 1790), 91-92.

III. 3. d. Thompson Investigates a Place (and Person): the Century's Cusp

As Small settled into life in Île-à-la-Crosse, an orphaned boy named David Thompson obtained a position to attend the school at London's Grey Coats Hospital. Because students received room, board, and the potential to meet a future employer during their education, the opportunity to attend Grey Coats proved a boon for the underprivileged child. Amongst the businesses that sent scouts to the school, the HBC frequently combed Grey Coats for potential job recruits. During one particular visit to Grey Coats, an HBC representative was told of the eager and diligent Thompson. Impressed by the boy's reputation, the visiting Servant offered him a job. Thompson accepted quickly and enthusiastically. After signing a contract, and then boarding a ship for Hudson Bay, fifteen-year-old Thompson reached York Factory on the Honourable Company's behalf in 1785.³²²

Thompson promised to work hard; the HBC watched him to assure that would happen. Physically agile, astute, and eager to learn new skills, Thompson tried and (almost always) completed every task supervisors assigned him. Even better for the HBC, Thompson became enchanted with the North West's natural surroundings and volunteered to map rivers and record altitudes of York Factory's greater region; he even learned how to compile astronomical statistics. By 1787, the HBC found

³²² B.55/a/11, (1795-1796) Duck Portage, Manitoba Post Journals, HBCA, n.d., n.p.. York Factory was a post on the southwestern shore of Hudson Bay. The HBC established the post in 1684.

Thompson's efforts so impressive that it promoted him to a seven-year apprenticeship at Cumberland House.³²³

After reaching that inland station, Thompson learned necessary survival skills from fellow Cumberland House Servant Philip Turnor. While apprenticing under Turnor, Thompson also met a Servant by the name of Peter Fidler. Under Turnor, both Fidler and Thompson improved their cartographic skills, learned Indigenous languages, and gained experience collecting furs from trappers and evaluating them for fur auctions in London.³²⁴ Moreover, they developed a strong friendship. Regarding his own abilities while with Fidler and Turnor, Thompson impressed Cumberland House Chief Factor Malcolm Ross so much that Ross reported Thompson as the most effective Servant he had ever encountered – even during a period when Thompson's broken leg took more than a year to heal.³²⁵ This reputation led to Thompson receiving promotion to "Surveyor" in 1794 after completing his apprenticeship. For his first assignment, Thompson obtained instructions to travel west as quickly as possible while making maps along the way to send back to Montréal and London. Additionally, the HBC told Thompson to travel to Île-à-la-Crosse.³²⁶

³²³ J. B. Tyrrell, "David Thompson, a Great Geographer," *The Geographical Journal* 37, no. 1 (Jan., 1911): 49-58.

³²⁴ A succinct historiographical analysis about this explorer's history appears in D'Arcy Jenish "Saving David Thompson," *Canada's History* 90, no. 2 (April -May 2010): 41-44.

³²⁵ This information is located in the documents about Manchester House (another post at (now) Buckingham, Alberta). A.6/3, (1669-1715) "File currently unnamed," official general outward correspondence, HBCA, n.d., 128d-129.

³²⁶ "David Thompson: The Intrepid Surveyor, David Thompson (1770-1857)," *Pathfinders and Passageways: The Exploration of Canada*, Library and Archives Canada, accessed July 10, 2015, <http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/206/301/lac-bac/explorers/www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/explorers/h24-1650-e.html>.

Thompson kept to his company's instructions: he travelled every day, kept a journal of his experiences, collected data, and made maps for those who would follow his path. Yet as he followed these orders, Thompson also struggled with some other demands made by the Honourable Company. Thompson did not agree that he should communicate with locals only when arranging an immediate trade or the provision of a credit note.³²⁷ Instead, Thompson thought he needed to demonstrate trust first, wait a bit for that trust to be reciprocated, and then see if trade was of interest. With the HBC restrictions upon his activities, Thompson believed his role was not as successful as it could be and that his results would never be much better than Hearne's earlier and problematic efforts.³²⁸ As Thompson kept finding locals interested in trade after meeting him, and also capable of establishing and retaining more complex arrangements than he anticipated, Thompson ultimately found the HBC's policies both uncomfortable for his own personality and truly counterproductive for company goals. After a long private struggle about how his own standards meshed with HBC values, the previously rule-abiding Thompson decided to breach his own employment contract without notice on 23 May 1797.³²⁹ That same day, and as he continued on to Île-à-la-Crosse, Thompson became a

³²⁷ Thompson, *David Thompson's Narrative*, xxviii.

³²⁸ J. Neilsen Barry, "The First Explorers of the Columbia and Snake Rivers," *Geographical Review* 22, no. 3 (July 1932), 453.

³²⁹ J. B. Tyrrell, *A Brief Narrative of the Journeys of David Thompson in North-Western America*. (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1888), 7: "Tuesday, May 23rd, 1797: This day left the service of the Hudson's Bay Co., and [entered] that of the Company of Merchants from Canada. May God Almighty prosper me." See also B.179/a/1, (1798-1871) Reindeer Lake Post Journal, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

Pedlar.³³⁰ Unsurprisingly, the NWC men at Île-à-la-Crosse were delighted to see Thompson when he arrived in the village later that summer.³³¹

When he reached Île-à-la-Crosse, the cartography-obsessed Thompson mapped the community and sent his results to Pedlar headquarters in Montréal.³³² Upon receiving the maps, NWC management responded that Thompson had made the most helpful maps of the village and its greater area the company had ever acquired. After some months of travelling elsewhere, Thompson returned to Île-à-la-Crosse in the spring of 1798 and mapped the village and its region again in even greater detail. Due to their inclusive data about natural conditions and local practices,³³³ Pedlar management also commended these records as integral to NWC success along the Churchill.³³⁴

³³⁰ See Richard Slobodin, "The Subarctic Métis as Products and Agents of Culture Contact," *Arctic Anthropology* 2, no. 1 (1964): 50.

³³¹ Charles Chaboillez had spent the 1795-1796 winter at Île-à-la-Crosse, and Thompson credited Chaboillez with making Thompson's efforts more accepted. See Gratien Allaire, "Charles Chaboillez," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, accessed July 10, 2015, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/chaboillez_charles_5E.html.

³³² J.B. Tyrrell, "Early Explorations of the Churchill River" *Geographical Review* 3, no. 5 (May 1917), 378: "In 1797, while in the employ of the North-West Company, he (Thompson) surveyed the Churchill River from the mouth of the Reindeer River to Frog Portage, on his way to Cumberland House, and the following year he surveyed the river from Frog Portage upwards to Isle a la Crosse, making a detour on the route into Lac la Ronge. From Isle(sic) a la Crosse he ascended Beaver River, the principal upper branch of the Churchill River, past Green Lake to the source of the stream, whence he carried his canoes to Lac la Biche, where he built a trading Post. In May, 1799, he was on the Clearwater River, a branch of the Athabaska, which he ascended to Methye Portage, from which place he surveyed the Churchill River down to Isle a la Crosse, and thence checked his survey of the river made the year before down to Frog Portage."

³³³ Thompson, *David Thompson's Narrative*, lxxviii.

³³⁴ Shardlow, *David Thompson*, 113. Thompson's most descriptive map of the area is: NMC6763 (1817) Simon McGillivray, "Notice respecting the boundary between His Majesty's possessions in North America and the United States [microform]: A Map of America...Exhibiting the Principal Trading Stations of the North West Company; and intended to accompany the narrative of occurrences in the Indian countries of North America, connected with the Earl of Selkirk, the Hudson's Bay and the North-West companies," (London: Printed by B. McMillan, National Map Collection (R12567-0-7)), 1000-North America [cartographic material, architectural drawing]: Continents, oceans and archipelagos, Library and Archives Canada.

When Thompson sent a *third* set of maps of Île-à-la-Crosse in 1799,³³⁵ he simultaneously impressed and perplexed the NWC management. Definitely, Île-à-la-Crosse remained incredibly important to the NWC. But did the company really need so many documents to describe this well-known place? And could the talented Thompson not use his work time for other activities? These and other questions about Thompson's efforts became less difficult for management to answer when the Pedlars learned they were not the only people Thompson wanted to impress: their best mapmaker had fallen in love.³³⁶

As he admitted a few years later, almost immediately upon his first arrival at Île-à-la-Crosse Thompson had noticed a petite redhead who spoke English, Nihiyaw, some French, and who was respected both by locals and outsiders. Thompson quickly realized she appeared to be related to many people, and her family's opinions often influenced community decisions.³³⁷ As he made maps to impress his

³³⁵ Thompson, *David Thompson's Narrative*, lxxix. Thompson arrived in late May to do so.

³³⁶ The answer might have made sense once learned by others, but deconstructing attraction in historical terms has never been the academy's forte. Still, a few sources provide reflections. For remarks about how too few scholars admit that emotional crushes impact history, see the section of Clay Shirkey, *Here Comes Everybody* entitled "Love as a Renewable Building Material" at 140-141, where he observes "We don't talk about love when trying to describe the public world...(but) love has a half-life, too." Moreover, "when people care enough, they can come together and accomplish things of a scope and longevity that were previously impossible; they can do big things for love" (142). See also Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, trans. John Tedeschi and Anne Tedeschi (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 36 and Gerald Vizenor, *Manifest Manners: Post Indian Warriors of Survivance* (Hanover, London: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), 39. It was the general English belief that a loving relationship would ruin a business relationship. Martin Levy, *Love and Madness: The Murder of Martha Ray, Mistress of the Fourth Earl of Sandwich* (New York: William Morrow, 2004), 56. See also Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, 413 which has an explanation about how if one is revolutionary, a rebellious act then turns "into a project of love."

³³⁷ Although the NWC did not record that it ever left and re-established itself at Île-à-la-Crosse, buildings were regularly improved. As of May 26th, 2012 According to the Dictionary of Canadian

management, Thompson also found himself interested in impressing her. While he did his best to learn about her without revealing his personal interest, Thompson discovered the girl went by the name of Charlotte Small.

Before arriving at the village, sources had informed Thompson that Patrick Small had left Île-à-la-Crosse in 1791. With this news in mind, Thompson decided he would need to tread lightly in the community as he ascertained villagers' opinions about Small's departure. Much to his personal (and perhaps professional) relief, Thompson found locals did not speak of Small in disparaging terms. In that way, perhaps the bad impression Pond made upon his departure had not recurred when Small left.³³⁸ Because the father of the girl of his dreams was not around, Thompson also believed that impressing and influencing her family and guardians was even a more sensitive task. While certainly wishing to please his employer, Thompson had actually planned his 1798 trip to the village as a way to find more favour with more locals.³³⁹ In the end, Thompson's strategies worked both amongst the NWC

Biography when Thompson first arrived at Île-à-la-Crosse, he benefitted from the construction efforts of NWC worker Alexander MacKay, see Jean Morrison, "Alexander MacKay" *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, accessed July 10, 2015, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio.php?id_nbr=2519. MacKay's descendants, considered Métis by locals, help challenge the assumptions made by writers who contend the Small children were the first mixed culture descendants around Île-à-la-Crosse. Mackay likely married around 1790, and his wife was a product of a mixed marriage.

³³⁸ Notably, and inaccurately, J. Howard Richards explains how Île-à-la-Crosse was not established as a community until this same year. See his *Saskatchewan: A Geographical Appraisal* (Saskatoon: Division of Extension and Community Relations, University of Saskatchewan, 1981), 50-51. Pond noted that the exchanges at the village might have slowed down, but the sluggishness was not due to diseases (unlike other locations). Yerbury, "Post Contact Chipewyan," 250. Nihyaw families were hit significantly in 1790, and this event made some Dene more comfortable visiting Île-à-la-Crosse. But the amount of trade was not modified and the number of people who came to Île-à-la-Crosse did not change. Yerbury, *Ibid.* 251.

³³⁹ D'Arcy Jenish, *Epic Wanderer: David Thompson and the Mapping of the Canadian West* (Toronto: Anchor Canada, 2004), 110. Thompson was regularly complimented on how well he took care of Charlotte's mother, and that this gesture ensured he would be a welcome member of families and trading circles in Île-à-la-Crosse. MSS 231, T. C. Elliot papers, MacKay folder, Box 2,

managers and the villagers. This approval showed its fullest form when Île-à-la-Crosse watched David and Charlotte marry soon after his third arrival to the village on 10 June 1799.³⁴⁰ Here was a new recognition of kinship that reinforced the community's concerns for respect, the acknowledgement of family ties, and the relevance of both men and women's impact upon local and more distant circles.

As Thompson's role in Île-à-la-Crosse solidified in many different ways, various Honourable Servants travelled to the village and also tried to make a positive impression. Unfortunately for these HBC men, their arrival was not received positively. When they showed little ability to construct shelter, no villager helped them. Moreover, when they did appear to build something akin to a sleeping quarters, villagers purposefully damaged those efforts as soon as the housing went up. With such a strong negative response to the HBC, Thompson knew that although still burdened with memories of Pond's disrespect, the NWC could regenerate positive links with the community members.³⁴¹ But being the astute trader he was, Thompson also knew that the NWC's profitable posture was earned rather than to be expected.³⁴² Every day, he needed to demonstrate his trust for his neighbours (and now, possibly his relatives). Every day, they had the discretion to reject such an effort.

folder 16, Oregon Historical Society.

³⁴⁰ An official religious ceremony happened 10 June 1799 in the village. Thompson, *David Thompson's Narrative*, xlv; Sakitawak Bicentennial, "En garde...Many Years of Trade War," accessed July 15, 2015, <http://www.jkcc.com/war.html>.

³⁴¹ Rupert Ruggles, *A Country so Interesting: The Hudson's Bay Company and Two Centuries of Mapping, 1670-1870*. (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 53. Citing Tyrrell, *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor*, 352.

³⁴² Thompson, *David Thompson's Narrative*, 351.

Given Thompson's history at Cumberland House, the HBC's decision to re-send Peter Fidler to Île-à-la-Crosse was likely no accident. Fidler's first visit, before Thompson wed Charlotte, had proved beyond unsuccessful. When Fidler arrived for the second time soon after Thompson's wedding, the HBC expected much better results.³⁴³ In similar form to their first response to Fidler's original sojourn, locals burned down Fidler's second shelter as soon as he constructed it. To show their rejection even further, the NWC would not even sell products to Fidler.³⁴⁴ With such poor treatment, the normally cheerful and optimistic Fidler concluded that if the HBC did not send more men to help him find the means to survive in Île-à-la-Crosse for at least two months, the Honourable Company might as well cut their losses and consider the village a NWC community. Fidler also took this intimidating opportunity to argue that the HBC ban on fraternizing with locals put Fidler in even more danger, since no social ties existed that could have triggered a sense of neighbourly protection.³⁴⁵ By the turn of the nineteenth century, the similarly trained Thompson and Fidler could not have been in more differently stationed professional and personal circumstances. Thompson never complained about Fidler

³⁴³ Tyrrell claims Fidler arrives again in 1792. Tyrrell, *Journals of Samuel Hearne and Philip Turnor*, 353. This visit, however, is rarely considered an "official" expedition by Fidler as he failed to establish a trading post building.

³⁴⁴ E.3/1-7, (1789-1807) Peter Fidler, *Journals of Exploration*, HBCA, n.d., n.p. Arthur S. Morton, *A History of the Canadian West*, 451. Île-à-la-Crosse traders ensured that any pemmican arriving in the entire west arrived at Île-à-la-Crosse before reaching elsewhere. Villagers were able to do so because the NWC had also constructed a Post at nearby Green Lake, and locals from that location regularly produced the food for travelers. Fidler was allowed to purchase food for his own consumption but nothing more to ensure he would not be understood as a trader.

³⁴⁵ Rich, *Hudson's Bay Company 1670- 1870*, 434-435; The policy is discussed at B.239/a/2, (1714-1722), York Factory Post Journals, HBCA, n.d., 22; Yerbury, "Post Contact Chipewyan," 241; Ross, *Beyond the River and the Bay*, 115; A.S. Morton, *A History of the Canadian West to 1871*, 453.

in his own writings, and Fidler similarly did not criticize Thompson either. But unfortunately for Fidler, he did not experience Thompson's good standing with work management.

Not only had Thompson, his colleagues, and locals kept the HBC at bay, they had also ensured another competitor did not make roots in Île-à-la-Crosse. Earlier, when Thompson had struggled with his views about HBC policies, some Pedlars had grappled with NWC policies and decided to form their own company in 1798, based on the claim that the NWC had lost its principled way. Led by two founding NWC partners, Alexander Mackenzie and Simon McTavish, this dissatisfied group of NWC men created what was eventually nicknamed the "XY" Company.³⁴⁶ Focused on making more "wintering partners,"³⁴⁷ this group also correctly believed the new company's survival depended upon a presence at Île-à-la-Crosse. In early 1799, XY men made their way to the village. As a result of this third business sending representatives, for a few months that year Île-à-la-Crosse hosted people from (at least) five cultures (three Indigenous and two European), three fur trade companies,³⁴⁸ and several "free traders" – all of whom appreciated the village's

³⁴⁶ For a general study, see Russell Anthony Pendergast, "The XY Company, 1798-1804" (PhD dissertation, University of Ottawa, 1957).

³⁴⁷ Wintering partners not only invested in the company to which they affiliated, they also actively investigated the North West on their own and, as a result, obtained more shares of the company. Typically, wintering partners also had broad discretion to act in any way that they perceived would help company profits. See John Roberts, *The Modern Firm: Organizational Design for Performance and Growth* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 10.

³⁴⁸ Timothy Paul Foran, "'Les Gens de Cette Place': Oblates and the Evolving Concept of Metis at Ile-a-la-Crosse, 1845-1888," (PhD Dissertation, University of Ottawa, 2011), 18; Burpee, *The Search for the Western Sea*, 499; Morton, *Under Western Skies*, 213.

importance for their own financial survival.³⁴⁹ For a community with only approximately one hundred and fifty permanent residents,³⁵⁰ Île-à-la-Crosse's multi-sided form was even more noteworthy.



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³⁴⁹ At this time, Île-à-la-Crosse had also become the most popular place for 'free traders,' Ross, *Beyond the River and the Bay*, 39.

³⁵⁰ Morton, *History of the Canadian West*, 512.

³⁵¹ Image 10 - Painting of Sir Alexander Mackenzie painted by Thomas Lawrence (c. 1800). Image courtesy of National Gallery Canada.



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As they rejected HBC ways, residents also so threatened XY men that this company abandoned its hopes of trading in Île-à-la-Crosse within a few months of its arrival. This failure contributed to why the rebellious startup soon collapsed as a company, and nearly everyone involved with the XY Company rejoined their original employer and went back to their Pedlar ways.³⁵³

With this return to a calmer two-company fur trade in Rupert's Land, Thompson decided he and Charlotte could leave the village and work for the NWC across the North West.³⁵⁴ They did so with the conviction that the NWC must continue to never

³⁵² Image 11 - C-000164, "Simon McTavish a partner in NWC", artist unknown, ca.1800, Acc. No. 1956-6-1, Library and Archives Canada.

³⁵³ Innis provides one of the best explanations of the 1804-1805 ongoings that led the XY Company and NWC to agree upon terms. Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada*, 194-203.

³⁵⁴ The most recent explanation of this point is Roy Macgregor, "As Statues, Explorers Stand Still After Life of Historic Travels Together," *Globe and Mail*, Sept. 14, 2009, A2. David and Charlotte remained married for fifty-eight years and eventually found themselves poverty stricken in

take its comfortable and commanding role for granted, with or without them both being there to reinforce trust. As his wife regularly reminded him, villagers still had final say about how trade and cultural co-habitation would be conducted.³⁵⁵



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Montréal. Thompson and Charlotte returned to the village in 1812. Thompson, *David Thompson's Narrative*, xcvi.

³⁵⁵ David Thompson, "Travels" (unpublished manuscript) 34a, 1847.

³⁵⁶ Image 12 - Statue of David and Charlotte Thompson in Invermere, British Columbia. Image by Ross MacDonald, Parks Canada, 2006.

III. 3. e. The Community's Early Nineteenth Century

Notwithstanding Fidler's repeated and embarrassing departures from Île-à-la-Crosse, the HBC believed its international reputation still needed a link to the tiny village. So even when it did not have a representative there, the Honourable Company misled its investors in 1799 and claimed the company had indeed established itself in the community. What it did not tell those same investors was that "established" meant Servants dared only to court trappers at the community's outskirts and did not have the courage to even stay one night in the village itself. As it scoured the horizon daily for any sign of the HBC, the NWC continued to work on trust with villagers, and those same residents helped keep out Servants as a result. Over and over, Pedlars regularly ran Servants out of the community – figuratively and literally. As such NWC-HBC antics occurred, more of each corporation's workers wondered how the law judged each others' behaviour.

Given the status of the British legal system in Rupert's Land, all fur company men had every reason to be confused about how to understand the land's regulatory system.³⁵⁷ As A. S. Morton properly observed about the colonial legal regime at this time, "the Canadian courts had no jurisdiction over Rupert's Land."³⁵⁸ Sometimes, fur trade men wondered how their own safety could be assured if a colonial legal

³⁵⁷ Kent McNeil, *Native Rights and the Boundaries of Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory*, Studies in Aboriginal Rights 4 (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan Native Law Centre, 1982), 4. For information about how the role of a specific monarch would have upon colonies, read Chapter 1 of Christopher Tait, "The Colonial Crown: Monarchy in British North American Politics and Culture, 1760 – 1867," (PhD diss., University of Western Ontario, 2007), 45-47.

³⁵⁸ Morton, *History of the Canadian West*, 340-341.

process was not enforced, and that nervousness made its way to the village. For example, in 1802 a Pedlar met his death down the river from Île-à-la-Crosse at the hands of an XY man who never faced charges.³⁵⁹ All traders residing close to the community nervously wondered about the correct legal proceeding in this circumstance. Should the man have their sympathy because he only defended himself? Should locals organize an ad hoc arrest? Would British representatives ever arrive to provide some guidance?³⁶⁰ While this tense situation remained unresolved, Servants accused NWC men of “seducing” First Nations in criminal (yet never further explained) ways,³⁶¹ Pedlars complained about the Servants’ violent nature, and villagers wondered how their non-Indigenous neighbours could boast about the existence of their legal systems at all when none of those same non-Indigenous people had even shown proof of their legal system’s declared authority on the Churchill River. When Great Britain passed the *Canada Jurisdiction Act* in 1803,³⁶² and people around Île-à-la-Crosse learned of this legislation, many residents hoped this Act would provide some guidance about how everyone should formally show their orderly side.³⁶³

³⁵⁹ Hamar Foster, "Long-Distance Justice: The Criminal Jurisdiction of Canadian Courts West of the Canadas, 1763-1859," *The American Journal of Legal History* 34, no. 1 (1990): 7 – 11.

³⁶⁰ Raffan. *Emperor of the North*, 73.

³⁶¹ This attitude was claimed by HBC men at Île-a-la-Crosse who wanted to justify their lack of outreach with locals compared to the NWC. See B.42/b/45 (1783-1810) “William Linklater to Thomas Stayner (Churchill)” Fort Churchill, Manitoba. Correspondence Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

³⁶² *The Jurisdiction Act of 1803*, 43 George 3, c.138 (1803). See also Louis Knafla, “Introduction” in *Laws and Societies in the Canadian Prairie West*, eds. Louis A. Knafla and Jonathan Swainger (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 14.

³⁶³ Deidre Simmons, *Keepers of the Record: The History of the Hudson’s Bay Company Archives* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill Queen’s University Press, 2007), 111.

The *Canada Jurisdiction Act* detailed how “powers are given to the Company to make laws, impose penalties and punishments, and to do so in all causes civil and criminal according to the laws of England.”³⁶⁴ Before 1803, the HBC claimed its workers acted as representatives of the British government and its legal regime. But as Morton and others have explained, the actual activities of Servants suggest workers did little to demonstrate this role. In theory and pending practice, the Act’s appearance meant people in Rupert’s Land learned that trials could be held at closer Selkirk instead of faraway York (Toronto) or Montréal. It then followed that the possibility of arresting, detaining, and charging people with violations appeared more feasible.

The Act, however, ultimately had little resonance in the village – and for good reasons. Île-à-la-Crosse had witnessed some tense events that a known set of criminal laws might have mitigated or even prevented. But at the same time, the ongoing social cohesion within the community that actually kept locals’ actions respectful. For one matter, while social drinking amongst traders happened regularly in fur trade country, consumption and trade of liquor at Île-à-la-Crosse was markedly more controlled than in other parts of the North West.³⁶⁵ Although Île-à-la-Crosse traders certainly did drink with residents, and residents even traded

³⁶⁴ Provision 1 of the Jurisdiction Act of 1803 ensured any activities considered a crime in Upper Canada or Lower Canada the same in Rupert’s Land. This statute’s purpose, in fact, actually already existed. Apparently people in Rupert’s Land needed a reminder of whose rules were supposed to be followed. Sir William Schooling, *The Governor and Company or Adventurers of England Trading Into Hudson’s Bay*, 6. Supposedly more authoritative because Justices of the Peace could hear conflicts and make a judgment, only HBC traders could be justices and HBC men were not always in the locations where a justice was needed. See E. E. Rich, *The Fur Trade and the Northwest to 1857*, 240-241. See generally A. S. Morton, *The Canada Jurisdiction Act (1803) and the North-West* (Ottawa: Royal Society of Canada, 1938).

³⁶⁵ See B89/a/3, (1805) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.d., n.p. Anne Harper-Fender gives examples of Île-à-la-Crosse in 1805-06. See Harper-Fender, “Discouraging the Use of a Common Resource: The Crees of Saskatchewan,” 169.

alcohol themselves, many villagers believed alcohol should be exchanged instead of consumed because doing so had more value for their long-term economic standing.³⁶⁶ With such an interest in trading liquor rather than ingesting it, locals also did not take kindly to those who did otherwise and proved too boisterous for unwritten community expectations.

Along with (and because of) the unique impact of alcohol, Île-à-la-Crosse's residents also showed the ability to resolve disputes on their own.³⁶⁷ Villagers resolved petty thefts, invented various forms of compensation for violated contracts,³⁶⁸ and also openly discussed whether any resolution devised by a judge in Selkirk would be better than what Île-à-la-Crosse residents had established.³⁶⁹ Certainly, socializing and sometimes even drunkenness led to violence in Île-à-la-Crosse. As well, sometimes locals could not solve problems without an opinion from another party located elsewhere. But compared with other communities, Île-à-la-Crosse was remarkably peaceful.³⁷⁰ So the Act was welcome, but more as a way to enhance community standards rather than to be some type of doctrine for people inexperienced in the rule of law.

³⁶⁶ Craig Heron, *Booze: A Distilled History* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2003), 24.

³⁶⁷ MacGregor, *Peter Fidler, Canada's Forgotten Surveyor, 1769 – 1822*, 25.

³⁶⁸ See B.89/a (1805-1940) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.d., n.p. for details of HBC men promising a slightly higher price for furs from Dene as a way to help the Dene overcome their fear of Cree men stationed close to the village. Scenes of this sort are also explained by Jarvenpa's, "Intergroup Behavior," 285.

³⁶⁹ James Scott Hamilton, "Fur Trade Social Inequality and the Role of Non-Verbal Communication," (PhD diss., Simon Fraser University, 1990), 73.

³⁷⁰ Yerbury, "Post Contact Chipewyan," 14.

Besides their established forms of control for deviance, villagers also found the means to construct their own taxation policy. With such an achievement, even more residents worked to keep Île-à-la-Crosse a peaceful place. The collection of money for community coffers stemmed from a claim made by both the NWC and HBC in 1804. That year, each company's profits had slumped dramatically for reasons out of the businesses' control. To stop their financial bleeding, each company declared it would have to place a surcharge on all transactions at every post.³⁷¹ True enough, this policy stabilized the companies' financial circumstances. But equally true, trappers' profit margins sank as a result. Across Rupert's Land, post workers heard complaints galore about the change. But not at Île-à-la-Crosse. Why the difference? Pedlars did not hear any protests because trappers did not darken the post's door – at all. Due to the surcharge and locals' lack of dependence on the fur trade for their sustenance, trading villagers simply stopped trading what they trapped. With such a forceful response in the village, Pedlars witnessed their post's 1805 profits plummeting to a near record (and all time relative) low.³⁷²

Stationed on the outskirts of the village, and while having to impose the tax themselves, Servants watched the NWC post's demise. After a few weeks, the HBC secretly thought up a strategy aimed at taking full advantage of this apparent trade stoppage at the North West's most frequented community. First ordering Peter

³⁷¹ Strategies about where and when to implement a type of surcharge on those obtaining goods from the HBC had happened for decades. For details about the HBC's attempts, see Natalie Hawkins, "From Fur To Felt Hats: The Hudson's Bay Company and the Consumer Revolution in Britain, 1670 – 1730," (Masters thesis, University of Ottawa, 2014), 40, 90, 124.

³⁷² Innis, "A note on recent Publications," 572.

Fidler to venture back there,³⁷³ and then having him tell locals he could not eliminate the surcharge, the HBC also instructed Fidler to announce another idea: the HBC would increase the gross value of every pelt so the net profit would return to the pre-surcharge levels. As Fidler and the HBC hoped, and as the NWC men helplessly watched, response to this proposal was beyond positive. Showing they were willing to put their cynicism about the HBC aside for a better deal, trappers decided to trade with the Honourable Company, and Fidler soon picked up nearly all of the business the Pedlars at Île-à-la-Crosse had lost.³⁷⁴ Trade for Fidler proved so brisk and favourable, he found the courage to construct sleeping quarters in the village's centre and the trappers did not find the time to burn it down.

What Fidler did not tell locals, however, was that the HBC strategy had one more stage. After a while, when it appeared Fidler had reinforced good relations with people who had previously shown their loyalty to Pedlars for decades, Fidler told his newly acquired contacts that he had bad news: the pelts' value had dropped significantly. With such an unfortunate development, Fidler explained how the HBC had no choice but to return the pelts' value to that when the Honourable Company imposed the surcharge. Fidler was sorry to bring this news to his new contacts, but he reassured them that he and his company would continue to provide trustworthy links to the international fur trade for village residents³⁷⁵. Confidentially, the HBC

³⁷³ James MacGregor, *Peter Fidler: Canada's Forgotten Surveyor*, 153.

³⁷⁴ Philip Taft Spaulding, "The Metis of Île-à-la-Crosse," 55 claims the HBC finally established a Post in 1805. Spaulding cites Innis' *The Fur Trade in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1956), 283, for his claim.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

believed such a reassurance would be enough since returning to the NWC would be both annoying and embarrassing for locals.³⁷⁶ The HBC was wrong.

Not only did the strategy backfire; it did so in ways Fidler and his company had not even imagined. When Fidler told his contacts about slumping fur prices, those contacts asked NWC men how the lower fur value impacted Pedlar efforts. The Pedlars responded that they did not know of such a slump. The same trappers who had dealt with Fidler concluded he either lied or the HBC was not a reliable company when it participated in trade further afield.³⁷⁷ Whatever the case, word spread about the mismatch of information between Fidler and village Pedlars, and village trappers decided to return to the NWC in droves. With such a wonderful turn of events for the NWC, Pedlars headquarters even sent more workers to help respond to the sudden surge in trade. By late 1805, Île-à-la-Crosse's NWC depot had become "crowded with servants, to overawe the mild and easy-going Peter Fidler in the English house."³⁷⁸ Yet again, the HBC had failed to establish itself, and Fidler again feared for his life after an unidentifiable party lit his accommodations on fire in the middle of the night. After watching this home burn to the ground, Fidler determined to get out of the village. In explaining this even more rapid exit, Fidler told his supervisors that the Métis trappers spoke harshly and inaccurately about

³⁷⁶ This type of process by a potential trading party is typical of strategies used during what economists consider "rent seeking." For context of the Hudson's Bay Company's efforts, see the analysis about rent seeking on page 118 of Chrystia Freeland's, *Plutocrats: The Rise of the New Global Super Rich and the Fall of the Rest of Us* (Toronto: Doubleday, 2012).

³⁷⁷ E.3/1-7, (1789-1807) Peter Fidler, Journals of Exploration, HBCA, n.d., n.p. The date must be after 1805, and most likely 1806. He apparently has to break this news in the early spring.

³⁷⁸ A. S. Morton, *A History of Western Canada*, 525.

the HBC, and even local First Nations at Île-à-la-Crosse were “greatly against us [the HBC].”³⁷⁹ In other words, and since all of his fellow Servants had already run away, absolutely no one would come to Fidler’s aid.

Unfortunately for Fidler (and HBC profits), HBC management refused to take Fidler at his word. One of his supervisors wrote, “I can not [sic] describe my agitation of mind” about Fidler’s debacle – regardless of the potentially “scurrilous” activities of Pedlars.³⁸⁰ The HBC, however, did not fire Fidler,³⁸¹ but it issued a sharp reprimand for supposedly tarnishing the company’s reputation due to his failure at Île-à-la-Crosse.³⁸²

As Fidler attempted to improve his reputation with his own employer, NWC men at Île-à-la-Crosse kept collecting a surcharge on pelts while living peacefully with villagers. Residents had complained about the surcharge, changed their economic patterns in response, and the policy had not quite disappeared. But during all the stages invented by the HBC to solidify its presence in Île-à-la-Crosse, the trappers’ departure and then return to the NWC revealed the villagers’ demand for significant openness and honesty (or what economists call “certain information”) which then inspired locals to help NWC strengthen their own roles in the community.³⁸³ Still,

³⁷⁹ B.89/a/1 (August 19. 1805) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., (October 1805), 25.

³⁸¹ Morton, *A History of the Canadian West*, 519.

³⁸² 25 August 1808 entry by Harmon as quoted in W. Kaye Lamb, ed., *Sixteen Years in the Indian Country: the Journal of Daniel Williams Harmon, 1800-1816* (Toronto: Macmillan Co. of Canada, 1957), 114.

³⁸³ “The NWC fort is well built and has attached to it an excellent kitchen garden...” as quoted in Daniel Williams Harmon, *A Journal of Voyages and Travels in the Interior of North America*

the HBC believed it could not go on without whatever Île-à-la-Crosse provided if the Honourable Company truly wanted to continue in the fur trade. After determining not to send Fidler back to the village again, the HBC chose John Clarke to convince locals that his employer was truly “honourable” in both name and deed.

III. 3. f. Clarke and the Success of Honourable Ways: The Pre-merger Years



JOHN CLARKE
Chief Factor in the Service of the Honourable Hudson Bay Company.

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As a man who had prided himself as a Pedlar during his youth, an independent traveler and consultant to others in his twenties, and then a wiser and even more

Between the 47th and 58th Degrees of North Latitude (Andover, Andover Press: 1820), 168. The author claims this quote comes from the 1808 Aug 25 entry and includes observations about how the garden illustrated the community's acceptance of the NWC.

³⁸⁴ Image 13 - John Clarke (1781-1825), ca. 1815. From [historylink.org](http://www.historylink.org), accessed July 10, 2015, http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=9680.

mentoring Servant during his middle age years, John Clarke described himself as a man with deep knowledge about many fur companies' strengths and limitations. Over the years, several men in Rupert's Land had worked for both the HBC and the NWC. But Clarke could make an additional claim: he had proof that when he made a recommendation, his proposals were followed. In other words, his record for good guidance stood for itself. When and how he helped NWC posts readjust to different Indigenous perspectives after relocating, or when he helped start a company from the ground up in 1810 around the Spokane River (present day Washington State),³⁸⁵ Clarke was an extraordinary profitmaker all across the North West. As well, he had the ability to somehow learn information the HBC had considered confidential. For example, he knew of other failures by Fidler. Of particular note to Clarke, he even knew how Fidler had secretly returned to Île-à-la-Crosse twice in 1806 to fail for a fourth and fifth time.³⁸⁶ Moreover, Clarke knew Fidler had tried to implement what the HBC called its "retrenching system" during these additionally futile attempts. So even with more men and the most tradeable product in the possession of any Servant anywhere in Rupert's Land, Fidler could not establish the HBC on the Churchill River.³⁸⁷ Of course, Clarke had to concede that the efforts of an aggressive

³⁸⁵ Reuben Gold Thwaites, *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846*. (Cleveland, Ohio: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1904), 195.

³⁸⁶ B.60/a/6, (December 23, 1806), folder 6, "James Bird to John McNab, 23 December 1806," Edmonton, Alberta Post Journal, HBCA, n.p.

³⁸⁷ Robert S. Allen, "Peter Fidler and Nottingham House, Lake Athabasca, 1802–1806," *History and Archaeology* (Ottawa), 69 (1983): 283-347. Fidler's repeated placement at Île-à-la-Crosse was part of the HBC's "retrenching system." Robert Allen, "Peter Fidler," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, accessed July 10, 2015, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/fidler_peter_6E.html. At this time, Clarke did not have employment with the HBC but regularly visited the company's offices after leaving the NWC.

Pedlar named Samuel Black ensured Fidler experienced harsh conditions.³⁸⁸

Moreover, Clarke also agreed with the decision that Fidler deserved a year's leave with pay for all that he went through during these efforts to build a post at Île-à-la-Crosse.³⁸⁹ But Clarke contended he would have never failed like Fidler, and given all the information he had somehow acquired about Fidler and his numerous debacles, HBC management decided to believe him.

As a continuation of this ability for helpful foresight, Clarke had repeatedly told the HBC that Île-à-la-Crosse must be made a pivotal component of the Honourable Company's presence. It could not be publicly recognized as important but given no bureaucratic or financial assistance in return.³⁹⁰ When Clarke also explained how he believed that the HBC post established in 1815 and lasting for four months was realized because of NWC accidents rather than HBC improvements,³⁹¹ the HBC had heard enough. If he had so many accurate understandings and superior ideas, surely Clarke must be the man to truly make Île-à-la-Crosse an HBC settlement. HBC management told Clarke it wanted him to go and establish himself in the village.

³⁸⁸ B.89/a/2, (1805-1940), "Île-a-la-Crosse, Post Journals, 36-36d.

³⁸⁹ Fidler and his replacement Linklater regularly duelled with the NWC's Samuel Black, who (according to Fidler) ruined the chances of HBC-NWC cooperation and led Fidler to declare it was "very mortifying" how NWC did so well around Methye Portage. Apparently, Black even threatened to "murder" Fidler but Fidler still struggled with the issue of Île-à-la-Crosse being the best place for fishing, gardening and astronomical data collection. B.89/a/2, (1805-1816), Île-a-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, 27 March, 31 May, 12 July, 31 August, 10 November, 1807. See also Robert S. Allen, *Peter Fidler, and Nottingham House, Lake Athabasca, 1802-1806* (Ottawa: Parks Canada, National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, 1977), 283-247, 294-307.

³⁹⁰ Stuart Houston, *To the Arctic by Canoe 1819-1821* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1994), 126.

³⁹¹ A.36/4: f.182, "file currently unnamed," HBCA, n.d., n.p. Some academic disputes exist whether Clarke's appearance in 1815 represents the official re-establishment of a Post or, alternatively, that such a formal event did not happen until 1819. See Rich, *The Fur Trade and the Northwest to 1857*, 232 and documents located in B.89/a/4, (1805-1940), "Île-a-la-Crosse, Post Journals, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

Clarke agreed, but only on his own terms. First, Clarke told management he needed to study the impact of Île-à-la-Crosse's activities in Lower Canada and even England before visiting the village himself. Second, he informed officials they simply must do a better job of acknowledging the community's economically successful multicultural tendencies.³⁹² Moreover, the HBC should stop being so stubborn in its view that men's opinions should always trump female perspectives – especially when those women with those opinions were Métis. After all, if it was the women who showed up with the pelts, they would be expecting an exchange to occur.³⁹³ When management claimed it already took serious heed of these components, Clarke replied that HBC results showed otherwise.³⁹⁴ Since he also learned other Servants shared his views but had rarely watched their ideas be implemented, Clarke demanded a reassurance that any recommendation he made would be implemented without hesitation.³⁹⁵ HBC officials rejected this ultimatum at first. But Clarke showed his connective abilities yet again by being the person to tell HBC management how

[b]y the end of 1811...the Canadians [the NWC employees] ... succeeded in driving nearly all of their English rivals from the district. They know that the English River District is the geographical key to the Athabasca Country and they have been prepared to go to almost any lengths to keep the Hudson's Bay Company traders out of it.³⁹⁶

³⁹² W. Kaye Lamb, *Sixteen Years in the Indian Country*, 114.

³⁹³ B.89/a/2, (June 13, 1810), Île-à-la-Crosse, Post Journals, HBCA, n.p.: Women, and accompanied by children, traded with company men.

³⁹⁴ Thompson, *David Thompson's Narrative*, 559; barley grown "with excellent results."

³⁹⁵ B.89/a/2, (July 4, 1811), Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.p.

³⁹⁶ Eric Ross, *Beyond the River and the Bay*, 114.

Since such a revelation illustrated how the HBC likely needed Clarke more than Clarke needed a job as a Servant, officials agreed to his conditions. Given that Clarke also somehow knew about how Samuel Black and his NWC colleague Peter Skene Ogden kept a written record of how many Servants visited the village's greater region,³⁹⁷ and that in nine years, only twenty-six Servants had dared to show themselves in the village's trading space, Clarke was needed even more.³⁹⁸ Since Clarke also knew about Black's obsession to keep the region Servant-free, and that Black had constructed a "watch house" in Île-à-la-Crosse, – the only known above-ground security system in the North West – his interest in going there could not be refused, even with the additional standards to which the HBC must keep.³⁹⁹ By also agreeing to Clarke's request for a scout to visit Île-à-la-Crosse, the HBC had to organize a trip to the village for John Howse as well. In the autumn of 1814, Howse surprised Île-à-la-Crosse residents with his arrival, and he shocked them even more when they learned Howse brought the largest allocated budget for a single Servant in HBC history.

Instead of observing quietly on Clarke's behalf, Howse told all residents who would listen that he planned to build a post, provide the best financial incentives ever offered to trappers, and live in Île-à-la-Crosse for the rest of his career. Despite these

³⁹⁷ Ogden, a former judge of King's Bench in Montréal, decided to work with the NWC and received his first assignment to reside in the village. Thompson, *David Thompson's Narrative*, 496.

³⁹⁸ B.89/a/1, (1805-1940), Île-à-la-Crosse, Post Journals, HBCA, n.d., n.p.; B.60/a/13, (1798-1826), Edmonton Post Journals, , HBCA, n.d., n.p.

³⁹⁹ B.60/a/13 (July 3, 1810) Edmonton Post Journals, HBCA, n.p. Later on, the HBC Post workers notice the "French" (NWC men) building a "watch house," and the Servants believe the NWC men "have planned this for a while" See note in B.60/a/13 (September 21 1810) Edmonton Post Journals, HBCA, n.p.

(or because of, if locals did not take kindly to such grand announcements) proclamations, Howse departed after only eight months and then claimed his life had been in jeopardy every day of all of those months. When Howse reached York, company management called his efforts yet another “shameful” effort on behalf of the HBC.⁴⁰⁰ Clarke could not have agreed more, and he did so with yet another act that impressed company officials: during Howse’s time, Clarke had secretly visited the village to watch him in action and witnessed his apparently pathetic attempts at wooing the Métis.⁴⁰¹

In Clarke’s view, Howse’s mistakes also impacted the planning Clarke had to do. First, rather than also surprise locals with his presence as he had originally intended, Clarke ensured word of his arrival would reach Île-à-la-Crosse before he did. Second, Clarke made sure such gossip included mention of his interest in improving HBC relations with the Métis.⁴⁰² Because that interest prioritized Métis over First Nations in the community, Clarke’s strategy broke with HBC policy at the time. But because of Clarke’s supposedly intrepid abilities, the Honourable Company

⁴⁰⁰ The shame is noticed by Colin Robertson and noted by H. Christoph Wolfhart’s “Joseph Howse,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, accessed July 10, 2015, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/howse_joseph_8E.html.

⁴⁰¹ Evidence does exist that Clarke originally had an interest in relocating in the village, but that enthusiasm is inconsistent. For a claim about his interest, see B.179/a/13, (September 24, 1819) Reindeer Lake Post Journal, HBCA, n.p.: “a chief Indian brought me a few lines from Mr. Clarke wishing that I should send him to Île-à-la-Crosse, which I don't wish...in the fall of 1814 when Mr. Howse settled that place he went there from this lake....and them (sic) went in to the NWCs House altho (sic) they were Staunch Traders of our...” Note that some community records describe Clarke as arriving in 1819. It is unclear why this date is used, but by that year the HBC’s fort had not faced challenges for a number of months.

⁴⁰² Elizabeth Arthur, “Duel at Île-à-la-Crosse,” *Saskatchewan History* 29 (1974): 48.

again felt pressured to meet his demands.⁴⁰³ About a month after Howse abruptly departed Île-à-la-Crosse, Clarke reached the village and this time, villagers expected him.⁴⁰⁴

Part of Clarke's inspiration for making amends with Métis came from learning of events in Selkirk between the HBC and Métis that led to them making a treaty on 25 June 1815.⁴⁰⁵ By no means did Clarke wish to make a treaty with people around Île-à-la-Crosse. Still, Clarke was adamant that the HBC approach village Métis first before it made any more arrangements with nearby First Nations. Clarke observed how, while having much in common, the Métis and First Nations around Île-à-la-Crosse had their own cultural specificities for land use and trading protocols, both within their families and with other people not belonging to their respective cultures.⁴⁰⁶ Appreciating these nuances, Clarke believed, was key to ensuring more company-local confrontations did not occur. When the "Battle of Seven Oaks" unfolded in June 1816 just north of Fort Douglas (in now Manitoba) and led to Métis insurgents killing the HBC Governor, Clarke's nervous concern about his relations with the Métis only grew stronger.⁴⁰⁷ Clarke did not think he could force

⁴⁰³ Macdougall, "The Comforts of Married Life," 13.

⁴⁰⁴ Stuart Houston, *To the Arctic by Canoe 1819-1821: The Journal and Paintings of Robert Hood, Midshipman with Franklin* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), xxvi; Raffan, *Emperor of the North*, 61.

⁴⁰⁵ Allyson Stevenson, "The Metis Cultural Brokers and the Western Numbered Treaties, 1869-1877" (Master's thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2004), 25 and 51.

⁴⁰⁶ MacGregor, *Peter Fidler, Canada's Forgotten Surveyor, 1769-1822*, 209.

⁴⁰⁷ Governor Semple was killed 19 June 1816. The confrontation occurred after local Métis traders accused their neighbouring HBC Servants of stealing a NWC shipment of pemmican. Alcock, "Past and Present Trade Routes," 61. E. E. Rich calls this incident a "massacre." See Rich, *The Fur Trade and the Northwest to 1857*, 221. Different historians have various views about how officially the NWC helped the Métis in this battle – and whether calling it a massacre is

his employer to change how the HBC treated Métis everywhere, but considered it absolutely imperative that the HBC treat the Métis at Île-à-la-Crosse better than the company had in the past.⁴⁰⁸ To show his commitment to such a new HBC idea, Clarke told villagers during the summer of 1816 that he would follow Métis standards for trade instead of reinforcing HBC principles.⁴⁰⁹ On this point, Clarke had not gained agreement beforehand but given Clarke's apparent acumen, the HBC decided to let this unapproved strategy pass.⁴¹⁰

As part of his effort to show more trust toward the Métis, Clarke also called for more Servants to work with him and solidify community ties. On this issue, HBC management did not agree. The company responded that even if Clarke regularly faced difficulties as the NWC stepped up their plans to remove him from the village, it would not send more men. In the meantime, Clarke wrote about how Pedlar Benjamin Frobisher attempted to convince locals the HBC could not be trusted in

appropriate. Stephen Bown, *Merchant Kings: When Companies Rule the World, 1600-1900* (Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 2009), 209.

⁴⁰⁸ HBC worker James Johnston was killed and the Post employees quickly retaliated with no avail. HBC headquarters concluded local officials should have demonstrated "a little more coolness and discretion" and "better management on the part of Mr. Howse, would probably have put the NW people more decidedly in the wrong..." See A.6/18, (March 27 1816) "File currently unnamed," HBC London to Robert Semple, HBCA, 333, n.p.

⁴⁰⁹ Lawrence J. Barkwell, "Early Law and Social Control Among the Métis," in *The Struggle for Recognition: Canadian Justice and the Métis Nation*, Manitoba Métis Federation, Inc., eds. Samuel W. Corrigan and Lawrence J. Barkwell (Winnipeg, MB: Pemmican Publications, 1991), 49-51.

⁴¹⁰ As an example, and realizing the NWC was still better at approaching First Nations and Métis outside Île-À-La-Crosse, but too scared to change his company's policies in front of his own employees or competitors, Linklater on approval of Clarke adjusted his efforts in a way that helped HBC account books. See entries from 13 September to 16 October 1815 in B.89/a/3 (September 13 to October 16, 1815) Île-À-La-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.p. These dates suggest the ultimate leadership of the HBC Post was not simple to observe when learning who made decisions at the HBC Post.

any way,⁴¹¹ and Servant Samuel Black re-commenced his own tradition of daily intimidation of an HBC manager.⁴¹² With great regularity, Clarke returned to find his quarters smashed or even burned to the ground. The HBC granted him respite at Fort Carlton (approximately 360 kilometres away) to compensate for his difficulties. But it still would not send more men. While at Fort Carlton, Clarke was even more dire: without more Servants in Île-à-la-Crosse, he argued, the HBC should abandon its post in the village altogether.⁴¹³ As it had done before when Howse and Fidler failed, management blamed Clarke rather than corporate policy for his poor results. It seemed the HBC's respect for Clarke's views had diminished significantly.⁴¹⁴

That distrust for Clarke's opinions revealed itself further when the company cited the comments of other HBC men that prioritizing Métis over First Nations had severely reduced profits since a number of First Nations had stopped trading with the HBC altogether either at Île-à-la-Crosse or elsewhere.⁴¹⁵ But Clarke would not relent about this point, and he felt correct enough to take issue with another company view: Clarke concluded the company should stop thinking that the use of alcohol enhanced trade and that First Nations fell for its addictive qualities more easily.⁴¹⁶ At Île-à-la-Crosse, alcohol consumption was relatively low. If people

⁴¹¹ Daniel Williams Harmon, *Journal of Voyages and Travels in the Interior of North America*, 168. See also William Stewart Wallace, "Northwesters' quarrel," *The Beaver*, 278 (December 1947): 9.

⁴¹² B.89/a (1805-1940) Ile-a-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

⁴¹³ Richard Slobodin, "The Subarctic Métis as Products and Agents of Culture Contact," *Arctic Anthropology* 2, no. 2 (1964): 50-55.

⁴¹⁴ Parker, 169 and 174.

⁴¹⁵ See Part IV of Ann M. Carlos' and Elizabeth Hoffman's "The North American Fur Trade: Bargaining to a Joint Profit Maximum under Incomplete Information, 1804-1821," *The Journal of Economic History* 46, no. 4 (December 1986): 967-986.

⁴¹⁶ Peter G. Beidler, *Murdering Indians: A Documentary History of the 1987 Killings That Inspired*

acquired liquor, it was likely traded anyway. But even more significant to Clarke, if any group demonstrated overuse and then dependency upon liquor, it was his fellow Servants who regularly imbibed too much, needed to sober up and ran debts with the HBC as a result of their consumption.⁴¹⁷

While both Clarke and the HBC criticized each other, both of them equally misinterpreted the role of another development in Rupert's Land at Île-à-la-Crosse. Over the previous decades, some First Nations families (mainly Nihiyaw) had moved closer to (mainly HBC) posts and acted as an intermediary between company traders and other Indigenous families who harvested furs. Nicknamed the "Homeguard" by the HBC, these families subsequently had the roles of translators, protectors, and wholesalers. As years passed, the HBC determined the Homeguard families' power had declined and these Indigenous interlopers would be more dependent upon the Honourable Company as a consequence. Clarke felt that when meeting the Homeguard around Île-à-la-Crosse, would undoubtedly have the upper hand.⁴¹⁸

What Clarke had not learned before arrival in Île-à-la-Crosse was that the "Homeguard" never developed around the village. First Nations had not moved closer to the post; they had *always* lived nearby. Moreover, those nearby First

Louise Erdrich's *the Plague of Doves* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2013), 228.

⁴¹⁷ See Bruce K. Alexander, *The Globalisation of Addiction: A Study in Poverty of the Spirit* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 136-7.

⁴¹⁸ Jarvenpa, "Silot'ine: An Insurance Perspective on Northern Dene Kinship Networks in Recent History," 156. First Nations had come to Île-à-la-Crosse for years, so the Homeguard role did not exist in the same way.

Nations were direct and often immediate relatives of Métis who lived in or close to the village themselves. So any interloping or translating roles had many years to solidify with or without the HBC. For years, “complex” trading links had reinforced activities akin to bartering, payment “in kind,” credit-type arrangements, and longer-term evaluation of prosperity.⁴¹⁹ When Dene and Nihiyaw showed Clarke they would not suddenly be subject to HBC decision-making, Clarke was taken offguard.⁴²⁰ Given this error, the company’s wrong ideas about alcohol consumption, poor communication between local contacts and management out east, and what Clarke called his “detestable (Pedlar) neighbours,” any influence Clarke had shrank as the days passed.⁴²¹ Certainly, Clarke had shown more respect for village ways than his predecessors had demonstrated.⁴²² But because he and the HBC proved unenthusiastic in changing their beliefs, all the company could claim was that it was located in the village without any influence whatsoever.

Clarke eventually concluded Île-à-la-Crosse would never be possible for the HBC to overcome in any circumstance. In fact, by the spring of 1820 Clarke recommended

⁴¹⁹ B.89/b/1-23 (December 23, 1820) Île-à-la-Crosse, Correspondence Books, HBCA, 35.

⁴²⁰ Ann Harper-Fender, “Discouraging the use of a Common Resource: The Crees of Saskatchewan,” 166; Yerbery, *The Post Contact Chip*, 251. The diary of Daniel Williams Harmon for August 25, 1808 describes the Indians at Île-à-la-Crosse as mostly Chipewyan with a few Cree. Daniel Harmon Williams, *Sixteen Years in the Indian Country*, 114. By 1812, the fur trader David Thompson reported that the Cree were progressing southward from Ile a la Crosse while between fifty and sixty small canoes of Chipewyan were at the old Post of Ile a la Crosse. See Thompson, *David Thompson’s Narrative*, 559.

⁴²¹ B.89/b/1 (August 18 1820) Île-à-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, HBCA, n.p.

⁴²² B.89/a/18 (June 26 1801) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.p. For a description by Clarke about his own efforts in this manner, see B.89/b/2 (1820-1910) Île-à-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.: Clarke completes many field trips to close locations, such as Rat River, Green Lake, Rapid River, La Loche. He attempts to decide where most base living goods should be located, and ends up accusing other Post managers of keeping provisions at their Posts instead of sending them to Île-à-la-Crosse.

the Honourable Company just admit the village was an NWC community.⁴²³ He called the Pedlars the fur trade's only "conquerors,"⁴²⁴ and he wrote how the Métis could lead their lives easily with or without any company there.⁴²⁵ With such pessimism about his own employer, Clarke concluded that the HBC might as well assign the forty-five Servants at Île-à-la-Crosse to other posts.⁴²⁶ Dubbing Île-à-la-Crosse the "last ridout" of the North West, Clarke wrote how the NWC survived there because it recognized, and then ultimately relied upon, Métis authority.⁴²⁷ During all of Clarke's time in the village, the fledgling HBC post lost money, so Clarke thought his recommendation about closing the post would be acted upon. Clarke was in for a shock.⁴²⁸

By the autumn of 1820, and as senior officials from both the HBC and NWC met to plan a type of merger, the newly appointed HBC Governor George Simpson wanted to learn for himself exactly why the HBC and Île-à-la-Crosse appeared to be such a

⁴²³ B.89/b/1 (September 27, 1820) Île-à-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, HBCA, n.p.

⁴²⁴ B.89/b/2 (December 23, 1820) Île-à-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, HBCA, 36.

⁴²⁵ Rich, *The Fur Trade and the Northwest to 1857*, 221, 232.

⁴²⁶ B.89/b/1 (February 1821) Île-à-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, HBCA, n.d. 40-41. Raffan, *Emperor of the North*, 153.

⁴²⁷ See comments about how Clarke arrested a Mr. McMurray on a bench warrant, held McMurray prisoner, and then took the prisoner to Cumberland House in B.89/a/4 (April 27, 1820, May 31, 1820 and June 10, 1820) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.p. When any such action happened, Clarke had to leave someone else in charge of the HBC Post, and such a delegation regularly led to Clarke needing to take care of "errors" done while he was away. For an overview of this possibility, see Oliver MacDonagh's "The Anti-Imperialism of Free Trade," *Economic History Review* 14, no. 3 (1962): 489-501. See the HBC's claim that "The affairs of the company were being directed from London" and the most pressing concern was that local company officials "make that continual adjustment to changing conditions (because doing so) is the essential feature of vigorous and healthy life." Hudson's Bay Company, *The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading Into Hudson's Bay During Two Hundred and Fifty Years 1670-1920* (London, UK: The Hudson's Bay Company, 1920), 67.

⁴²⁸ A.36/4, "file currently unnamed," HBCA, n.d., n.p.

difficult pairing.⁴²⁹ Simpson traveled to the village, witnessed Clarke's efforts, and called the Factor's actions "very formidable."⁴³⁰ But Simpson also believed the HBC would eventually become the dominant fur company in Île-à-la-Crosse, and he told this point to Clarke repeatedly. The Governor told Clarke that newer technological processes and more multi-lingual communication would further improve the manager's experience in the village, and that Clarke should have more faith in his own abilities and future prospects. Besides, Simpson knew secretly, negotiations for a corporate overhaul were already underway.⁴³¹ No evidence suggests that Clarke knew about the merger talks while he hosted Simpson.

⁴²⁹ When HBC Governor Simpson visited Île-à-la-Crosse in the autumn of 1820, he was impressed by Clarke's abilities so much that Simpson wondered if the NWC's strength would be felt at all in Île-à-la-Crosse. See B.39/a/18, (September 7, 1820) Fort Chipewyan Post Journals, HBCA, 14 for George Simpson's journal dated 7 Sept 1820.

⁴³⁰ HBCA, B.39/a/18, (September 7, 1820) Fort Chipewyan Post Journals, n.p.

⁴³¹ Paul Krugman, "Historic High Technology Cluster," in *Geography and Trade* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), 63 (quote) and 36. Management from each company signed a "coalition agreement" 26 March 1821. Notably, one of the NWC men responsible for the negotiations leading to this agreement (Angus Bethune) found it imperative to evaluate Île-à-la-Crosse's conditions during 1820 when he (and a few other NWC men) deliberated about whether the fur trade could survive with two rival companies. Marion O'Neil, "The Maritime Activities of the North West Company, 1813 to 1821," *Washington Historical Quarterly*, 21 no. 4 (1930): 243-267.



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After Simpson expressed faith in Clarke's potential, the post manager still had doubts. As he watched locals cleverly adjust their trapping activities based on price adjustments in the global fur market instead of accepting the HBC's "fixed costs" system,⁴³³ Clarke tried desperately to win over locals by describing his regular disdain for his employer's mandate.⁴³⁴ Clarke also explained his negative views about company policies by writing to Governor Simpson and detailing how "contrary to your [Simpson's] expectations, HBC representatives are not bringing goods inland and, it is said, make personal arrangements before arriving at Île-à-la-

⁴³² Image 14 - A rendition of a very young George Simpson. Stephen Pearce, artist, "Sir George Simpson, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1857" (1857) Library and Archives Canada, MIKAN 2909632, accessed on July 10, 2015, http://collectionscanada.gc.ca/pam_archives/index.php?fuseaction=genitem.displayItem&lang=eng&rec_nbr=2909632.

⁴³³ Ray and Freeman contend the theory of 'fixed costs system' never provided the results the HBC contended it would. In that way Clarke's decision ensured more profit for his employer- his decision was a better way to achieve HBC goals. See Ray and Freeman, *Give Us Good Measure* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 198.

⁴³⁴ During February of 1821, Clarke approved cooperative lodging and negotiations between HBC men and NWC employees at Carleton. B.89/b/2 (February 12, 1821) Île-à-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, HBCA, n.p.

Crosse, let alone Athabasca.”⁴³⁵ Clarke regularly recalled how, as more than 60 per cent of Canada’s entire fur trade had at least one of its trading stages occur at Île-à-la-Crosse, and when that place functioned as a “cosmopolitan trading community,”⁴³⁶ it was locals and not the multi-national and government-funded HBC who controlled the fur market. Clarke understood how Île-à-la-Crosse “trade was fundamentally anti-competitive, since its ultimate goal was not to gain wealth but to create mutual obligations and alliances of advantage to all.”⁴³⁷ With such a premise in the village, Clarke remained adamant that HBC policies still did not and could not translate there.

As Clarke continued to trade with people who were children from “inter-territorial intermarriages,”⁴³⁸ he never quite abandoned the idea that under the right conditions, he could shift his own ideas to complement the set of “mutual obligations” that happened there and make a lot of money for those involved.⁴³⁹ But he would need his company to shift as well and according to Clarke, the HBC’s corporate structure at that time actually made conditions worse. Locals already had

⁴³⁵ “Letter from Clarke to Simpson,” B.89/b/2 (March 23, 1821) Île-à-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, HBCA, n.p.

⁴³⁶ V.F. Valentine, *The Métis of Northwestern Saskatchewan* (Ottawa, ON: Department of Natural Resources, 1955), 5. This statistic is likely higher due to how Clarke ordered to close many other HBC locations during the spring months of 1821. See “Letter from Clarke to McLeod,” B.89/b/2 (February 10, 1821) Île-à-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, HBCA, 9. The term in quotations appears in Robert Jarvenpa, “Silot’ine: An Insurance Perspective on Northern Dene Kinship Networks in Recent History,” 166.

⁴³⁷ Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 27.

⁴³⁸ Brenda Macdougall, “Wahkootowin: Family and Cultural Identity in Northwestern Saskatchewan Metis Communities,” *Canadian Historical Review* 87, no. 3 (September 2006): 449.

⁴³⁹ Morton argues the shortsightedness about Cumberland House illustrates how the Hudson’s Bay Company was already “completely broken down” by 1774. Morton, *A History of the Canadian West*, 290. For details of for moose hunts done by both Cree and Dene at Île-à-la-Crosse, see Brumbach and Jarvenpa, “Ethnoarcheology of Subsistence Space and Gender,” 427.

made laws about theft, family matters, trading practices and land use,⁴⁴⁰ and the HBC did not appreciate how its laws could not simply be dropped into the community.⁴⁴¹ Whatever means the HBC seemed to promote, Clarke believed those policies discouraged sensible and profitable trading patterns, decreased the potential for peaceful interaction, and then shrunk profit margins as a result.⁴⁴²

By the spring of 1821, when Clarke learned about the impending merger, Île-à-la-Crosse had a post office, an open-air tavern, a place for religious ceremonies, and a thriving marketplace.⁴⁴³ Its reputation for success based on kinship, such as happened amongst Métis locals and then was emulated by visiting traders, was famous and unmatched across Rupert's Land.⁴⁴⁴ Even when diseases made their perilous way up the Churchill, the village fortuitously experienced less devastation than other locales due in part to residents' ability to self-organize.⁴⁴⁵ At least three Indigenous languages flourished there, non-Indigenous visitors could also speak English or French to locals and be understood, and those same visitors could often

⁴⁴⁰ Compare my views to Rich whom concludes the region became more law abiding because of the development of the monopoly. Rich, *The Fur Trade and the Northwest to 1857*, 241.

⁴⁴¹ On 19 December 1820, Tindal informs Clarke: "I do, upon consideration, think that the criminal jurisdiction granted by the [new] Act does not extend to the Territories of the Hudsons (sic) Bay Company," B.89/b/2 (1821) Île-à-la-Crosse, Correspondence Books, HBCA, n.d., 15.

⁴⁴² Sarah Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 172 and Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, 138; J.G. MacGregor, *Peter Fidler, Canada's Forgotten Surveyor, 1769-1822*, xvi.

⁴⁴³ MacGregor, *Peter Fidler, Canada's Forgotten Surveyor, 1769-1822*, 102.

⁴⁴⁴ Morton, *A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71*, 519.

⁴⁴⁵ For a helpful analysis of the significant impact of diseases in general in western Canada and the dependency which subsequently developed, see generally Jody Decker, "We should never be again the same people': The diffusion and cumulative impact of acute infectious diseases affecting the Natives on the Northern Plains of the Western Interior of Canada, 1774—1839," (Ph.D. dissertation, York University, 1989) and Paul Hackett, *"A Very Remarkable Sickness": Epidemics in the Petit Nord 1670-1846* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2002). See also Abel, *Drum Songs*, 73.

speak Indigenous languages in reply.⁴⁴⁶ Especially for “the expanding Métis-Cree class who filled a niche as fur trade laborers [sic] and low-level managers,” Île-à-la-Crosse had “the best marketing, employment, and recreational behavior” in the North West.⁴⁴⁷ What with all these strong components interwoven together, the quantity of interactions in Île-à-la-Crosse could not be matched by any other place in the North West.⁴⁴⁸ The HBC, while apparently aware of the socializing, refused to modify its form to take full economic advantage of what such informal activities might lead to at the post.

In July 1821 The Honourable Company and NWC officially merged and went forward using the HBC’s banner. Before this new company began its life, Governor Simpson returned to Île-à-la-Crosse on 26 June to learn for himself how village Servants planned to implement the corporate change. Confident the NWC’s pending disappearance in the village would trigger an immediate improvement for the entire HBC, Simpson viewed the HBC’s earlier failure in Île-à-la-Crosse as one caused by illegal Pedlars, poor technology, and Clarke’s stubbornness.⁴⁴⁹ As Clarke walked

⁴⁴⁶ See Peter Bakker’s observations about how a unique form of Métis at Île-à-la-Crosse Île-à-la-Crosse reveals the location’s true distinctiveness, even within Métis circles. Bakker, *A Language of Our Own: The Genesis of Michif, the Mixed Cree-French Language of the Métis*, 158.

⁴⁴⁷ Jarvenpa, “Intergroup Behavior and Imagery: The Case of Chipewyan and Cree,” 297.

⁴⁴⁸ Jefferson, *Fifty Years on the Saskatchewan*, 37. Robert M. Vanwynsberghe made this observation in *Alternatives: Community, Identity, and Environmental Justice on Walpole Island* (Toronto: Allyn and Bacon, 2002), xii. For a groundbreaking example of how to argue this theory, see Colin G. Calloway, “The Inter-Tribal Balance of Power on the Great Plains, 1760-1850,” *Journal of American Studies* 16, no. 1 (April 1982): 25-47.

⁴⁴⁹ Documents do not easily illustrate whether Clarke knew of Simpson’s arrival or of his own pending promotion. Whatever the case, Clarke was not in the village to welcome Simpson, and Simpson was surprised on that point. B.89/a/18, (1805-1940) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA. For McLeod confirmations see *Ibid*, B.89/a/6, n.d., 1-10 and A.10/27, “File currently unnamed,” HBCA, n.d., 513-513d. When Governor Simpson re-visited Île-à-la-Crosse on June 26, 1821, Clarke was gone and Archibald McDonald was in charge with John McLeod as Clerk. Some historians have written that McLeod was “Chief Trader” but his functions in the

around Île-à-la-Crosse with the Governor, the post manager noticed locals were not openly enthusiastic about only one company, and they were certainly displeased that the remaining business was not Pedlar-owned.⁴⁵⁰ Furthermore, Clarke saw hardly any confidence amongst HBC workers about their own employer,⁴⁵¹ and residents even openly scoffed at Clarke's paltry attempts to reinforce British law in front of the visiting Governor.⁴⁵² But Simpson remained optimistic that a new monopoly was about to start its life, and that the village would be a helpful means to achieve the HBC's end goal: financial control of the North West.

documentation have more in common with Clerk responsibilities. D.5/10-42, (1843-1856), "file currently unnamed," Sir George Simpson, Records, Correspondence Inward, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

⁴⁵⁰ Documentation details how Île-à-la-Crosse events rarely had an emphasis upon religion if that religious perspective might modify how a trading relationship would ensue. The abandonment of a strict religious practice occurred amongst both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. See descriptions in John Cooper, "The Northern Algonquian Supreme Being," *Primitive Man* 6, no. 3/4 (July - October, 1933): 92 and 108.

⁴⁵¹ *Act for Regulating the Fur Trade and Establishing a Criminal and Civil Jurisdiction Within Certain Parts of North America*, 1 & 2 Geo 4, c. 66 (1821).

⁴⁵² Clarke passed four resolutions on 12 April 1821: 1. Detention of anyone who enters stockade; 2. Any aggression done "at their (aggressors) peril; 3. Any aggression also "repelled by force of arms"; 4. Anyone demonstrating a "military strategy...will be fired at." B.89/b/2, (1821) Île-à-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, HBCA, n.d., 35-36.

III. 4. A Multiplicity of Monopolies? Community Times To 1870



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III. 4. a. Introduction: Art acting as Truth/Hope

From the early years of the nineteenth century to 1847, and often on behalf of the HBC, explorer John Franklin traveled vast terrain in the North American areas

⁴⁵³ C-141429 and C-141430, "The Hudson's Bay Company and North West Company forts at Île-à-la-Crosse, 1820," George Back, artist, February 28, 1820, Acc. No. 1994-254-1.40R, George Back fonds R3881-0-6E, Library and Archives Canada. Accessed June 14, 2015, http://collectionsCanada.gc.ca/ourl/res.php?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&url_tim=2015-07-15T19%3A01%3A38Z&url_ctx_fmt=info%3Aofi%2Ffmt%3Akev%3Amtx%3Actx&rft_dat=2837997&rft_id=info%3Asid%2FcollectionsCanada.gc.ca%3Apm&lang=eng.

claimed by Britain. A mapmaker, astronomical data collector, and recorder of cultures and landscapes, Franklin went to regions little known or completely unfamiliar to the Honourable Company. Information that Franklin sent back to company headquarters helped senior management plan future HBC activities. Moreover, this information helped the HBC gain more international fame.⁴⁵⁴

While appreciating Franklin's efforts, it is important to remember he hardly acted alone. Without the work of his assistants, Franklin would have found it difficult to travel, organize his mapmaking, and even understand the Indigenous languages he encountered during his ventures. Throughout much of his exploring life, George Back worked as one of those assistants.⁴⁵⁵ Moreover, not only did Back show talent in the same ways Franklin had, Back also possessed a strong artistic ability and often created vivid impressions of what he and Franklin saw during their voyages.⁴⁵⁶ One of Back's works, "The Hudson's Bay Company and North West Company forts at Île-à-la-Crosse, 1820", was created eight years after he accompanied Franklin to the community.⁴⁵⁷ It is a beautiful artistic effort. But since the Honourable Company

⁴⁵⁴ For different sources about Franklin, see James Parsons, *Reflections on the Mysterious Fate of Sir John Franklin*, (Cambridge, UK: University Printing House, 2014); Anthony Dalton, *Sir John Franklin: Expeditions to Destiny*, (Toronto, Ontario: Heritage House Publishing, 2012); Andrew Lambert, *The Gates of Hell: Sir John Franklin's Tragic Quest for the North West Passage*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).

⁴⁵⁵ See generally C. Stuart Houston's *Arctic Artist: The journal and Paintings of George Back, Midshipman with Franklin, 1819-1822* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994). Unfortunately for the purposes of this project, no interpretive analysis of the painting mentioned here appears in this text.

⁴⁵⁶ Edward Sabine, "Contributions to Terrestrial Magnetism. No. XIII," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* 162, (January 1872): 380.

⁴⁵⁷ John Clarke detailed how Frobisher and Back arrived at the village and decided to stay for a few weeks starting 23 February 1820. Much to the annoyance of Clarke, the two men visited both the HBC and NWC Posts. See B.89/a/4, (February 23, 1820) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.p.

also kept the watercolour on file long after Back and Frobisher's visit,⁴⁵⁸ it also acted and acts still as an information source about the village.⁴⁵⁹

The painting's centre has the HBC depot showing signs of frequent visitors – a well-worn trail leading to its entrance and apparently so much product that a second building is necessary to hold surplus goods either acquired from trappers or available for exchange via the HBC.⁴⁶⁰ A flag catches the wind, smoke rises from a chimney; all these details are in colour. In comparison, the Pedlars' trading station appears further away, isolated and smaller, and located in the painting's corner. No visible components suggest that the NWC post is either busy or central to the entire community. In fact, compared with the coloured and precise HBC building, the NWC station is a blurry mixture of black, white, and grey and must be searched for on the community's horizon.

Section 4 of Part III discusses events in Île-à-la-Crosse roughly between the time when Back and Franklin ventured into the community and when the Crown no longer considered the HBC in control of the North West. During these years, some new concerns developed amongst those who inhabited Rupert's Land, including

⁴⁵⁸ At Library and Archives Canada, the painting is archived as Acc. No. 1994-254-1.40R, Colour transparency of the single page before conservation is available as well as the double page spread, folio 39 verso and 40 recto together (C-141429 and C-141430).

⁴⁵⁹ Peter Steele, *The Man Who Mapped the Arctic: The Intrepid Life of George Back, Franklin's Lieutenant* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 2004), 284.

⁴⁶⁰ Much thanks goes to Dr. Katharine Lochnan, senior curator at the Art Gallery of Ontario (the "AGO"), for her assistance in making observations about artistic presentations. For commentary about her efforts to do so, and the techniques it involves, see the review by Luke Herrmann of her curated effort at the AGO and the Tate Museum about Turner, Whistler, and Monet: "Turner Whistler Monet a superb three course feast," *The British Art Journal* 6, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2005): 83-84.

those who lived in the village. As these same years revealed,⁴⁶¹ however, several circumstances well established before 1821 maintained their influence. As a result, this section is both an analysis of unfamiliar concerns and an argument about continuity.

As an example of the new and old, Christianity made its official way to the village during this era. With the Catholic Church arriving, the HBC's goal of becoming the most dominant force in the area was both supported and challenged. With the possibility of shared or oppositional views between the mission and the post, various power dynamics subsequently strengthened or weakened depending on the issue at hand. As villagers regularly watched this tension, they maintained their reputation for simultaneously hosting different cultures, relative prosperity, and respite from the elements. These struggles between external parties meant villagers often maintained their unspoken authority over the community— even when outsiders claimed their own respective influence had grown in nature and scope. So when considering the painting by Back and then layering it with historical data, we can reflect about how Back's effort might be known for its realism but also should be considered for its suggestiveness.

⁴⁶¹ Although more fragmentary than other eras' records, this period's journals are located in the B.89/a/17-25, (1819-1861) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

III. 4. b. Immediate Shifts and Unintended Consequences to 1844

The HBC might have swallowed the NWC in 1821, but records reveal how this takeover did not provide the Honourable Company with any more immediate financial stability than before.⁴⁶² Indeed, during the first few years after the merger several unpredicted costs led many HBC managers to wonder whether their company would ever function as a profitable fur company in the North West – even if no other fur company existed in Rupert’s Land.⁴⁶³ Due to its own debts from costs during the competition’s final days, the low level of dependency amongst Indigenous locals for exchanges, and a global over-abundance of tradeable fur products, the expanded HBC could not automatically act like the monopoly Governor George Simpson envisioned.⁴⁶⁴ Times immediately proved so tough that HBC officials (finally) decided the company needed new policies to stop its financial bleeding. Management sent instructions to every post about what to do next. When Île-à-la-Crosse newly appointed Chief Factor George Keith opened his letter from corporate headquarters containing those orders, he realized instructions for the village had little in common with what his predecessor John Clarke had recommended.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶² See John S. Galbraith, *The Hudson’s Bay Company as an Imperial Factor, 1821- 1869* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1957) 24-45.

⁴⁶³ Alvin C. Gluek Jr., “Industrial Experiments in the Wilderness: A Sidelight in the Business History of the Hudson’s Bay Company,” *Business History Review* 32, no. 4 (Winter 1958): 424.

⁴⁶⁴ Gary P. Spraakman, “Management Accounting at the Historical Hudson’s Bay Company: A Comparison to 20th Century Practices,” *The Accounting Historians Journal* 26, no. 2 (December 1999): 36.

⁴⁶⁵ Keith started to record accounts for the 1822 year. There, Keith stops using Clarke’s labels and re-names account book categories to HBC terms. See B.89/d/6a and 6b, (1822) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p. Île-à-la-Crosse’s events certainly support the argument that the HBC’s motivations for administrative change had more to do with an overabundance of bureaucracies rather than an urge to become more competitive against the NWC. In this way, some scholars wonder if such an emphasis had been placed by the HBC before the merger, the

First, the HBC told Keith to announce the community had a new name: Fort Superior.⁴⁶⁶ To go along with this new name, Keith read he was to build a watchtower taller than the NWC's lookout and to fortify every HBC building within the village's greater area to aid in their version of local British governance.⁴⁶⁷ At first, Keith wondered whether these changes created an unnecessarily severe impression of the HBC. But after learning the HBC posts at both Athabasca and Cumberland House were "a total shambles" due to crumbling buildings, and that workers at these locations still feared for their lives due to supposedly violent Indigenous peoples,⁴⁶⁸ Keith changed his mind and followed orders to the letter.⁴⁶⁹

In the second instruction, the HBC told Keith his post was now the official company headquarters for the entire Churchill River region. As a result, its administrative functions had to be recalibrated. The HBC also informed Keith that because of a

HBC might have taken over the NWC more easily. Guidance about linking events for the purposes of revealing causation is described in Edward Hallett Carr, "Causation in History," in *What is History?: The George Macaulay Trevelyan Lectures delivered in the University of Cambridge January-March 1961*, ed. Edward Hallett Carr (London: Macmillan & Co., 1962), 113-43 and "Fallacies of Causation," in David Hackett Fischer's *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 164-86, Graham Harman, "Time, Space, Essence, and Eidos: A New Theory of Causation," *Cosmos and History: The Journal of Natural and Social Philosophy* 6, no. 1 (2010): 1-17.

⁴⁶⁶ The earliest reference I could find to this term used by Sir George Simpson was in his "Athabasca Journal," 1820/21 where on 6 June 1821 he writes about coming to Fort Superior and finding "Mr Archd. McDonald in charge." B.39/a/18 (1820-1836), Fort Chipewyan Post Journals, HBCA, n.d., n.p. Locally, the Post was called Fort Superior erratically but apparently had such a name as of 12 May 1820. See the B.89/a/4 (1819-1861) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journal, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

⁴⁶⁷ Rich is right to recognize "The (Canada Jurisdiction) Act of 1821 left the fur-traders responsible for keeping the peace in the territories of which the trade was allotted to them." However, the traders often did not know how to interpret this power given to them. See Rich, *The Fur Trade and the Northwest to 1857*, 240-241.

⁴⁶⁸ While certainly more difficult to reach, the Athabasca Post was also considered "a total shambles" due to poor management. Raffan, *Emperor of the North*, 121.

⁴⁶⁹ Morton, *A History of the Canadian West*, 630.

higher unemployment rate in general and the village's new role in particular, the new Chief Factor should expect to meet many men searching for work.⁴⁷⁰ With such a predicted influx, the company told Keith that he could and should be very choosy about whom he hired and that high expectations could be demanded of those new Servants. The HBC also told Keith that he would meet all Servants heading west, as the company decided they must report to him before arriving at their final destination. Should Keith be disappointed in their efforts, he had the discretionary power to fire them on the spot.⁴⁷¹ Along with this newfound power, Keith also acquired the responsibility of recording each and every interaction he had with anyone in the village.⁴⁷² While welcoming how the change suggested had received a promotion, Keith also wondered whether all the new recordkeeping might actually increase distrust felt toward him or the HBC.⁴⁷³

Keith did not expect his post's profits to rise immediately post-merger. But when profits did not increase at all after several months, he wondered whether the village's change in name and skyline was a mistake. As his supervisors had also increased the number of requests for updates during each annual cycle, Keith also wondered whether his company feared some other matter it had yet to explain to him. He was right to sense company fretfulness. After what Keith considered too many weeks, HBC management finally admitted that it had hoped Île-à-la-Crosse

⁴⁷⁰ Spraakman, "Management Accounting at the Historical Hudson's Bay Company," 45.

⁴⁷¹ A.36/8, "file currently unnamed," HBCA n.d., 9-30. Keith had just replaced Archibald McDonald as Chief Factor. Before that, McDonald had taken over the duties of John Clarke. Marchildon and Robinson, *Canoeing the Churchill*, 147.

⁴⁷² B.89/a/5, (November 1, 1822) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journal, HBCA, n.p.

⁴⁷³ Raffan, *Emperor of the North*, 119.

would actually profit so much, it would take care of both its own and many other posts' costs. As the first few quarters revealed, however, the village post was barely able to keep itself afloat. So almost immediately, Île-à-la-Crosse did not reach results the company aspired to achieve.

As profit margins stagnated, Keith also learned his supervisors also wondered about his management ability. As had Clarke did before him, Keith found himself regularly blaming company policy for the paltry results. And as Clarke and others before him learned, management was quick to blame the Factor rather than HBC processes. With such a difficult relationship developing, Keith concluded (like Clarke) he had no choice but to implement his own ideas and ask for professional forgiveness after profits (hopefully) rose.⁴⁷⁴ After all, with his job on the line Keith had little to lose in ignoring HBC regulations. He could get fired even if profits returned, but Keith speculated better accounts would allow him to get his professional way.

After making up his mind to go against company orders he deemed unhelpful to the post, Keith ordered the strongest Servants to help him to tear down most of the post's fencing. With this change, the presence of the post transformed immediately. Additionally, since the fencing necessitated men to be assigned for sentry watch, taking it down suddenly freed up some labour hours that could be used for other post tasks. After finishing this chore, Keith then determined he would learn more

⁴⁷⁴ Morton, *A History of the Canadian West*, 630, 699.

about the post's landscape than his company recommended.⁴⁷⁵ Next, Keith Even hired Pedlars John McLeod and James Douglas, commended them in public and then paid them more than the salary the HBC stipulated should be provided.⁴⁷⁶ Keith might not have been able to stop the HBC from firing some other experienced men (such as Peter Fidler),⁴⁷⁷ but he could hire whatever men he thought best for the job. With these hirings, Keith also announced to all the Servants that worked with him that he guaranteed employment for at least another year.⁴⁷⁸ While he mended work ties, Keith watched smallpox and influenza venture into Île-à-la-Crosse and saw how (mainly female) locals helped improve villagers' health.⁴⁷⁹ Keith observed this cooperative effort and informed supervisors that he and his co-workers simply must

⁴⁷⁵ B.89/b/3, (November 9, 1825) Île-à-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, HBCA, n.p.

⁴⁷⁶ Notably, Keith trusted these former Pedlars and did not attribute problems to any disloyalty on the Pedlars' part. McLeod likely acquired employment because of Simpson's good word about him. Apparently Simpson was impressed by McLeod's knowledge of the bush and McLeod's personal concern that Simpson be updated as quickly as possible. See B.39/b/6 (1822-1860) Fort Chipewyan Correspondence Books, HBCA, n.d., 44, 62. Notably McLeod's first appointment was at Île-à-la-Crosse but he only stayed there less than a year and then learned he had to move to the Athabasca district. B.200/e/11, (1822-1834) Fort Simpson (Mackenzie River), Northwest Territories Report on Districts, HBCA, n.d., 1-3. Douglas' reputation at Île-à-la-Crosse apparently preceded him, as in 1821 the HBC made him a second-class clerk in the village at age 18. He stayed in Île-à-la-Crosse until 1825. He later became Governor of Vancouver Island and inspired the label "Douglas Treaties" for negotiation settlements between that region's First Nations and the British Crown. Another exception included the HBC's continued employment of Joseph Laroque. Laroque had earlier faced serious reproach for not challenging (then) NWC workers Ogden and Black at Île-à-la-Crosse. Wallace, *Documents Relating to the NWC*, 219, 460.

⁴⁷⁷ J. B. Tyrrell, "Peter Fidler, trader and surveyor, 1769 to 1822," *RSC Trans.* (3rd series) 7 (1913): 125.

⁴⁷⁸ Alan D. McMillan and Eldon Yellowhorn, *First Peoples in Canada*, 301.

⁴⁷⁹ Ray, "Diffusion of Diseases," 155 and 145 citing Governor George Simpson to Roderick Mackenzie, D.5/4 (January 10, 1836) "file currently unnamed," Sir George Simpson, Correspondence Inward, HBCA, n.p. In this source, Roderick Mackenzie reported to Governor Simpson, "the few Indians that we found at the Establishment [Ile a la Crosse] on arrival were laid up with Influenza." See also Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, 30. Laura Peers, *The Ojibwa of Western Canada: 1780 to 1870*, 21.

become part of such a community circle of trust. Such a concern, Keith argued, justified his interest in helping locals build a community hospital.⁴⁸⁰

Like his predecessors, Keith did not hesitate to reveal his skepticism about his supervisors' insights.⁴⁸¹ But he never quite gave up on the HBC as a place of employment. Instead of letting his frustration grow in the village, Keith decided to return east, and the HBC appointed John Charles the new HBC post manager.

Upon arrival, Charles agreed with Keith's observations about alcohol: locals traded the HBC for it but they largely then traded it with others elsewhere.⁴⁸² Charles noticed First Nations and Métis families consuming liquor when he first arrived. But as historian Arthur Ray has explained,⁴⁸³ and as the village illustrated, Indigenous alcohol consumption rarely impacted Indigenous trade, and villagers did not show a particular dependency or addiction above what developed in non-Indigenous circles. In fact, Charles eventually agreed with Keith's earlier word and fellow Servant Roderick Mackenzie that Servants often demonstrated a troubling abuse of

⁴⁸⁰ Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, 190.

⁴⁸¹ About this observation as a general trend, see page 275 of Eric Jay Dolin, *Fur, Fortune, and Empire: The Epic History of the Fur Trade in North America* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2010).

⁴⁸² R. Cole Harris, *Reluctant Land: Society, Space, and Environments in Canada before Confederation* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009), 384.

⁴⁸³ On this point, see the challenge to E. E. Rich's conclusions about alcohol by McMillan and Yellowhorn, *First Peoples in Canada*, 254. See also Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, 85.

alcohol themselves.⁴⁸⁴ If only, complained the managers over the years, the HBC workers could be more like their First Nations neighbours and *not* drink.

Although regularly in agreement with Keith's (and Clarke's) conclusions, Charles still showed more nervousness than his predecessors about openly challenging management. As he led the post through the 1820s, Charles watched residents plan more techniques to stave off diseases.⁴⁸⁵ He even wrote about how the village had the best health care in the North West despite what the HBC provided elsewhere for its employees,⁴⁸⁶ and he told supervisors the Honourable Company's self-promotion as the only fur company in Rupert's Land was misleading, given the HBC's poor results.⁴⁸⁷ Yet despite observing company shortcomings and struggling with how those flaws impacted his own life, Charles stayed a Servant and even obtained a promotion that meant he moved to the Selkirk post. He also chose not to inform management that, in his views, the company's dependency upon villagers had actually grown.⁴⁸⁸ He left that task to his replacement, Roderick Mackenzie.

⁴⁸⁴ HBCA, B.89/b/3, (1820-1826) Île-à-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.: goes elsewhere." Mackenzie recorded most of the post's records even before becoming the Chief Factor in 1830.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*: Letter from George Keith to Governor, 17 Sept 1825. As well, if Indians who visit are in an ill mood, Post will need to adapt so Keith "beg your attention" to not find those adjustments unsatisfactory.

⁴⁸⁶ David Hackett Fischer, *Champlain's Dream*, 185; D.5/14, (1845) "file currently unnamed," Sir George Simpson, Correspondence Inward, HBCA, n.d., 190d, 299. Shepard Krech III, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999). Particularly see Table 3.1 in Krech, "Diseases in the Western Canadian Subarctic, 1800-1860," 87.

⁴⁸⁷ Abel, *Drum Songs*, 73. More recent investigations often contend the issue of diseases and fatalities in western Canada was greatly exaggerated by some earlier analysts. The most significant wave of diseases leading to death in the North West likely happened during the small pox epidemic of 1781-82. McMillan and Yellowhorn, *First Peoples in Canada*, 253. Even during this bout, villagers did not consider their experience impossible to overcome.

⁴⁸⁸ B.89/a/14-27 (1805-1940) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

Mackenzie proved unceasing in his bluntness. By 1836, he submitted a report that described how locals' understanding about the climate and their ability to establish complicated and profitable trading relationships was better than any HBC technique he was forced to implement.⁴⁸⁹ Mackenzie conceded that since he could not access other post records, he could not ascertain whether the HBC had a monopolistic presence elsewhere. But when Mackenzie wrote about the village, he concluded enough evidence of a monopoly did exist– amongst the villagers.⁴⁹⁰ Management did not enjoy receiving this finding and instead blamed the post's results upon costs stemming from the merger and Mackenzie's own leadership.⁴⁹¹

The HBC's dependency upon Île-à-la-Crosse became even clearer to Mackenzie when he received word from management of yet another task. In early 1836, the company determined that meteorological statistics should be collected, and it picked four locations whose information it believed would be the most helpful and the least difficult to collect. Along with New York City, Montreal, and Fort Resolution, the HBC chose Île-à-la-Crosse. On top of his other duties, Mackenzie suddenly had to measure precipitation, barometric pressure, cloud cover, temperature changes, astronomical conditions, and other related topics.⁴⁹² But his

⁴⁸⁹ See the remarks of how the village post is still considered the most important to maintain. Page 196 of George Colpitts' "Provisioning the HBC: Market Economics in the British Buffalo Commons in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Western Historical Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (Summer 2012).

⁴⁹⁰ Parker, 177 and 232; B.89/a/13 (November 12, 1831) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.p.

⁴⁹¹ Raffan, *Emperor of North*, 122.

⁴⁹² S. Hunter Christie, "Discussion of the Magnetical Observations Made by Captain Back, R. N. during His Late Arctic Expedition," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* 126 (1836): 385; Richardson, "Note on the Best Points, in British North America, for Making

knowledge about weather and climate did not end there. The same year he started to collect meteorological data, a small sector of land that acted as a helpful alternative portage dried up completely.⁴⁹³ With little notice, Mackenzie found himself searching for alternative ways to get products to customers he could not afford to lose.⁴⁹⁴ As he contemplated what to do, Mackenzie received word that some of his customers had started to purchase products from another seller – his Métis neighbours. Mackenzie never learned how his neighbours obtained products without going through his post. But somehow those neighbours had, and Mackenzie again realized his company seemed unable to dominate in a territory that supposedly belonged to it alone.⁴⁹⁵

Notwithstanding the changes in landscape and the attendant Métis trading agility, Mackenzie and his twenty-five workers still did better than other HBC Posts in Rupert's Land.⁴⁹⁶ Mackenzie did not attribute that success to company policies. Instead, he credited profits to his vigorous efforts in reinforcing trusting relations with locals.⁴⁹⁷ As he explained to management how the Métis population continued

Observations on the Temperature of the Air; And Also for the Height of the Station above the Level of the Sea," 122.

⁴⁹³ D.5/4, (1831-1840) (January 7, 1935) Governors' and Commissioner's Records, Sir George Simpson, Correspondence Inward, Folio 99 "John Rowand (Fort Edmonton) to George Simpson," HBCA, n.p.; Raffan, *Emperor of the North*, 137-38.

⁴⁹⁴ John Barrow, et al, "Communications on a North-West Passage, and Further Survey of the Northern Coast of America," *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 6 (1836): 41. Information from a letter dated 6 Feb 1836 by John Richardson.

⁴⁹⁵ John Brown, *The North-West Passage: And the Plans for the Search for Sir John Franklin* (London, England: E. Stanford, 1858), 21.

⁴⁹⁶ B.80/z/1, (1840) Fort Good Hope, Northwest Territories, Miscellaneous Items, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

⁴⁹⁷ Notes about local Post describe how Métis are not "loitering" but acting as contacts with circles away from village. B.89/b/3 (1825-1910) Ile-a-laCrosse Correspondence Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.; See specifically years 1825-26, 82; and letters from October 1825, "Keith to Headquarters," Page 18 of "Keith to John Stuart," for the specific role Métis have in connecting with First Nations.

to grow,⁴⁹⁸ the Chief Factor also concluded he needed the same permission - as Keith and other predecessors had obtained - to implement his own policies with or without company preapproval.

So after he decided to ask for forgiveness rather than permission, Mackenzie announced he would no longer expect anyone to call the village "Fort Superior" and, in fact, he hoped everyone would return to referring to the community as "Île-à-la-Crosse" and in doing so also help re-establish land use that assisted community survival.⁴⁹⁹ For his second unapproved idea, Mackenzie acknowledged his approval of the relationships his employees had with the numerous women referred to as a "local wives."⁵⁰⁰ Not only did he recognize marriages previously denied, he saw these ties as a boon rather than a hindrance for company goals.⁵⁰¹ In yet another HBC-defying feat, Mackenzie publicly admitted the very positive impact Indigenous women had upon trade with company representatives.⁵⁰² As more months passed, and as other men came to work with Mackenzie, Île-à-la-Crosse's reputation was

⁴⁹⁸ Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 51.

⁴⁹⁹ Frank Gilbert Roe, "Early Agriculture in Western Canada in Relation to Climatic Stability," 113. Barley was growing particularly well at the village. See also Sir John Richardson, *The Polar Regions* (Edinburgh: A & C Black Clark Edinburgh, 1861), 270.

⁵⁰⁰ Many Métis originated from a relationship between a local and a servant. Too many violations of the non-socializing occurred, and as the HBC struggled in the nineteenth century with keeping employees, the company often intentionally decided not to enforce its strict policy. See Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, 55 and Sharron Fitzgerald, "Hybrid Identities in Canada's Red River Colony," *The Canadian Geographer / Le Geographe canadien* 51, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 187. Wright, *Saskatchewan, the History of a Province*, 42.

⁵⁰¹ Heidenreich and Ray, *The Early Fur Trade*, 10.

⁵⁰² B.89/b/3, (April 6 1826) Ile-a-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, HBCA, specifically "Keith to Stuart:" Keith calls the influence of women a local "regulation."

enhanced as the most profitable inland HBC post with the most distinctive set of standards implemented by Honourable Company men themselves.⁵⁰³



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It is impossible to determine exactly why HBC management did not reproach Mackenzie. But for whatever reasons, Mackenzie's supervisors did not order him to reverse any of his decisions. As Mackenzie recorded how locals challenged his authority on a daily basis even with the improvements he introduced,⁵⁰⁵ and the HBC nervously learned about those challenges, the policies likely appeared as a way to buttress against social/cultural tension.⁵⁰⁶ Moreover, it appeared that whatever Mackenzie had done, the freemen's presence had also disappeared, so the post did

⁵⁰³ D.5/4 (1831- 1840) Sir George Simpson, Correspondence Inward, HBCA: ff 152, 228, 229, for some examples of recording practices and views about obligations during interactions with locals.

⁵⁰⁴ Image 16 - "Sir Roderick McKenzie" by Donald Hill (1892), McCord Museum, Collection M1591, oil on canvas.

⁵⁰⁵ Harper-Fender, "Discouraging the Use of a Common Resource," 169. John M. Cooper, "The Northern Algonquian Supreme Being," 108.

⁵⁰⁶ Morton, *A History of the Canadian West*, 309.

even better because it realized the locals compared their treatment experiences at the post as well.⁵⁰⁷ With such success, it seems that management felt reconciled to the point that its “low level managers” at Île-à-la-Crosse got the results the HBC so desperately wanted because they were so much more responsive to community viewpoints.⁵⁰⁸ So as it secretly winced at how much authority Mackenzie had, the Honourable Company accepted Île-à-la-Crosse as the strongest example of “self-government” in Rupert’s Land and lapped up as much profit as it could there in the meantime.⁵⁰⁹ Mackenzie had explained repeatedly, via the word of McTavish, that realizing the village governed itself was imperative if the HBC wanted to make money there.⁵¹⁰ Mackenzie was relieved to learn that in 1844 his employer finally admitted that Île-à-la-Crosse’s Métis “can live independent of us [the HBC].”⁵¹¹ It was a pity, however, that such a change of heart had taken so long.⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁷ B.89/b/3 (January 11, 1826) Île-à-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, HBCA, see specifically “Keith to Gov: Asking what to do when traders allege they have no outstanding debts? Some Post workers have made some mistakes, so should I do my own local thing. As well, the Métis are comparing prices amongst Posts and districts. Have found differences. How to respond?” As well, on January 25, 1826 “to Gov.: now our Indians are keeping aloof because they know of comparison.”

⁵⁰⁸ Robert Jarvenpa, “Intergroup Behavior and Imagery,” 297.

⁵⁰⁹ Heidenreich and Ray, *The Early Fur Trade*, 10; Sarah Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900*, 115. Term is from Carter.

⁵¹⁰ Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 124.

⁵¹¹ Sir George Simpson, “Fur Trade and Empire,” in *The Middle of Nowhere: Rediscovering Saskatchewan*, ed. Dennis Gruending (Saskatoon, SK: Fifth House, 1996), 20; Ann Harper-Fender, “Discouraging the Use of a Common Resource: The Crees of Saskatchewan,” 168.

⁵¹² Visiting Europeans often called for trade to be less encumbered by European standards and claimed company sustenance would not continue without the abolishment of various policies invented by Great Britain and the HBC. See Harold Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada*, 173 where he makes reference to a 1766 memorial written to His Excellence Guy Carleton and signed by fifty-seven men supporting the nullification of certain fur trade regulations. “Copy of a Memorial upon the Indian trade...to His Excellency Guy Carleton, Esq.” LAC, Shelburen MSS, L (1754-66), 137-139.

As the HBC now admitted it was the villagers and not the Servants who monopolized trading activities, another institution faced the reality that its role had also stalled in impact. In the community of Saint Boniface, and with the mandate to work with locals more than did other Catholic missionaries, a group of Oblate priests dreamed of expanding their presence.⁵¹³ At the same time as the missionaries hoped to stretch their reach, they also lamented their financial inability to do so. The same year the HBC finally gave a village Factor the discretionary power he requested, Oblate priests confessed to themselves that without a radical shift in their own planning, they would fail to maintain any presence in the North West. The question for the Oblates then became: what to do next? And where?

III. 4. c. “Even My Cook Is a Bishop”: After Converters Arrive

Despite grander hopes to spread widely across the North West, the Catholic Church had essentially stalled at its Saint Boniface location in what is now Manitoba. The Oblates there considered themselves more adept at exploration and gaining acceptance from locals than were other Catholic orders,⁵¹⁴ but even their efforts

⁵¹³ The congregation was known as *La Société des Missionnaires de Provence* for the first decade of its existence. Mazenod changed the name to *Les Oblats de Marie Immaculée* while seeking Pope Leo XII's approval for the congregation in 1826. See generally Donat Levasseur, *Histoire des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée: essai de synthèse* (Montréal: Maison provinciale, 1983) and Théophile Ortolan, *Les Oblats de Marie Immaculée durant le premier siècle de leur existence*, (Paris: n.p., 1912) volume 1: 77-86, 187-197. Additional information about this point appears in Foran, “‘Les Gens de Cette Place,’ 12.

⁵¹⁴ For details on how the Oblates distinguished themselves from other Catholic workers see Foran “Les Gens de Cette Place,” at 13 where he writes: “Their preferred method of evangelization was *la mission paroissiale* – a localized revivalist campaign based on a model developed by Saint Vincent de Paul in the early seventeenth-century. *La mission paroissiale* drew together the inhabitants of a particular parish for three to six weeks of intensive instruction, preaching and catechizing. Participants were encouraged to bare their souls in the confessional

around the Red River failed to create the difference the men had prayed would come. Certainly inventive in how they found ways to survive during the 1840s despite no financial assistance from their administrative headquarters, the missionaries in Saint Boniface had grown unsatisfied with their languishing results. Frustrated by what they perceived as Indigenous peoples' slow conversion rates, and nervous about the ever-increasing presence of Protestants (mainly in the form of Methodists),⁵¹⁵ Saint Boniface priests wondered how to improve their efforts of conversion without money and without a larger congregation to represent them after converting occurred. How exactly could they achieve these goals with no budget and few people?

While these missionaries thought hard about their future, Servants at Île-à-la-Crosse struggled with the effects of slumping global fur prices and locals who seemed immune to HBC attempts at fur trade domination.⁵¹⁶ During earlier decades, company workers had shown distrust for Catholic efforts further east.⁵¹⁷ But now, communication between these two non-Indigenous circles had become more

and to repent for their sins. They were also encouraged to join in a solemn procession that culminated in the planting of a large wooden cross, which was meant to remain a permanent feature of the local landscape".

⁵¹⁵ For explanations about the Methodist efforts at this time, see Gerald M. Hutchinson, "British Methodists and the Hudson's Bay Company 1840-1854," in *Prairie Spirit: Perspectives on the Heritage of the United Church of Canada in the West*, eds. D.L. Butcher et al. (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1985), 28-43; Neil Semple, *The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 174-176.

⁵¹⁶ Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place," 22 and Carolyn Podruchny, "Baptizing Novices: Ritual Moments among French Canadian Voyageurs in the Montreal Fur Trade, 1780- 1821," 173-174.

⁵¹⁷ Foran explains how an official HBC ban of the Church beyond Saint Boniface existed. However, given the financial constraints upon the mission, it is unlikely that much work was even feasible beyond the Red River territory. Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place," 35, and Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1995), 33-36.

regular and, surprising to both missionaries and Servants, more cooperative during some difficult circumstances such as occasional food shortages. Due to this more positive interaction, HBC management learned of the Saint Boniface missionaries' interest in expansion. The HBC informed the priests that if they decided to travel elsewhere in Rupert's Land and perhaps even create some permanent presence beyond Saint Boniface, they could count on Servants to help them along the way.⁵¹⁸ With such a promising offer, the priests were loath to refuse it. As a result of the HBC outreach, some of Saint Boniface's priests set off on shorter trips to scout out a location hopefully to introduce themselves to more Indigenous contacts willing to convert.

After results he considered disappointing, Saint Boniface priest Jean-Baptiste Thibault met some First Nations in an area now known as The Pas, Manitoba. As Thibault recalled in the report he sent back to Saint Boniface, these Indigenous men claimed to be from an area known as "Île-à-la-Crosse." Arguing that he felt safe in the company of these First Nations,⁵¹⁹ Thibault concluded that they demonstrated a certain "partiality" for Oblate views.⁵²⁰ Soon after sending his report south to Saint Boniface, Thibault received a message back from that mission's Bishop Joseph-Norbert Provencher. Provencher instructed Thibault to travel to Île-à-la-Crosse.

⁵¹⁸ Robert Jarvenpa and Hetty Jo Brumbach, "The Microeconomics of Southern Chipewyan Fur-Trade History," in Shepard Krech III, *The Subarctic Fur Trade: Native Social and Economic Adaptations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 157.

⁵¹⁹ Such safety would be a pleasant surprise, given how missionary publications had portrayed the West as "filled with dangerous Indians": J.R. Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant*, 130.

⁵²⁰ Morice, *History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada*, vol. 1: 136.

During the summer months of 1842, Thibault arrived at the village for what Provencher regarded as an “exploratory visit.”⁵²¹

After reaching Île-à-la-Crosse, Thibault sent a message to Provencher. Because of its convenient location on the Churchill and what Thibault considered good access to both people and amenities, he considered Île-à-la-Crosse ideal for a mission.⁵²² Coincidentally, the HBC’s Mackenzie also wrote to the Bishop to explain what a pleasure it was to receive Thibault and to learn about his interest in the community.⁵²³ While not telling Thibault about his own belief that the HBC’s current posture would never overtake the community’s own (and arguably Métis) processes, Mackenzie also privately thought that the Church’s arrival could at least weaken Métis residents’ controlling tendencies.⁵²⁴ Even better, Mackenzie mused, missionaries could help increase the number of “Chipewyan and Nihyaw hunters

⁵²¹ Alexandre Taché, *Vingt Années de missions dans le Nord-West de l’Amérique* (Montreal: Eusebe Senecal, 1866), 4, 13; and Foran, “Les Gens de Cette Place,” 35-36.

⁵²² Some sources suggest Provencher sent missionaries to Île-à-la-Crosse in 1838, much to the opposition of Simpson (but he did not make this view publicly known). See Auguste-Henri de Trémaudan, *Histoire de la Nation Métisse Dans l’Ouest Canadien*, 4e éd (Saint-Boniface, MB: Éditions des Plaines, 1984), 127. Rev. A. G. Morice, *History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada*, vol. 1: 200.

⁵²³ Unknown to Provencher, then Governor Simpson had written to Île-à-la-Crosse Chief Factor Roderick McKenzie: “you must do your best to make them [the missionaries] comfortable and if you keep them in good humour, I think you may find them useful in encouraging the natives to industry.” Barbara Benoit, “Mission at Île-à-la-Crosse,” *Beaver* 311, no. 3 (Winter 1980): 43. See also Raymond Huel, “Western Oblate History: The Need for Reinterpretation,” *Western Oblate Studies* 3 (1994): 21. As an example, Taché regularly dined with the McKenzie family: Benoit, “Mission at Île-à-la-Crosse,” 48. Regarding their changed minds about what cultures resided in the area, see Alan B. Anderson, *French Settlements in Saskatchewan: Historical and Demographic Perspectives (Issue 5 of Research Report)*, (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan Research Unit for French Canadian Studies, 1985), 2.

⁵²⁴ Benoit, “Mission at Île-à-la-Crosse,” 41.

attached to Île-à-la-Crosse.” And maybe, Mackenzie thought, even the missionaries themselves might become post customers.⁵²⁵

After hearing what he considered wonderful news from his fellow missionaries and the post’s manager, Bishop Provencher ordered Thibault to return to Saint Boniface and report his findings about Île-à-la-Crosse to all the mission workers around the Red River. After this debriefing by Thibault, Provencher instructed Fathers Alexandre-Antonin Taché and Louis-François Laflèche to pack their few belongings and journey to Île-à-la-Crosse. After a 1600 kilometre journey, Taché and Laflèche arrived at the village 8 July 1846. According to the priests, Mackenzie was the first to welcome them. Not only did he greet them, the HBC Chief Factor promised to help the men build both a place of worship and whatever housing they desired.⁵²⁶

Just before Taché and Laflèche reached Île-à-la-Crosse, Mackenzie had heard word of the HBC closing even more posts across Rupert’s Land. That update left Mackenzie both nervous and hopeful that Île-à-la-Crosse could potentially pick up

⁵²⁵ Parker, “Re-Conceptualizing the Traditional Economy,” 167. Parker claims these seasonal trends were also reinforced by inter-company rivalry prior to 1821. Such might be the case, but the patterns also correlate with cultures’ activities without the rivalry. McCarthy, *From the Great River to the Ends of the Earth*, 32. P2707-P2709 (May 24, 1845) “Thibault to Provencher”, Joseph-Norbert Provencher to the Central Councils of l’Oeuvre de la Propagation de la Foi, Joseph-Norbert Provencher Series, Fonds Corporation archiépiscopale catholique romaine de Saint-Boniface, Archives de la Société historique de Saint-Boniface (hereafter SHSB/Arch), Centre du patrimoine. Notably, the priests first called the locals at Île-à-la-Crosse “Montagnais.”

⁵²⁶ See generally Anderson, *French Settlements in Saskatchewan*; McCarthy, *From the Great River to the Ends of the Earth*; Morice, *History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada*, 203. Foran claims the two men arrived 10 September. See Foran, “Les Gens de Cette Place,” 41. Foran also provides details about how Laflèche did not have official Oblate status. Foran, *Ibid.* 38. Apparently, the HBC even paid the priests’ transportation costs. Foran, “Les Gens de Cette Place,” 104, citing Joseph Paul Augustin Benoît, *Vie de Mgr Taché, archevêque de St. Boniface* (Montreal: Beauchemin, 1904), volume 1: 104, 108.

some of the trade that had abruptly ended because of other post closures given that he had a higher number of workers who might help organize such a possible activity.⁵²⁷ Much to Mackenzie's relief, the HBC believed that business at the Île-à-la-Crosse post would increase with the missionaries' arrival, and as a result Mackenzie could also be left to his own policy-making devices regarding employee and trading issues. While this optimism amongst Servants, the missionaries thought the post's trading activities would do the same for their efforts.⁵²⁸ So as Mackenzie happily welcomed twenty-eight full-time Servants to help him with the predicted influx,⁵²⁹ the missionaries looked forward to whites and Indigenous peoples alike solidifying their relationships with Christ.

Soon after the priests settled in, they and a few Servants constructed a mission building. Laflèche named the new structure after St. John the Baptist. Although such a title seemed appropriate, Laflèche more frequently referred to the mission as "La Maison Omni-bus," given the number of varied people he had already met. So taken by this good news, the impressed Provencher back in Saint Boniface dubbed Île-à-la-Crosse the "Bethlehem of the North."⁵³⁰

⁵²⁷ B.89/d/62 and B.89/d/78 (1842-1854) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p., show 28 employees. Similar numbers continue over the next few years.

⁵²⁸ "Codex Historicus de l'Île-à-la-Crosse," (1845-1897) Fonds Oblats de Marie-Immaculée Keewatin-Le Pas, Archives de la Société historique de Saint-Boniface (ASHSB), Centre du patrimoine, p. 17; Fortune-François Fernand-Michel, *Dix-huit ans chez les sauvages: voyages et missions de Mgr Henry Faraut, eveque d'Anemour, dans l'extreme nord de l'Amerique britannique* (Paris: Régis Ruffet & Cie, 1866), 79-81.

⁵²⁹ B.89/d/56 (1944) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., 26 Post employees in village; B.89/d/58 (1942-54) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

⁵³⁰ P. Duchaussois, *Mid Snow and Ice: The Apostles of the North-West* (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1923), 91.

When they met locals in this new “Bethlehem”, Taché and Laflèche found that Indigenous residents already showed an awareness of many Catholic fundamentals.⁵³¹ For years before the priests reached the community, Métis families around Île-à-la-Crosse had kept certain practices of their coureur/Pedlar heritage alive, and some of those rituals had a Catholic influence that HBC trading practices seemed unable to weaken.⁵³² With this cultural component integrated into Métis life ways, the priests were even more pleased with their decision to locate there. At the same time, HBC workers watched their own hopes about the priests bear fruit, as the two men appeared to create “a strong centripetal effect upon the regional population...[as] Chipewyan and Cree family-bands assembled during the summers at Île-à-la-Crosse to trade and to receive the sacraments from the Oblate priests.”⁵³³ As locals helped the priests build their living quarters, post workers concluded that this general response to the priests’ clumsy construction abilities illustrated a community trust that would positively impact trading activities.⁵³⁴

Almost immediately, the priests realized locals would not come to help them unless the men appeared to assist the community in return. “Undoubtedly conscious of a large mixed-blood contingent in the community given the prevalence of European

⁵³¹ Taché, *Vingt années de missions*, 13.

⁵³² “How could it happen that the Indians of the Bay could be exposed so long—from 1668 up to 1840—to White influence and yet have taken on so little of European religious culture?...As for the traders, throughout most of the north country they were concerned exclusively or almost exclusively with one thing, the business of trading a limited range of the White man’s products for the Indian’s furs. They did not go in much for mixing religion with business.” Cooper, “The Northern Algonquian Supreme Being,” 108.

⁵³³ Jarvenpa, “Intergroup Behavior and Imagery,” 286.

⁵³⁴ Foran, “Les Gens de Cette Place,” 41-42. Unsurprisingly, the priests’ accounts include explicit mention of their own ability to improve this cabin on their own accord. See Taché, *Vingt années de missions*, 18. See also “Codex Historicus de l’Île-à-la-Crosse,” (1845-1897) Fonds Oblats de Marie-Immaculée Keewatin-Le Pas, ASHSB, Centre du patrimoine, 8-9.

surnames and the historical role of Île-à-la-Crosse as a contact zone between distinct ethno-linguistic groups,”⁵³⁵ the priests had not anticipated learning about how Métis locals had rejected almost every trading policy the HBC introduced at Île-à-la-Crosse. As a result of such power, the Oblate Brothers realized if the mission did not openly support a high price for furs, fewer trappers would come for religious guidance – even if the Brothers never participated directly in an exchange. After a number of weeks, and showing their failure to notice this correlation quickly enough, Taché and Laflèche realized that Indigenous visits to the mission had declined.⁵³⁶ In response to how “[t]he impact of the church ... was initially negligible,”⁵³⁷ Taché and Laflèche decided to improve their learning of what locals wanted in their community, and then subsequently satisfy some of those aspirations.⁵³⁸

For their first readjustment, the missionaries redesigned their worship calendar to suit locals’ own schedules. For example, rather than having all the Easter liturgies occur in the spring, Taché and Laflèche held Easter masses during the summer months. Such a calendar change meant locals could still travel and fish as they always had, and then possibly attend mass as they had not had the opportunity to do

⁵³⁵ Foran, “Les Gens de Cette Place,” 245.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*, 184.

⁵³⁷ Robert Jarvenpa, “Silot’ine: An Insurance Perspective on Northern Dene Kinship Networks in Recent History,” 156.

⁵³⁸ Macdougall, “The Comforts of Married Life,” 11 and 13. The priests claimed to be “warmly received” by the HBC and that such a welcome had the approval of First Nations. See P2707-P2709 (May 24, 1845) “Thibault to Provencher”, Joseph-Norbert Provencher to the Central Councils of l’Oeuvre de la Propagation de la Foi, Joseph-Norbert Provencher Series, Fonds Corporation archiépiscopale catholique romaine de Saint-Boniface, SHSB/Arch., Centre du patrimoine.

previously. This type of calendar change by men of the cloth had occurred elsewhere, but Taché and Laflèche believed they went even further by allowing anyone to participate in Communion regardless of whether or not they were baptised.⁵³⁹



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For their second contribution to Île-à-la-Crosse needs, the priests announced they would help with village health-care services. Before arriving, Laflèche and Taché presumed they would make their first major project some type of educational facility. Indeed, soon after reaching Île-à-la-Crosse, they told locals of their interest

⁵³⁹ "Codex Historicus de l'Île-à-la-Crosse," (1845-1897) Fonds Oblats de Marie-Immaculée Keewatin-Le Pas, SHSB/Arch, Centre du patrimoine, 22, 35-36, 44 and Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place," 111, 213.

⁵⁴⁰ Image 17 - "Alexandre Taché" (1850), artist unknown. Oblate Communications, The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, accessed on July 10, 2015, <http://www.omiworld.org/dictionary.asp?v=5&vol=2&let=T&ID=1957>.

in “teaching children in the settlement.”⁵⁴¹ Yet while they did not reject this proposal, several residents also explained the need for assistance during sudden weather changes, times when elderly villagers could not help themselves, and when diseases hit local families. Impressed with how locals organized care for those suffering from measles and influenza in 1846,⁵⁴² Laflèche and Taché concluded that the issue of health care effectively complemented their own aspirations. Thanks much to the villager’s willingness to construct the necessary buildings, the priests opened their version of a health-care centre in January of 1847.⁵⁴³ Within three years of its opening, Laflèche and Taché announced this “hospital” was available to anyone in Rupert’s Land.⁵⁴⁴ With the hope that such inclusion would mean more customers, Mackenzie supported this effort wholeheartedly and even offered the labour of Servants to construct the hospital. Thanks to the planning and then manpower provided by locals, the building made it through three winters.⁵⁴⁵

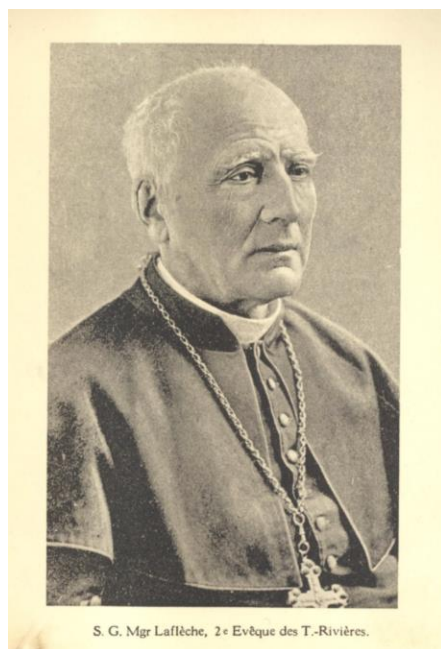
⁵⁴¹ Ron Clancy, “Religious History of St. John Baptiste Parish: Arrival of the Grey Nuns. The First Schools and the Boarding School,” *Memories of Deep River: Hunting, Trapping, Fishing and Fur Farming in Northern Saskatchewan, Canada*, accessed on July 10, 2015, <http://www.jkcc.com/rcindex.html>.

⁵⁴² B.154/a/46, (1841-1850) Norway House, Manitoba, Post Journals, HBCA, n.d., n.p. See also Ray, “Diffusion of Diseases,” 153, and Hackett, *A Very Remarkable Sickness*, 216. The missionaries had heard a mumps outbreak hit the village in 1844, and Ray contends this information impacted how the priests determined their own role a few years later – the community could likely survive an epidemic better, but it also had a vital role to play in mitigating the impact amongst locals there and away from Île-À-La-Crosse. Ray, “Diffusion of Diseases,” 156.

⁵⁴³ D.5/19, (January 12 1847), “file currently unnamed,” Sir George Simpson, Correspondence Inward, HBCA, 65. This reporting about health in general and diseases in particular was a regular part of all Posts’ data: Ray, “Diffusion of Diseases,” 153.

⁵⁴⁴ Benoit, “Mission at Île-à-la-Crosse, 48.

⁵⁴⁵ Hackett, *A Very Remarkable Sickness*, 176 and B.156/a/10, (1789-1834) Oxford House, Manitoba Post Journals, HBCA, n.d., 9d, 10d.



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Back in Saint Boniface, mission leaders claimed final authority over every mission decision at Île-à-la-Crosse still lay with them. Those same leaders located by the Red River decided they could and would refuse to provide funding for the hospital or the buildings used for mass and school in the more western village.⁵⁴⁷ So the village priests found they shared even more in common with Île-à-la-Crosse Servants: no man from either sector received financial backing to perform the supposedly unique functions their respective institutions thought Île-à-la-Crosse inspired. Just as the HBC did, the priests' headquarters bragged about its representatives in the village while refusing to fund them. Saint Boniface leadership declared Taché and Laflèche

⁵⁴⁶ Image 18 - Mgr Louis-François Richer-Laflèche, accessed on August 3, 2015, <http://joachimleblanc.com/brochure.htm>.

⁵⁴⁷ Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest*, 43.

the most “experienced” missionaries west of the Red River.⁵⁴⁸ But that same Red River leadership denied its experts any help.

As Taché and Laflèche’s reputation for success grew, their efforts inspired other Catholics to arrive at Île-à-la-Crosse and to learn about what made the place so impressive. As those visitors helped demonstrate Catholic values, they received a warm response from the priests. Helpful to the Île-à-la-Crosse missionaries, visitors often provided labour and products that helped mitigate the mission’s difficult financial conditions. For example, when Brother Louis Dubé turned up in the village, he decided to become the mission’s in-house gardener, cook, and pastry maker. Another (unnamed) priest followed Dubé, and this second visitor even gifted the mission with a herd of cattle. By 1855, woodworker (and priest) Patrick Bowes arrived and constructed an eighteen metre long church with a steeple and twelve glass windows. Three years later, Bowes completed a two-story residence for mission workers.⁵⁴⁹ With these signs of “progress,” Saint Boniface missionaries referred to the Île-à-la-Crosse mission as “Chateau Saint-Jean.”⁵⁵⁰ Notably for the Île-à-la-Crosse priests, none of any of this perceived opulence developed with any more money, so they deserved a reputation of making a house into a home with no budget as well.

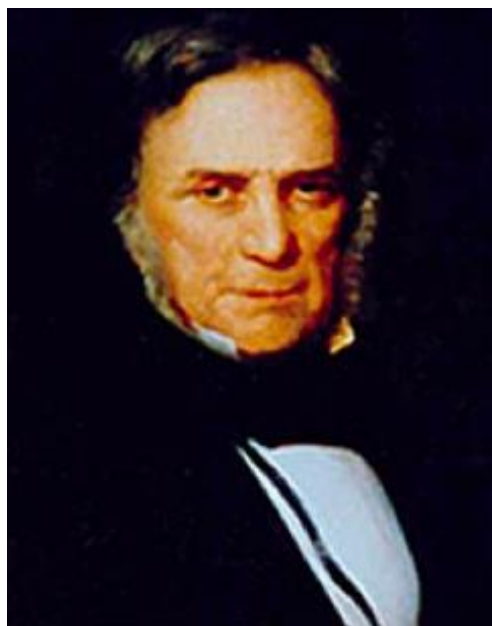
⁵⁴⁸ Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on Canada’s Northwest*, 194, 207.

⁵⁴⁹ Foran, “Les Gens de Cette Place,” 54-55; “Codex Historicus de l’Île-à-la-Crosse,” (1845-1897) Fonds Oblats de Marie-Immaculée Keewatin-Le Pas, ASHSB, Centre du patrimoine, 31, 38; *Ibid*, 31, 38-39; T0483-T0486. (May 8, 1861) “Moulin to Taché,” Île-à-la-Crosse, Corporation archiepiscopale catholique romaine de Saint-Boniface, Archidiocese de Saint Boniface – Serie Alexandre Tache, SHSB/Arch.

⁵⁵⁰ Foran, “Les Gens de Cette Place,” 54-55; “Codex Historicus de l’Île-à-la-Crosse,” (1845-1897) Fonds Oblats de Marie-Immaculée Keewatin-Le Pas, ASHSB, Centre du patrimoine, 19-20; Taché, *Vingt années de missions*, 31-32.

While the mission solidified its place in the community during the 1850s, the village's HBC Servants increasingly believed their post's favourable reputation had waned amongst both company officials and trappers in the North West. Now led by Factor Nicol Finlayson, Île-à-la-Crosse Servants felt immense pressure both to keep the specific village station profitable and to bring in profit to compensate for other posts' poor results. At first, Finlayson accepted his company's understanding about the post's role. But after a number of months, Finlayson concluded his headquarters' demands simply revealed its distrust for his own leadership at a local level. As he watched employees quit despite the supposed monopoly the Honourable Company had on employment in Rupert's Land, Finlayson considered his task of pulling other posts through difficult times almost impossible. Finlayson also lamented that if his own post could not even introduce any innovation proposed by workers without approval of management, these same workers would likely not stay even if the post only had to take care of its own accounts.⁵⁵¹

⁵⁵¹ B.89/b/3, (1820-1826) Île-à-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.



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Following in his predecessors' footsteps, Finlayson showed his displeasure with management by inventing his own policies to suit the circumstances he observed in Île-à-la-Crosse. As an example, within a month of his arrival in 1850, Finlayson established what he called a "deficit" budget without corporate permission. The HBC already had run deficits during its history. But management considered Finlayson's interpretation only viable when more than one large company competed in the North West. Receiving a negative response to his idea, Finlayson retorted that the Honourable Company still did not comprehend how little dependency trappers had upon the HBC. Moreover, he kept to his view that local ideas created corporate gains. Finlayson unilaterally informed trappers that if they brought in furs one year, he would promise them set prices that year for furs brought in the succeeding

⁵⁵² Image 19 - "Nicol Finlayson", artist unknown. Red River Ancestry, oil on canvas, accessed on July 11, 2015, <http://www.redriverancestry.ca/FINLAYSON-NICOL-1794.php>.

year.⁵⁵³ And while doing so, he put money aside to cover the potential loss incurred with such a promise.⁵⁵⁴ Due to more locals deciding to trade and the sense of loyalty triggering the purchase of even more goods beyond the value of the fur exchange, Finlayson predicted any short-term loss would pay for itself quickly.⁵⁵⁵

Finlayson's prediction came true. More families brought in furs and those families purchased other goods as well. Even better for Finlayson, the HBC increased its set value for pelts in 1852, so his trading partners were of even better spirits. As some trappers invariably stopped trading with the HBC and did not bother to cash in on his 1851 challenge, Finlayson also did not need to pay out all trappers with the money he put aside. As well, Finlayson had to hire more men to take care of all the trading that occurred.⁵⁵⁶

HBC headquarters did not dispute Finlayson's recordkeeping, nor did it challenge him on how he achieved such positive results. Still, the Honourable Company found itself having to save face with the other posts after word of Finlayson's experiment spread. The HBC had to admit Finlayson's plan worked, but it forbade other factors

⁵⁵³ Parker, "Re-Conceptualizing the Traditional Economy," 150. Workers quickly believed a debt system would lead to immediate profit and long-term financial stability for the post. See also Arthur J. Ray, "The Decline of Paternalism in the Hudson's Bay Company Fur Trade, 1870-1945," in *Merchant Credit and Labour Strategies in Historical Perspective*, ed. Rosemary E. Ommer (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1990), 188-9.

⁵⁵⁴ See letter from Eden Colville to George Simpson, 14 July 1851 in Eden Colville, *London Correspondence Inward from Eden Colville, 1849-1852*, ed. E. E. Rich, with the assistance of A. M. Johnson (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1956), 221-37.

⁵⁵⁵ B.89/a/24 (1819-1861) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, the date is likely close to February 1851, n.p.

⁵⁵⁶ B.89/d/56-82 and B.89/d/82-94 (1842-1862) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, specifically 1849-50, n.p., where 51 employees are listed; the next year 37 employees names appear. In 1851-52, Finlayson lists 38 employees.

from following Finlayson's lead. In other words, the HBC had to change its perspective about the village, but reconcile that change with its strictness elsewhere. As a result of this difficult position, the HBC asserted that the village was no longer a role model but instead an "exception."⁵⁵⁷ The post could still help compensate for other posts' paltry results, but Finlayson's strategies would only be followed in Île-à-la-Crosse.

Perhaps the HBC was sympathetic to Finlayson because of his heavy responsibilities at Île-à-la-Crosse. After all, he supervised more than forty employees, still had to fend off perennial "free traders" (such as "Widow Morin") venturing into the village,⁵⁵⁸ and he worked in tandem with the priests' efforts to ensure the mission remained "the de facto administrative headquarters of Catholic missionary activity in Rupert's Land and the North Western Territory."⁵⁵⁹ Moreover, Finlayson also worked hard to convince mission workers to be customers despite their supposed poverty.⁵⁶⁰ With the positive relationships he apparently founded with priests who had increased their own numbers, Finlayson found himself invited to a dinner at the mission where he realized so many men of the cloth lived there, "even my cook is a

⁵⁵⁷ B.89/d/56-82 and B.89/d/82-94 (1842-1862) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

⁵⁵⁸ Not surprisingly, many of these entreprenuring free traders decided to visit the more seemingly prosperous Île-À-La-Crosse. One of those new men, Charles McDermott, arrived in 1861 and also troubled the Oblates due to his supposed immorality. B.89/e/4 (1822-1904) Île-À-La-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA, n.d., 1: see specifically "Memorandum regarding the English River District," Île-à-la-Crosse 1862. For a helpful description of the difference between "Freemen" and "free traders" (the former a part of the HBC's form prior to 1859) see Macdougall, "The Comforts of Married Life." Not surprisingly, many of the interloping traders were Métis. As well, a number of them, such as the "Widow Morin," were female. *Ibid*, 31. Those called freemen often completed transactions away from the Post on behalf of the HBC. See Philip Goldring, *Papers on the Labour System of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1821-1900*, Vol. 2 (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1980), 229.

⁵⁵⁹ Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place," 50.

⁵⁶⁰ René Fumoleau, *As Long as This Land Shall Last*, 27.

bishop.”⁵⁶¹ But despite how these factors led to the HBC conceding Finlayson had helped Île-à-la-Crosse gain a reputation of a trading “Palace,”⁵⁶² Finlayson’s company still did not respond to his requests for either a bigger budget or more labour.⁵⁶³ Eventually, and likely due to his disgust with HBC requirements, Finlayson resigned after only three years.⁵⁶⁴ As notable as Finlayson deciding he could not reconcile his village sensibilities with company strategies, it took three years for the HBC to determine who Finlayson’s successor would be.

In 1860, George Deschambeault arrived at Île-à-la-Crosse to lead the post. While prepared to implement company principles, Deschambeault concluded the post had functioned very well without any Chief Factor at all. Deschambeault observed how the church and the HBC still had to court villagers, and as a result most of those institutions’ innovations spoke to villagers’ demands first and company/church beliefs second. While Deschambeault formed these conclusions, the mission still had not received any funding from the Church’s higher administration. How could the mission stop its financial bleeding? The men suddenly admitted that they could tolerate working with women. By showing this newfound flexibility, they could

⁵⁶¹ Morice, *History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada*, 249.

⁵⁶² Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on Canada’s Northwest*, 55.

⁵⁶³ In 1859, Great Britain refused to renew the HBC’s exclusive trade license for Rupert’s Land. As a result, men who had previously traded without obvious recognition could suddenly be open about their freelancing and, as well, anyone interested in starting a trading operation could do so. Foran, “Les Gens de Cette Place,” 116 and Raymond Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1996), 35-36.

⁵⁶⁴ See Alice M. Johnson, “Nicol Finlayson” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, accessed August 10, 2015, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/finlayson_nicol_10E.html.

acquire some needed free labour.⁵⁶⁵ The village priests made a request with the Saint Boniface mission, and after an eight-week journey in a canoe over more than sixteen hundred kilometres,⁵⁶⁶ Sisters Agnes, Pepin, and Boucher arrived at “the key and historic mission of Île-à-la-Crosse.” The three nuns quickly noticed that more than seven hundred people claimed the community as their home.⁵⁶⁷

Very interested in creating a “motherly” environment” at the mission,⁵⁶⁸ the nuns were happily surprised that parents of more than twenty-five children were waiting for their arrival and wanted details about how the religious sisters intended to educate students.⁵⁶⁹ Even better, the nuns did not need to lobby the male missionaries to construct a building for classes because a school existed already.⁵⁷⁰ Interested in liturgical events and the hospital’s activities, the priests left the school to their female co-workers. But besides allowing Father Henri Faraud more time

⁵⁶⁵ The Oblates believed Grey Nuns could assist in missionary work throughout all of Rupert’s Land. Foran, “Les Gens de Cette Place,” 148, citing Taché, *Vingt années de missions*, 91-93. See also Foran’s mention of Duchaussois, *Aventures canadiennes des Sœurs Grises*, 14-18, 21 in Foran, *Ibid.* 150, 117 and “Codex Historicus de l’Île-à-la-Crosse,” (1845-1897) Fonds Oblats de Marie-Immaculée Keewatin-Le Pas, ASHSB, Centre du patrimoine, 134.

⁵⁶⁶ Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on Canada’s Northwest*, 92.

⁵⁶⁷ Morice, *History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada*, 260. Morice notes, “there were probably only five Protestants ...probably the Hudson’s Bay Company Clerk (Mr. Roderick McKenzie) and his family.” For a rather melodramatic description of a ten week journey from Saint Boniface to l’Île à la Crosse by the women guided by an apparently ill priest (Grandin), see Pierre Duchaussois, *Aventures canadiennes des Sœurs Grises* (Paris: Flammarion, 1934), 15-18 and *Annales de l’établissement des Sœurs Grises à l’Île à la Crosse*, January 5th, 1885, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi Pour La Province de Quebec*, No. 25, *Archives de soeurs Grises* (hereafter “ASGM”), Montreal, 1: 175-197.

⁵⁶⁸ “Historique,” St. Famille Île à la Crosse sub series, L018 Fonds ASGM, 1, 5. See also Foran, “Les Gens de Cette Place,” 150.

⁵⁶⁹ “Codex Historicus de l’Île-à-la-Crosse,” (1845-1897) Fonds Oblats de Marie-Immaculée Keewatin-Le Pas, ASHSB, Centre du patrimoine, 71; Marchildon and Robinson, *Canoeing the Churchill*, 148.

⁵⁷⁰ *Annales de l’établissement des Sœurs Grises à l’Île à la Crosse*, January 5th, 1885, *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi Pour La Province de Quebec*, No. 25, ASGM, Montreal, 1: 206.

since lessons no longer needed preparing, having the nuns there meant he had more time to focus on his self-promotion within church bureaucracy.⁵⁷¹

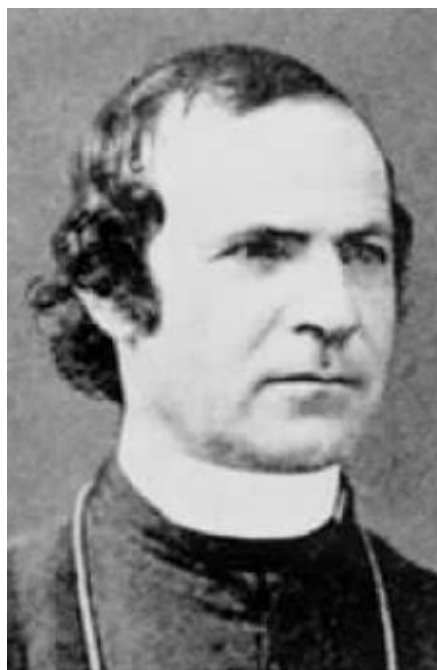
Before the women reached the village, Faraud definitely had helped improve the Catholic Church's presence in Île-à-la-Crosse. Laflèche and Taché founded the mission, a bishop who predated Faraud had arrived to help spread the Bible's word with the priests, and many other religious workers had bolstered the mission's efforts in the meantime. But Faraud made sure he had received the most repeated recognition from Saint Boniface supervisors. Determining his own work in the church was similar to what other men had done before receiving bishop status, Faraud lobbied both Oblates in France and cardinals in Italy to support the application he submitted in 1863. Whatever he wrote to the Vatican, and whatever his European contacts said of him, Faraud soon became Île-à-la-Crosse's second resident Bishop.⁵⁷²

When it announced Faraud's promotion, the Vatican also declared a new set of jurisdictional boundaries for its understanding of the North West. With this new map, Île-à-la-Crosse was no longer part of Saint Boniface's parish and instead fell within the metes and bounds of the "Diocese of Athabasca." So when Île-à-la-Crosse's Father Faraud became Bishop Faraud, he actually became the first bishop of a completely new see. For his first act as a bishop, Faraud helped residents

⁵⁷¹ Robin Riddington and Jillian Riddington, *Where Happiness Dwells: A History of the Dane-zaa First Nations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013), 136.

⁵⁷² Faraud also mentioned his carpentry skills as evidence of his contribution to Île-à-la-Crosse's success. Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place," 43.

respond to the devastating effects of whooping cough, scarlet fever, and measles – all without the need to get approval from Saint Boniface.⁵⁷³ Although a few residents perished, Faraud considered the community's response evidence of a cooperation that did not exist elsewhere in Rupert's Land.



Bishop Henri Faraud (AD)

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After this effort, which included a huge renovation of the hospital, Faraud announced Île-à-la-Crosse's school would be open to any child living in the Athabasca diocese's area.⁵⁷⁵ As a result more students arrived, and when they came

⁵⁷³ B.89/a/34 (February 8 and 18, March 10, and April 1, 10 and 11, 1863) Ile-a-la-Crosse Post Journals, , HBCA, n.p. Also mentioned by Parker, "Re-Conceptualizing the Traditional Economy," 189. At the end of the year and into 1864, many community members also suffered through scarlet fever and measles, Parker, Ibid. 192: scarlet fever and brought in measles. B.89/a/35 (May 22, 1865) Ile-a-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.p.

⁵⁷⁴ Image 20 - "Bishop Henri Joseph Faraud", artist unknown. Oblate Communications, The Missions Oblates of Mary Immaculate- Montréal, accessed July 10, 2015, <http://www.omiworld.org/dictionary.asp?v=5&vol=2&let=F&ID=1707>

⁵⁷⁵ Philip Taft Spaulding, "The Métis of Ile-a-la-Crosse," 56. J. Champagne backdates the school to as early as 1852, but whether instruction was formalized and guaranteed then is not possible to confirm. See J. Champagne, "Monseigneur Alexandre Taché, o.m.i, organisateur de l'Elgise

to the school neither Faraud nor the teachers recorded the students' family background.⁵⁷⁶ In that way, the school's recordkeeping reinforced the village's patterns of not keeping track of cultural backgrounds that institutional headquarters of various external forces often demanded.⁵⁷⁷

Faraud continued to maintain his reputation for inventing village-specific policies. For example, he continued to adjust more of the church's liturgy to suit the timing of community activities and the more than sixty HBC employees.⁵⁷⁸ Additionally, he gave communion to the post's more than sixty employees regardless of their religious background.⁵⁷⁹ Faraud also emphasized saints as much as he taught about Jesus,⁵⁸⁰ he openly challenged the belief systems presented by visiting Methodists,⁵⁸¹ and he even lobbied the post to provide employees with more holidays.⁵⁸² And during all of his efforts, Faraud never received any financial help

catholique dans l'Ouest canadien," *CCHA Rapport* 16 (1948-49): 13-22. See also Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest*, 137.

⁵⁷⁶ Sir John Richardson, *Arctic Searching Expedition: A Journal of a Boat-Voyage through Rupert's Land and the Arctic Sea, in Search of the Discovery Ships under Command of Sir John Franklin, with an Appendix on the Physical Geography of North America*, 2 volumes (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1851), 1: 208; Sir John Richardson, *Ibid.*, 104. For details about the inter-Indigenous component of attendance, see Morice, *History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada*, 76; Wright, *Saskatchewan, the History of a Province*, 45-46.

⁵⁷⁷ Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest*, 58.

⁵⁷⁸ B.89/f/1 (1865-1882) Ile-a-la-Crosse Lists of Servants, HBCA, n.d., n.p. details 67 HBC employees in 1865.

⁵⁷⁹ Abel, *Drum Songs*, 119.

⁵⁸⁰ Morice, *History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada*, 206; Terrence L. Craig, *The Missionary Lives: A Study in Canadian Missionary Biography and Autobiography* (Leiden, Neth.: Brill, 1997), 54. The emphasis on saints rather than mainly Jesus was not unusual in religious instruction in the Americas. Morice, *History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada*, 206.

⁵⁸¹ Morice, *History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada*, 200; Rev. James Evans, "Extract of a Letter from the Rev. James Evans, General Superintendent of the Wesleyan Missions in the Hudson's-Bay Territory, Dated July, 1864," *Wesleyan-Methodist Magazine* 1 (April 1865): 414.

⁵⁸² Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place," 157: "In spring 1861, Végréville and Moulin recommended a decrease in the number of "congés" allotted to the schoolchildren so as to mitigate the influence of their families." This policy ultimately failed, due to a combination of natural events, families' views about their children's activities and the health of church workers. Foran cites T0391-T0393.

from the Church's administration.⁵⁸³ Because he proved to other Church leaders that his "plans ripened" in Île-à-la-Crosse,⁵⁸⁴ and when he negotiated a peace settlement with Dene trappers who claimed that God had told them to kill the White population unless the trappers received a better price for pelts, Faraud gained an even more positive reputation. It is likely that village donations of labour, household goods, and food resulted from his efforts.⁵⁸⁵

Regardless of how financially stressed either the mission or post felt, Île-à-la-Crosse's stable form solidified further during the 1860s. With the independently functioning parish,⁵⁸⁶ the post maintaining its lead above other HBC stations, and the Métis population growing, Île-à-la-Crosse's distinguishing features also grew in strength. Hardly any of the company workers or missionaries complained loudly enough about difficult times enough to leave, and locals continued to protect their own ways while borrowing newer functions from the church and the post when

(April 6, 1861) "Moulin to Taché," Île-à-la-Crosse, Corporation archiepiscopale catholique romaine de Saint-Boniface, Archidiocèse de Saint Boniface – Serie Alexandre Tache, SHSB/Arch. and L. Soullier, *Vie du Révérend Père Légeard*, (l'oeuvre de Saint-Paul, 1886), 56 and 82.

⁵⁸³ Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place," 48 on how low funds impacted "satellite" mission work. Less emphasis on stations away from Île-à-la-Crosse also altered where the HBC traded. Particularly after 1863, the church cut back on what it budgeted the school. Foran, *Ibid.*, 159. Both sectors low budgets that led to less cooperation as a way to protect money; Kevin Gambell, "The Île-à-la-Crosse Cemetary: A Regional Approach," 44. Gambell argues that the mission illustrated more monopolistic tendencies than that HBC.

⁵⁸⁴ Morice, *History of the Catholic Church in Western Canada*, 307. Besides making arrangements about transportation, church officials and Post workers regularly helped each other find the best ways for goods and communication to arrive at Île-à-la-Crosse. Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place," 65; "Codex Historicus de l'Île-à-la-Crosse," (1845-1897) Fonds Oblats de Marie-Immaculée Keewatin-Le Pas, ASHSB, Centre du patrimoine, 23 and Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place," 109.

⁵⁸⁵ Martha McCarthy, 133 and from CMS/B/OMS/C C1 O 34/1-85, A35 (April 30, 1860) "Journal of Robert Hunt," Rev. Robert Hunt, 1859-1861, Letters and papers of Individual missionaries, catechists and others, North-West Canada mission, Overseas series, foreign division, Church Missionary Society Archives, University of Birmingham.

⁵⁸⁶ Gaston Carrière, "Faraud, Henri," in *Dictionnaire biographique des Oblats de M.I. au Canada*, Vol. 2 (Ottawa: Edition de L'Université d'Ottawa, 1977), 19-20.

they wished to do so. But while the villagers showed few signs of nervousness, men much further away feared that not enough stability existed across a larger area made up of what they and Great Britain referred to as “British North America”, the details of which are not the concern of this thesis.⁵⁸⁷ Suffice to say that the eastern colonies became officially known as “Canada.”⁵⁸⁸ On 1 July, 1867 Canada had its own House of Commons, and the colonies that immediately became the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario and Quebec also established properly functioning legislatures. The *British North America Act, 1867* detailed what matters the provinces controlled, what Canada governed, and how if a subject was not mentioned in the act it defaulted to the House of Commons’ jurisdiction. Amongst those subjects that suddenly became a federal matter, the MPs had to determine the legality of the HBC over Rupert’s Land and the rule of law in the North West.⁵⁸⁹

As Kent McNeil has explained, the implemented British legislation that created Canada magnified the arguably illegitimate form the Honourable Company had in law. From its very start in 1670, the point of a company governing an area that its representatives did not visit conflicted with legal norms used by colonial powers

⁵⁸⁷ For expanded analysis, see W.L. Morton, *The Critical Years: the union of British North America 1857-1873* (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1964); P.B. Waite, ed., *The Confederation debates in the Province of Canada, 1865: a selection* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963).

⁵⁸⁸ *The British North America Act*, 30 - 31 Victoria, c. 3 (1867) App. II, No. 11. Trevor Lloyd, *Empire, A history of the British Empire*, (US: Hambledon & London, 2000), 97; Tim Jepsen et al. *The Rough Guide to Canada*, 7th ed. (UK: Rough Guides, 2010), 956.

⁵⁸⁹ Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Colonial Secretary in 1858-59, even encouraged the Provinces of Canada to launch a legal action against the HBC. “Lytton to Head” (May 13, 1859) R178-0-5-E, Office of the Governor-General of Canada Fonds, LAC, 283-284 for a description of how the HBC would do nothing to improve the federal government’s political and economic concerns. This disparaging perspective about the HBC can also be gleaned from the view the HBC should only be compensated for recent improvements it had made rather than its overall value. Elaine A. Mitchell, “Edward Watkin and the Buying-Out of the Hudson’s Bay Company,” *Canadian Historical Review* 34, no. 3 (September 1953): 219.

regarding discovery, the obligation to implement laws in a region to prevent other countries from having the right to enter and overtake the area, and English domestic legal regimes about sovereignty. From its start, Canada had to face the blunt fact that its statutory documentation did not clearly explain how the North West (or Rupert's Land) was legally part of the country.⁵⁹⁰ So, how to get the North West to be *Canada's North West*?

Just before the *British North America Act* had passed, Great Britain detached itself from the HBC and this move transformed the Honourable Company from a type of Crown entity to a regular business like any other trading enterprise. Before the shift in the HBC's status, Great Britain's government also asked if Canada's political leaders would want the company to be a Canadian institution. Because of its paltry profits, and its clear history of not enforcing colonial perspectives, Canada respectfully declined.⁵⁹¹ In the meantime, this political back-and-forth about the HBC's ownership did not resolve the point that Rupert's Land was physically unknown to many in Ottawa and in a type of legal no-man's-land in any British or Canadian court.⁵⁹²

⁵⁹⁰ For an excellent explanation of the difficult quandary in law this circumstance represented, see Kent McNeil, "Interpretation of the Terms and Conditions," in *Native Claims in Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory* (Saskatoon, SK: Native Law Centre, 1982).

⁵⁹¹ Gary Sprakkman, *Management Accounting at the Hudson's Bay Company: From Quill Pen to Digitization* (Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing, 2015), 108.

⁵⁹² S.146 of the BNA Act did provide for the eventual inclusion of Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory within Canada. What made the application of the law problematic was due to different views on where any boundary between Rupert's Land and Canada proper would be and then how the HBC Charter would apply to Rupert's Land even if Canada still had control of that region. The dispute between the Province of Canada and the HBC prior to 1867 was mainly over the location of the boundary between RL and Canada, though there were questions raised about the validity of the HBC Charter. See generally Kent McNeil, *Native Rights and the Boundaries of Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory*.

Within thirteen months of Canada's birth, and despite the fact that Great Britain had not properly claimed the North West through typical royal prerogative of the time, British MPs passed *The Rupert's Land Act* stating that Britain would accept a surrender of Rupert's Land from the HBC, after which Rupert's Land could be transferred to Canada by virtue of s.146 of the *British North America Act*. Canada thus claimed it controlled Rupert's Land via this supposed surrender.⁵⁹³ After this transfer, Canada named Rupert's Land "The North West Territories" (hereinafter the "NWT"). After all of these stages were completed, Ottawa claimed it automatically gained authority to govern this territory in every aspect since the land was not within any province's boundaries.⁵⁹⁴

Likely influenced by both lack of political concern about the North West and the budgetary impact the region created, as well as unease about how to navigate difficult relationships with various Métis communities, Ottawa was slow to demonstrate the power it claimed to have over the NWT.⁵⁹⁵ Slow to build schools, municipal infrastructure, or general health facilities that elsewhere were the responsibility of provincial legislatures, the federal government consequently learned of local peoples' disappointment with the Crown. The French language

⁵⁹³ *Rupert's Land Act*, 31-32 Victoria, c.105 (1868). Then see *Rupert's Land and North-Western Territory – Order of Her Majesty in Council admitting Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory into the union*, 33 Vict. (June 23, 1870).

⁵⁹⁴ Anthony J. Jordan, "The Constitution of the Northwest Territories," (LLM Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1978), 10.

⁵⁹⁵ On this point, see Kent McNeil's *Native Claims in Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory: Canada's Constitutional Obligations* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan Native Law Centre, 1982), 15-17.

seemed unavailable when locals wanted it used for public events, religious venues seemed unable to access financial assistance typical of aid in cities located in jurisdictions such as Ontario or Quebec, and the issue of whether the Crown had really proven title to the territory haunted all of these tense matters. A certain set of families located around the Red River and well connected to Île-à-la-Crosse decided they had had enough of Ottawa's claim of control but denial of responsibility.

Amongst them someone, trained as both a lawyer and priest and whose father was from Île-à-la-Crosse, decided to take the Crown's authority "head on" using Canada's own laws when doing so. Since late 1869 this man, Louis Riel Jr., had encouraged members from his father's community and residents around Red River/Fort Garry to challenge Crown officials about their claim of governance and their denial to provide.

Invigorated by his own identity as a Métis, Riel framed his challenges against Canada using terms from Canadian law. Fort Garry was not in a province, and as such Canada was required to provide administrative structures both in national terms and in the ways newly anointed provinces had. Riel did not reject the arrival of newcomers, nor did he automatically disapprove of the transfer of land title to the Crown. But he and his neighbours chided Crown representatives and even religious officials who did not support his and his fellow residents' demand for educational facilities, churches, bilingualism, and the recognition of the river lot system for Métis who preferred that traditional type of land distribution. Those matters, Riel argued, were simply part of enforcing prior occupancy and the type of federalism declared

in the *BNA Act*.⁵⁹⁶ In this way, Riel's condemnation of Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald pertained to the rule of law as much as his efforts focused on specific rights for Métis peoples.

Many scholars have taken much time to evaluate various components of Riel's exact thoughts and actions at this time.⁵⁹⁷ Whatever those examinations reveal, it is integral to highlight here the legality of Riel's perspective and how that legality invariably had an impact on how events unfolded around Red River in 1870. Canada faced the uncomfortable legal position of claiming the West but having no document that detailed how the region's original title-holder inhabitants had transferred that control to either Great Britain or Canada. As a result of this volatile position in law, and as a way to implement its control even further, the Canadian Crown sent out agents hurriedly to obtain transfer agreements with First Nations as a way to make their claim attain more legitimacy. Because Métis peoples lived in the same spaces in which these first treaties in the North West were to be finalized, Métis families regularly pressed for inclusion in talks as well.⁵⁹⁸ By 1870, the multi-

⁵⁹⁶ Ian Angus, "Louis Riel and English-Canadian Political Thought," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 74, no. 4 (Fall 2005): 884-894 at 887.

⁵⁹⁷ See Jennifer Reid, *Louis Riel and the Creation of Modern Canada: Mythic Discourse and the Postcolonial State* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2012); Stanley, George F.G. *Louis Riel: Patriot or Rebel?* Vol. 2. (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1979); William McCartney Davidson, *Louis Riel 1844-1885: A Biography* (Calgary, Alberta: Albertan, 1955); JM Bumsted, *Louis Riel v Canada: The Making of a Rebel* (Winnipeg: Great Plains Publications, 2001). Hans V. Hansen, ed. *Riel's Defense: Perspectives on His Speeches* (Montreal, PQ: McGill-Queens University Press, 2014); And Justice Beverly McLachlin's Keynote address on October 28th, 2010 at the Delloyd J Guth Visiting Lecture: Beverly McLachlin, "Louis Riel: Patriot Rebel" *Manitoba Law Journal* 35, no. 1 (2011): 1-13.

⁵⁹⁸ Aritha Van Herk provides helpful context in *Mavericks* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2010), 61.

layered set of documents that made Manitoba into a province contained a combination of First Nations, Métis, and federal Crown rights.⁵⁹⁹

The very invention of Manitoba helped recognize Métis perspectives, as by 1871 the land was treated with First Nations living within the province's metes and bounds,⁶⁰⁰ the Torrens system created homesteads,⁶⁰¹ and the region also had Métis who had acquired scrip.⁶⁰² Everyone who felt recognized by one of these processes knew he or she also had various new rights and responsibilities in law. Because Riel's father originally came from Île-à-la-Crosse, word travelled fast to the village about Red River skirmishes, Métis activities, and the structure of Riel Jr's challenge against Canada.⁶⁰³ For Métis elsewhere, Manitoba's arrangements likely seemed possible and necessary elsewhere.

Of course, Île-à-la-Crosse's circumstances did not compare exactly with the situation around Fort Garry. For one matter, Red River Métis were struggling with how the Dominion government did not appear to be providing schools, protection of their

⁵⁹⁹ *Manitoba Act*, 33 Vict., c. 3. (1870).

⁶⁰⁰ D. J. Hall, "A Serene Atmosphere?' Treaty 1 Revisited," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 4, no. 2 (1984), 329.

⁶⁰¹ The following definition of Torrens land system can be found in Tim Hanstad's "Designing Land Registration Systems for Developing Countries," *American University International Law Review* 12, no. 3 (1997-1998), 650: "This system was first introduced in Australia, in 1858, by Sir Robert Torrens. Torrens believed that a land register should show the actual state of ownership, rather than just provide evidence of ownership. Under this system, the government guaranteed all rights shown in the land register. Shortly after Torrens introduced the concept of title registration in Australia, a similar system developed in England." The English system was subsequently implemented in regions claimed by the Canadian government.

⁶⁰² *Ibid.* s. 31.

⁶⁰³ "Riel's Parents and Childhood," *University of Manitoba, Archives and Special Collections*, accessed on July 15, 2015, https://www.umanitoba.ca/canadian_wartime/grade4/module1/parents_childhood.shtml.

religious practices, and the provision of government functions in French. After these confrontations, many of those same Métis found themselves located in a province that automatically gained authority to take care of many administrative duties. In comparison, Île-à-la-Crosse residents had a school that did function in languages amenable to the locals' multilingualism, the church appeared largely unchallenged by other religions or governments,⁶⁰⁴ and no outsider party appeared capable of overtaking the community's historic trading dynamics. As important, because trading carried on in Île-à-la-Crosse at the discretion of villagers, little economic dependency upon many outsiders' goods had formed – even by 1870.⁶⁰⁵ But even as these differences existed, both regional groups of Métis residents believed Canada had not been consistent in following the rules it had established, and that inconsistency made its claim of sovereignty dubious.⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰⁴ Indeed, Faraud taught the nuns Cree and Chipewyan to improve the women's communication skills. Incidentally, Faraud was criticized by Moulin for spending too much time with the women. T2023-T2029. (April 8, 1863) "Moulin to Taché," Île-à-la-Crosse, Corporation archiepiscopale catholique romaine de Saint-Boniface, Archidiocèse de Saint Boniface – Serie Alexandre Tache, SHSB/Arch. and Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place," 165.

⁶⁰⁵ Macdougall, "The Comforts of Married Life," 33. Across the North West, Métis had also developed refined trading skills in the exchange of metals and munitions. Nicole J. M. St-Onge, "The Dissolution of a Métis Community, Pointe à Grouette, 1860-1885," *Studies in Political Economy* 18 (Autumn 1985), 154.

⁶⁰⁶ B.89/d/1-509 (1810-1920) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., 159-165. Canada's claim of sovereignty over Rupert's Land and the North Western Territory rested on the Rupert's Land Order of 1870 and the Crown's claim to sovereignty before that. But because that prior claim had no documented land transfer, and the order also did not include proper land transfer agreements for the time, the legal argument remains that the acquisition of Rupert's Land and then the North Western Territory was not justified using Canadian, British and international standards of the time. See generally Kent McNeil, "Sovereignty and the Aboriginal Nations of Rupert's Land," *Manitoba History* 37 (spring/summer 1999): 2-8, and Kent McNeil, "Sovereignty on the Northern Plains: Indian, European, American and Canadian Claims," *Journal of the West* 39, no. 3 (2000): 10-18.



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During the same week elected officials celebrated Confederation in 1867, Île-à-la-Crosse villagers helped missionaries rebuild church facilities after a fire. As Members of Parliament passed statutes, locals organized their own administrative functions. When those same MPs felt even more confident saying Canada would exist all the way to the Pacific Ocean as of 1871, villagers did not hold the same view because no government official had met with them to discuss making a formal arrangement with locals and the village showed no sign of needing federal assistance.⁶⁰⁸ Inspired by their friends and relatives living further southeast,

⁶⁰⁷ Image 21 - Louis Riel Sr., date unknown. Image courtesy of the *Winnipeg Free Press*. Riel Sr. died in 1864 and his descendants often resided in the village. He regularly ventured back and forth between Red River and Île-à-la-Crosse.

⁶⁰⁸ Explanations regarding the village's apparent lack of dependency had appeared for the previous decade. For example, highest amount of recorded orders appeared in 1865: B.89/d/115 (1863-68) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.. The number of employees was always in the double digits. For example, in 1863, B.89/d/96, (1862-63): "58 employee." The number of workers illustrated a high rate of consumer purchases and interaction of a relatively peaceful form.

villagers believed their opinions about federal recognition were as legally potent as the argument presented by families living around Red River.

Between 1821 and 1871, various individuals believed Île-à-la-Crosse would undergo a significant shift as to who demonstrated authority in the community during daily, seasonal, or annual activities. After all, only one major company with government backing would serve as a trading contact, the Catholic Church had arrived to implement its doctrine, and a new national government claiming its legal rights to the West was born. As these new trends appeared in the village, *why wouldn't* the community's fundamental form change?

Yet these years proved to be a time when, rather than weakening or disappearing altogether, local concepts reinforced themselves and a colonial or federal presence did not take over. Partly due to how the outsider forces directly and indirectly competed against each other, partly due to the obvious useful purpose of local practices and beliefs, and also due to the Métis culture, under no circumstances did the HBC, the Church, or something called the "Crown" succeed in dominating –let alone monopolizing - Île-à-la-Crosse.

By 1871, the HBC functioned more like a nervous dependent customer than a controlling monopoly,⁶⁰⁹ the Catholic Church had yet to overtake villagers' opinions

⁶⁰⁹ Modern economic analysis suggests the word monopoly for the HBC misrepresents even the company's most profitable times and, instead, the Honourable Company functioned more akin to a "monopsony" (the sole buyer). See page 194 of George Colpitts, "Provisioning the HBC." The

about creation, cooperation, or education,⁶¹⁰ and Canada's interest in imposing more "rigid boundaries" failed due to residents' intensified challenge to governance systems that did not reinforce the norms they had invented themselves.⁶¹¹ Economic stability and social cohesion reigned, a culture strengthened its form and the outsiders who observed such calm prosperity found themselves adapting as much if not more than their well-established neighbours.⁶¹² The mix of these forces with local forms showed how George Back's (and others') vision of a cultural, religious, or trading monopoly never truly developed on the Churchill River. His painting was inaccurate – even utopian- in its message.⁶¹³ The following Section explores how that community life, unacknowledged by Back and many men after him, continued with the arrival of even more outsiders with even stronger institutional support.

subtleties of sovereignty traditionally based on settlement, exploration, or conquest were lost on a Government which claimed the land by right of purchase from the Hudson's Bay Company". Fumoleau, *As Long as This Land Shall Last*, 307. See also Michael Bliss, *Northern Enterprise*, 195.

⁶¹⁰ T3772-T3773, (January 9, 1866) "Agnès to Taché," Île-à-la-Crosse, Corporation archiepiscopale catholique romaine de Saint-Boniface, Archidiocèse de Saint Boniface – Serie Alexandre Tache, SHSB/Arch. There, Taché writes about having at least forty Métis (and some First Nations) students attending and he is worried they will either disappear or ask for more assistance.

⁶¹¹ For this phrase see Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900*, 133.

⁶¹² Parker, "Re-Conceptualizing the Traditional Economy," 352. Compare my view to those explained by Sharron Fitzgerald in Fitzgerald, "Hybrid Identities in Canada's Red River Colony," 192.

⁶¹³ This either intentional or unconscious hope for an image to come true is analysed further in Kynan Gentry's "The Art of Forgetting," in *History, Heritage, and Colonialism: Historical Consciousness, Britishness, and Cultural Identity in New Zealand, 1870-1940* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2015).

III. 5. From Scrip Afar to Scrip Local – 1871 to 1906



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III. 5. a. Introduction

1867 marked the year of Canada's birth. Although some individuals and groups might have regaled others about how such a country's arrival mattered, the impact of a Canadian rather than British presence meant little to many of those who would be part of the new country. Some circles (such as the Métis families living around Red River) soon had to remind the federal government what governing a country actually entailed. With their distant experiences, Île-à-la-Crosse residents certainly

⁶¹⁴ Image 22 - Sketch from 1904 post journal depicting what a Chief Factor considered a "Ladies Man" (sic). B.89/a/1-48, (October 28, 1904) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

could make the same argument as their Red River contemporaries. But around the Churchill River, residents also appreciated the benefits of being left alone – especially when they had already organized some of those same functions Ottawa was supposed to implement.⁶¹⁵ As they hunted, trapped, traded, and socialized, villagers wondered if a way existed to be out of the Crown’s bothersome reach while also getting the government to fulfill its obligations. As months passed during the beginnings of the “post-Confederation” period, residents guarded their wily independence at a local level while fashioning methods to address the new national government.⁶¹⁶

This Section introduces events in Île-à-la-Crosse from the first implementation of scrip to Métis in the North West to when villagers made formal legal arrangements with Crown representatives. During this era, legislation such as the *Indian Act, 1876* appeared, the Crown and First Nations negotiated a number of treaties, significant military confrontations occurred such as that at Batoche, and the Canadian government decided to establish more political divisions in the West. Those trends are undoubtedly important, but we can determine their impact by also measuring the strength of Île-à-la-Crosse’s local influence. Provincial boundaries might have influenced some individuals’ roles and livelihoods, but so did the impact of trapline use and discretionary local trade. The years covered in this Section document the

⁶¹⁵ Spaulding, “The Métis of Ile-a-la-Crosse,” 57.

⁶¹⁶ Butler explained how he viewed the village school at this time as one of the best school structures in the West. William Francis Butler, *The Wild North Land: Being the Story of a Winter Journey, with Dogs, across Northern North America* (1968; repr., Edmonton, AB: Hurtig, 1968), 104.

individuals, communities and institutions that ensured the village's peculiar existence remained intact. As the village had proved influential in absolute and relative terms during the earlier parts of the nineteenth century, so this Section shows how local efforts can have regional, cultural, and (what becomes known as) national impact. From 1870 to 1906, Île-à-la-Crosse's people remained adamant that they would succeed with or without others, and those others often wondered how the villagers managed to maintain such an individual role in the North West, Canada, and Saskatchewan.

III. 5. b. From the Manitoba Métis to Legislating "Indians" in 1876

With the "postage stamp" province appearing on maps and Crown officials making reference to *Treaty 1* in 1871,⁶¹⁷ it did appear to many government workers and elected MPs that some type of Canadian sovereignty existed in the new province of Manitoba. But tied to this understanding ran the challenging fact that Métis families had previously obtained scrip certificates and therefore acquired either a cash settlement or a piece of land as recognition of their attachment to much of the treaty's area. Even more annoyingly for the Crown, the issue of land title remained unsettled outside Manitoba. With this legally tenuous position still ongoing, Ottawa had to find ways to arrange what the Crown might consider legal land transfer. As a result, more Crown representatives arrived west of Manitoba to secure more First Nations families under treaty and, when required, more Métis families receiving

⁶¹⁷ D. N. Sprague, *Canada and the Métis, 1869-1885* (Kitchener, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1988), 62.

scrip. Under the leadership of Canada's head negotiator Alexander Morris, other men with the title of "Indian agents" moved quickly to help bolster the federal government's assertion that it legitimately governed the West.⁶¹⁸ Scrip, which meant a Métis family obtained a certificate that could be traded for either cash or title to a piece of a land, acted as a way to make Métis families more "settled" in ways familiar to Crown officials because of the farming and/or purchasing that happened as a result of the certificate's worth. But as important, the acquisition of scrip by families acknowledged that Métis were entitled to compensation for a change in how they lived in the land and that they had earlier control (or "title") to much of that space.⁶¹⁹ That recognition, thanks to the clever politicking of the Red River Métis, became constitutionalized via the *Manitoba Act* and then became mandatory to acknowledge as part of Manitoba's (and Canada's) legal norms.⁶²⁰

As Morris and his agents convinced more First Nations to sign treaties, Canadian officials demonstrated that they regularly would not implement Crown obligations

⁶¹⁸ D. J. Hall, "A Serene Atmosphere?' Treaty 1 Revisited," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 4, no. 2 (1984), 321.

⁶¹⁹ For more analysis, see generally Brad Milne, "The Historiography of Métis Land Dispersal, 1870-1890," *Manitoba History*, no. 30 (Autumn 1995): 30-41.

⁶²⁰ Section 31 reads: "And whereas, it is expedient, towards the extinguishment of the Indian Title to the lands in the Province, to appropriate a portion of such ungranted lands to the extent of one million four hundred thousand acres thereof, for the benefit of the families of the half-breed residents, it is hereby enacted that under regulations to be from time to time made by the Governor General in Council, the Lieutenant-Governor shall select such lots or tracts in such parts of the Province as he may deem expedient, to the extent aforesaid, and divide the same among the children of the half-breed heads of families residing in the province at the time of the said transfer to Canada, and the same shall be granted to the said children respectively in such mode and on such conditions as to settlement and otherwise, as the Governor General in Council shall from time to time determine." *Manitoba Act*, 33 Vict., c. 3. (1870).

the treaty stated.⁶²¹ At the same time, more immigrants arrived to acquire plots of land and the Canadian government began to provide them with other amenities (such as a railway system). On top of these matters, several Métis families could not easily find the means, within the government bureaucracy, to legally establish their scrip-acquired farms. In other words, various circumstances combined so that land acquisition for a number of parties besides the Métis did not flow easily or properly. In an attempt to speed up the pace of creating a national presence, Canada employed its newly-invented North West Mounted Police (the “NWMP”) to work aggressively in the region.

Frequently, these NWMP activities danced along the line of strict Crown responsibilities, and as a result tension amongst many different peoples and groups rose significantly. Because of Canada’s concern to make the country appear “settled”, many First Nations experienced harsh treatment from these same police officers mandated to “clear the plains” of encumbrances on the land. Such forceful and violent efforts as were undertaken in this regard led many non-treatied and non-scripped Indigenous parties to wonder whether making agreements with the Crown should be pursued at all.⁶²²

⁶²¹ Sharon H. Venne, "Understanding Treaty 6: An Indigenous Perspective" in M. Asch, ed., *Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002), 184.

⁶²² James Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2013), 96.

Villagers around Île-à-la-Crosse developed a kind of ambivalence toward Crown efforts. Residents still had a history of welcoming outsiders, so if a visitor worked for the Crown he still might be potentially “respected”. In the meantime, people in the community also kept their vital interests in mind by making more formal arrangements amongst themselves while appraising how government agents covertly threatened families elsewhere during treaty talks. As the 1870s progressed, no Crown representative visited the village to discuss land tenure. That absence actually meant Île-à-la-Crosse escaped some of the more tense circumstances experienced further south. But residents wanted more Crown recognition – as Red River families had achieved – and as settlers appeared to get even closer to their part of the North West. And they wanted to make sure any recognition was actually implemented after it was reached.

While the Canadian government ignored the village, the Catholic Church also decided Île-à-la-Crosse was less of a priority. The same year Canada expanded its share of the map to Rupert’s Land, the Church decided to invent some new boundaries of its own. Some western dioceses changed size and with this shift, Île-à-la-Crosse became subsumed in the Church’s St. Albert district and lost its role as a community hub for the previously labeled “Athabasca” Church district.⁶²³ As a

⁶²³ Foran, “Les Gens de Cette Place,” 67-68. And at 97: “The fire acted as a topic for the Oblate sect to decide St. Albert should be the official headquarters in the North West. Locally, the fire of 1867 weakened the physical infrastructure and compromised the administrative capacity of Saint-Jean-Baptiste, thus precipitating the transfer of the Coadjutor Bishop of Saint-Boniface to the more westerly mission of Saint-Albert.” St. Albert made a new diocese, whose region included Île-à-la-Crosse. Île-à-la-Crosse no longer the religious headquarters for Athabasca as of 1871. Accession no. 84.400, Item 957, Box 33 “Mgr Grandin, Notes Intimes sur le Diocèse de St Albert, rédigées en 1884,” O.M.I. Collection, currently housed at Provincial Archives of Alberta, 15-25.

result, the mission lost the small budget the Church's administration had allocated to it as a station in a religious capital.⁶²⁴ Troubled by their view that the provided funds had never been enough, the missionaries were aghast as to how they would maintain the school, church, hospital, and other ad hoc functions without any institutional aid whatsoever.⁶²⁵ Such news also troubled Île-à-la-Crosse HBC Servants because, if the mission had no budget, the mission had no money to purchase post goods.⁶²⁶ With this disheartening news came word of another policy that locals realized would impact community lives as well: the federal government developed what Crown officials called "Indian schools." So the Crown would indeed be arriving in some shape or form not determined by villagers.

When Ottawa found that First Nations people in the West did not accede automatically or easily to Crown policies, the government had to invent other ways to assure its dominance.⁶²⁷ It imagined more ways that section 91 of the *BNA Act* – which referred to "Indians, and lands reserved for the Indians" – could be interpreted.⁶²⁸ Besides allowing the NWMP to help escort First Nations to small areas called "reserves," this section meant Ottawa had to reconsider its responsibility to provide education in territories as well. If it removed First Nations

⁶²⁴ "Compte-rendu," *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi* 42-52 (1870-80) and Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place," 175.

⁶²⁵ Included in the priests' concerns were purchases by the nuns of cleaning agents at the Post. Priests informed that the nuns had a bad habit of "constantly washing" and buying much more soap than the women really required. HE 1864, G87L 2, November 30 1872, Grouard to MacFarlane, Oblate Archives, Archives Deschatelets, Richelieu, QC. See also Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Métis*, 69.

⁶²⁶ Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place," 174 and 243.

⁶²⁷ Leanne Simpson, "Looking After Gdoo-naagininaa: Precolonial Nishnaabeg Diplomatic and Treaty Relationships," *Wicazo Sa Review* 23, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 30.

⁶²⁸ S. 91(24) of the *British North America Act*, 30-31 Vict, c. 3 (1867), which pertains to "Powers of Parliament".

from open land spaces that could be used for settlement and farming, and then announced that schools would be established, the Crown might doubly take care of its concern about Indigenous peoples by sending Indigenous children to schools specifically established for them.⁶²⁹ The schools would, according to Ottawa, take care of (at least) two constitutional prerogatives in one strategy.⁶³⁰

So how to pay to remove First Nations from the land and to establish the schools? The government recalled that some parties had already established schools in locations such as Île-à-la-Crosse. The federal Crown concluded that, whoever ran those schools, surely that party could be relied upon to help the Dominion achieve its goal to control the students by making them act in ways that were considered more “Canadian” (i.e., white). To convince anyone running an institution that Ottawa thought might easily act as an “Indian school”, the central authority offered to provide each school \$300 annually.⁶³¹ Île-à-la-Crosse’s new Bishop, Justin Vital Grandin, thus happily learned he could apply for some financial salvation.

But, recall whom exactly Île-à-la-Crosse’s missionaries schooled. Definitely, the mission hosted lessons for First Nations children. Indeed, the missionaries originally

⁶²⁹ Robert D. Cairns, “Natural Resources and Canadian Federalism: Decentralization, Recurring Conflict, and Resolution,” *Publius* 22, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 58.

⁶³⁰ J. R. Miller, *Shingwauk’s Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 95.

⁶³¹ MIKAN 2061703, (1877) “Privy Council’s Report on Grants to Schools at Lac La Biche, Isle a la Crosse and St. Albert,” Black Series [multiple media] (R216-245-8-E) File no. 7780, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development fonds R216-0-0-E, Library and Archives Canada ; MIKAN 2057836 (March 25, 1878) “Ile-a-la-Crosse Agency – Reverend Mr. Legard’s [sic] Report on the School at Ile-a-la-Crosse,” Black Series [multiple media] R216-245-8-E, File no. 10125, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development fonds R216-0-0-E, Library and Archives Canada.

assumed First Nations people would be their only students. But as decades passed and the village's Métis population grew, the number of Métis students increased and competed in number with the First Nations students. When Grandin submitted his grant application, and noticed that the government did not bother to ask him the cultural background of the mission students, he simply reassured the Crown the school would transform the students from "des sauvages" into "des hommes."⁶³² While using the word regularly used as a synonym for First Nations ("savages") to acknowledge all students, Grandin also added how the school's history and current leadership ensured that the Île-à-la-Crosse institution would be the most successful Indian School in the entire St. Albert district.⁶³³ Much to his relief, Ottawa civil servants concluded the village institution could be what it had now referred to as an "Indian residential school" and so gave Grandin the money. Crown officials did not query Grandin about his savages' cultural background.⁶³⁴

For the neighbouring and flailing HBC post, support was neither arriving nor even anticipated. In fact, post workers thought conditions had suddenly become worse since Winnipeg headquarters demanded more monthly documentation from Île-à-

⁶³² Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place," 239 and 376.

⁶³³ Foran, *Ibid.* 182-183.

⁶³⁴ Foran, *Ibid.* 181, citing PAA, O.M.I. Collection, Accession 84.400, Item 915, Box 32. Despite the lack of emphasis in some communication, the issue of an ethnic mixture did receive occasional mention. For example, see Foran *Ibid.*, 186: "According to Légeard, this core of mixed-blood pupils would exercise a "civilising influence" on Cree and Chipewyan children recruited from Treaty Six territory." MIKAN 2057836 (March 25, 1878) "Île-a-la-Crosse Agency – Reverend Mr. Legard's [sic] Report on the School at Ile-a-la-Crosse," Black Series [multiple media] R216-245-8-E. File no. 10125, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development fonds R216-0-0-E, Library and Archives Canada. In that way, the federal failure to emphasise the amount of Métis students suggests having accurate information about cultures was not particularly pressing for Canada. See also Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place," 160, citing AD, HEC 2500. P96C4, "Légeard to Maisonneuve, Île-à-la-Crosse, April 9, 1871." There, cultural background is again not recorded.

la-Crosse Servants.⁶³⁵ Shortly after, Winnipeg management told village Servants they must immediately halt the policy of providing the mission with free shipping and transportation.⁶³⁶ The post had to inform the Bishop of the bad news, and all concerned immediately understood the result: Grandin saw the financial benefit received from the school grant dry up completely.⁶³⁷ As they had for years, the conditions of the HBC and the mission had the capacity to jointly impact each other repeatedly and significantly. In this case, not only did the monthly inspection create more distrust amongst Servants, it also crippled the mission's budget.

While the HBC post and the mission grappled with these budgetary difficulties, village residents learned more news about treaty and scrip talks elsewhere.⁶³⁸ As they wondered how to get formal recognition for their links to the land, villagers understood that *not* having links with the Crown likely ensured more community autonomy.⁶³⁹ After all, if they "recognized" Canada more officially, they might also be restricting what Métis self-governance could mean.⁶⁴⁰ By 1876, ambivalence

⁶³⁵ See Parker, "Re-Conceptualizing the Traditional Economy," 230 and 233. Parker also provides helpful commentary about how the statistics taken over the decades did not necessarily lead to higher profits. In fact, data collection took away from employees' time that could have been used for other company matters. See also Parker, 275 of "Figure 7.30 Proportion of all Items Purchased by Indians, Ile a la Crosse Post, 1832 – 1876."

⁶³⁶ B.89/b/4 (August 9 1874), Île-à-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, HBCA, n.p. : Île-à-la-Crosse suddenly doing poorly. Post does not have an explanation. But a McMurray inspecting results wonders how badly Île-à-la-Crosse would do without La Loche. Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place," 69: 1868: HBC no longer will transport mission freight. G LPP 2201 (April 16, 1897) Legiard to Aubert, from Fr. A. Lacombe addressed to Fr. General, photocopy letter, (Lettres des Premiers Pères) Letters from the first Oblate Fathers in Canada, inside a folder of A. Fafard, Archives Deschatelets, Richelieu QC.

⁶³⁷ Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place," 97.

⁶³⁸ Foran, Ibid. 246, B.89/b/4 (1872) Île-à-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

⁶³⁹ D. Aidan McQuillan, "The Creation of Indian Reserves on the Canadian Prairies 1870-1885," *Geographical Review* 70, no. 4 (October, 1980): 392.

⁶⁴⁰ Sheila Carr-Stewart, "A Treaty Right to Education," *Canadian Journal of Education/Revue canadienne de l'éducation* 26, no. 2 (2001): 126.

ruled in Île-à-la-Crosse about how to embrace effectively agreements with the Crown while ensuring that Canada did not overtake the village with its grip. Particularly after the Dominion began the implementation of the proposed *Treaty 6*, ambivalence in the village about the Crown's role grew further.⁶⁴¹

When Ottawa and some First Nations leaders finalized *Treaty 5* in 1875, Crown agents were already making plans to clinch another agreement as soon as possible in other areas of the North West considered suitable for agriculture and immigrant settlement. As already explained, the forceful efforts of police and government officials during treaty talks often created an atmosphere of tension and distrust amongst potential First Nations signatories. Due to updates from traders and relatives, villagers learned of tensions first-hand. Still, perhaps the village could get the scrip and treaty recognition locals believe it deserved.⁶⁴²

Village residents watched as such was not to be the case. For whatever undisclosed reasons, agents decided *Treaty 6* boundaries would come close to Île-à-la-Crosse but would not stretch to the village. Even more insulting to village residents, agents refused to negotiate scrip with Île-à-la-Crosse families about any matter. Villagers were stunned to watch Canada claim that it governed the village but then simply walk away and not leave Île-à-la-Crosse's territory uncaded in its own law. To make

⁶⁴¹ For a helpful explanation of the land allocation process in the Canadian prairies see Chapter Seven of Greg Taylor's *The Law of the Law: The Advent of the Torrens System in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008). Regarding the Treaty 6 final negotiating days, see Sharon Venne's "Understanding Treaty 6: An Indigenous Perspective," in *Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in Canada*, ed. Michael Asch (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998).

⁶⁴² John Leonard Taylor, *Treaty Research Report- Treaty 6 (1876)* (Ottawa: Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Treaties and Historical Research Centre, 1985), 15-16.

the rejection worse, Ottawa also announced that any funding it had allocated to residential schools would be provided only if the school were located in treaty territory. So as a result of Ottawa not placing the village in treaty territory, Bishop Grandin lost his vital school grant.⁶⁴³

When Grandin learned of this drastic hit to the mission school's budget, he wrote to government officials about how his facility could assist in the Crown's obligation to establish schools in territories. Furthermore, Grandin argued, he actually taught *Treaty 6* students who travelled to Île-à-la-Crosse for their treaty right to education. His plea went ignored.⁶⁴⁴ Forced to test his resilience more than he dreamed possible, Grandin's fiscal desperation led him to decide his tolerance of women was higher than he originally understood. By the end of 1876, a further group of nuns arrived at Île-à-la-Crosse. Perhaps at one level Grandin imagined them as examples to show religious leadership, but first and foremost, he envisioned the women as a source of free labour.⁶⁴⁵

By the end of 1876, Île-à-la-Crosse's residents had learned about treaty and scrip talks, seen close and distant neighbours and relatives receive treaty advantages and scrip, and then learned Crown agents had determined to exclude villagers from those talks' final results. As these events happened, the villagers recalled that

⁶⁴³ Foran, 183.

⁶⁴⁴ RG 10, Vol. 3622, folio 4593, (7 Dec 1876) "Mills memorandum;" Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place," 183.

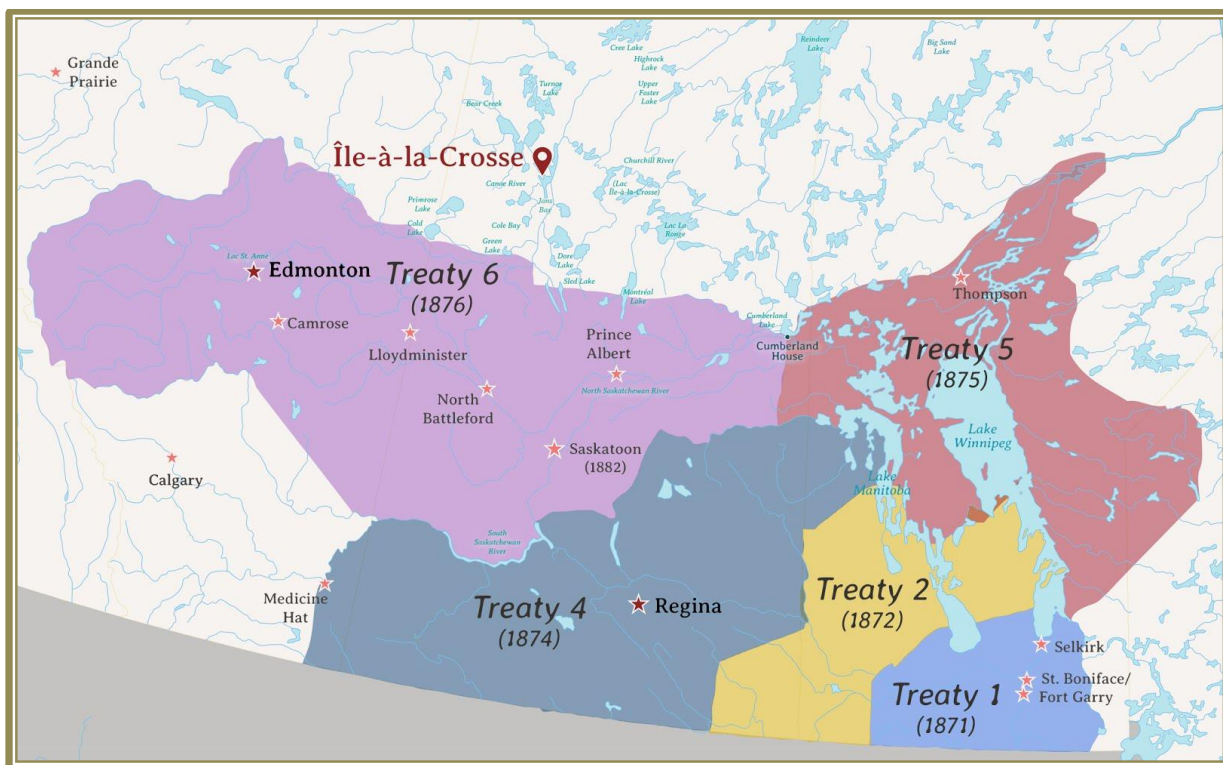
⁶⁴⁵ Regarding the arrival of the Grey Nuns see *Annales de l'établissement des Sœurs Grises à l'Île à la Crosse* (January 5th, 1885) volume 1 1885-1905, ASGM, Montreal; and Foran "Les Gens de Cette Place," 168.

visiting agents recommended that scrip and treaty be provided to villagers for fear of Île-à-la-Crosse becoming another community in a “wretched state.” But even with its own representatives calling for scrip, Ottawa still excluded residents from negotiations.⁶⁴⁶ While watching this inconsistent treatment, mission workers struggled to stay afloat as they never had before. The post brought in profit, but it was not typical of a (now) private company that could barely keep its doors open. In sum, many circumstances had changed significantly over a short period of time.

While influenced by these strong conditions, residents maintained individual and family connections to village activities – efforts that increasingly they felt demonstrated what they considered part of their identity as Métis people.⁶⁴⁷ Île-à-la-Crosse was publicly hailed as part of Canada but remained in an area not legally recognized by the Crown – and villagers had increasingly become even more aware of this contradiction. That awareness inspired the ever-growing numbers of Métis families to understand what it meant to be a product of both First Nations and newcomers and subject to whatever laws helped the community keep the trade and calm it had maintained for so long. Since no scrip existed, villagers also maintained that those laws were not ones declared by Ottawa.

⁶⁴⁶ W. A. Waiser, *Saskatchewan: A New History*, 28; Arthur J. Ray, et. al., *Bounty and Benevolence: A History of Saskatchewan Treaties* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000), 171.

⁶⁴⁷ B.89/d/170a-196 on (1871-1878) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.



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III. 5. c. What Canada Provides: to 1885

With no treaty, no scrip, no funding for its school, a company doing well locally but on the verge of bankruptcy globally, and three Indigenous nations intermingling with non-Indigenous peoples through trade and socializing – Île-à-la-Crosse somehow maintained its multi-sided and positive reputation. While this precarious balance carried on, some villagers wondered whether it might be best if Ottawa simply ignored the community. Perhaps being excluded helped this balance continue? Might scrip trigger the start of too many Crown policies that did not benefit Île-à-la-Crosse? While this questioning surfaced, it took less than two years

⁶⁴⁸ Signa Daum Shanks, "Treated areas of the North West, 1876," 2015.

after the start of *Treaty 6*'s implementation for residents to meet and determine that the government must be more aggressively confronted about all of its constitutional obligations – including scrip. In 1878, villagers calling themselves a “Church Missionary Society” and claiming to represent the entire community submitted a petition to the federal government. The document explained villagers’ argument that Canada could not claim the area as part of the country without formal agreements with locals.⁶⁴⁹ Given their relatively stable economic and social circumstances, residents believed they had nothing to lose politically and everything to gain legally by showing such assertiveness.

Ottawa did not appreciate the Church Missionary Society’s point of view. The Crown retorted that the Society’s mention about potential village unrest due to the absence of scrip could be taken care of by the recently invented federal “Indian Department.” Even better, claimed Ottawa, two other new institutions called “The Geological Survey of Canada” and “The Circumpolar Expedition” would surely provide business to locals when their representatives visited the community.⁶⁵⁰ When it learned the village’s HBC workers supported this petition, Ottawa concluded the HBC disingenuously disguised its own self-interest in profit with a supposed concern

⁶⁴⁹ MIKAN 2058472, RG 10, vol. 3692, file 13979 (February 7, 1879) “Île-à-la-Crosse Agency – Correspondence regarding a petition of the Stanley, Lac La Ronge and Pelican Narrows Indians Asking that a Treaty be made with them,” Black Series R216-245-8-E, Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Fonds, LAC. Note this label was an official term in the Anglican church but here it was used by a more Catholic-influenced circle.

⁶⁵⁰ B.89.d/242-246 (1881-1886) and B.89.d/279 (1885-1888) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA for details about the more expanded group of customers. While founded in 1824, the Geological Survey of Canada had yet to do a thorough investigation of the West until the later decades of the nineteenth century. B.89.d/350 (1890-1895) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., 60.

about Canada's role as a nation.⁶⁵¹ Ottawa also explained how in its newly created district of "Saskatchewan" within the North-west Territories, Île-à-la-Crosse might also become a de-facto capital and thus see more business.⁶⁵²

Unfortunately for the Crown, this counter-claim made residents even more adamant to challenge government efforts because it showed Ottawa's complete failure to appreciate the village – Île-à-la-Crosse was not even within Saskatchewan's metes and bounds.⁶⁵³ Even more infuriating for villagers, Canada's Prime Minister considered Île-à-la-Crosse significant enough to boast about while ignoring it in other ways. In 1880, Prime Minister John A. Macdonald had described how four "federal Indian" schools set the standard for other educational facilities. Incredibly to locals, Macdonald (who was also Minister of Indian Affairs) considered Île-à-la-Crosse's mission school one of the four.⁶⁵⁴ Although it refused to send funds to the school, the federal government spoke of Île-à-la-Crosse as an exemplar!

⁶⁵¹ B.89.a/19 and B.89.a/20 (1819-1861) Ile-a-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.d., n.p. MIKAN 142122, "no title," census returns for the Canadian census [textual record (microform)] 1881 sub-series, LAC. Jarvenpa and Brumbach, "Socio-Spatial Organization and Decision-Making Processes: Observations from the Chipewyan," 601.

⁶⁵² See *An Act to Further Amend the Law Respecting the Northwest Territories Act*, 49 Vict c. 25, (1886). For a larger context of the times leading to the districts' invention see Jerry Dupont, *Common Law Abroad: Constitutional and Legal Legacy of the British Empire* (Littleton, CO: F.B. Rothmans, 2001), 142.

⁶⁵³ Plate 2 in "Territorial Evolution," in *Historical Atlas of Canada: Volume III*, eds. D. Kerr and D. Holdsworth (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 7.

⁶⁵⁴ Canada, Division of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report for Year Ended 31 December 1880* (Ottawa: MacLean, Roger, 1881), 8. See also page 119 of Richard Enns' "'But What Is The Object of Educating These Children, If It Costs Their Lives to Educate Them?': Federal Indian Education Policy in Western Canada in The Late 1800s," *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'etudes canadiennes* 43, no. 3 (Fall 2009).

The national government was not the only one to take credit for village achievements. As HBC officials boasted to Honourable Company investors how the Île-à-la-Crosse station “held up its own as a port of call for provisions for the Athabaska brigades, and Green Lake as an outpost linking up the District with the Saskatchewan,”⁶⁵⁵ they also rejected local Servants’ recommendations to collect information about seasonal hunting and various community events.⁶⁵⁶ In addition, management did not relate to company investors how many Servants around the village had “refused to do their duty and left,” and how the “Indians have become complacent” because of post workers decreased ability to use local processes.⁶⁵⁷ All this chatter developed while the village trading post *still* produced the best results in the North West. That point showed the villagers’ ability to adapt. But it also allowed senior officials to feel justified when claiming that management still knew how to make business decisions better than community employees and traders. What those officials did not admit, as they continued to make statements that suggested how trappers had a dependency upon company arrangements,⁶⁵⁸ was that villagers showed no signs of believing they needed to bring furs to the post to get products they required.

⁶⁵⁵ Morton, *A History of the Canadian West*, 704. Note the mention of “Saskatchewan” here pertains to the North Saskatchewan River that flows through North Battleford. In that way, the village linked northern and southern regions.

⁶⁵⁶ Accounts kept in a more complete form, such as “packing” “tripmen’s advances” “inventory,” “returns,” “transfers” and “Expenses” and “day blotter,” “Indian ledgers.” These classifications continued into the 1880s and 1890s, also including in 1889, even have “supplies to sick and destitute Indians.” B.89/d/226-228 (1875-1881) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

⁶⁵⁷ B.89/b/6 (April 24 1882), Île-à-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, HBCA, n.p. He also believed this point based on poor returns for the entire 1881 to 1887 period. B.89/d/265 (1879-1887) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

⁶⁵⁸ B.89/b/11 (June 18 1883), Île-à-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, HBCA, n.p. : “if we had enough of necessary supplies for the hunters the Returns would have been excellent.” Servants reported this reality after noticing that residents’ purchases of consumer goods declined.

Factor Ewen McDonald attempted to tackle these ignorant and contradictory views held by higher management when he explained his and other Servants' safety. In 1883 he detailed how the "wretched" products sent by headquarters and the failure of treaty recognition made him conclude that "(t)he Indians of the Post are behaving very well under these circumstances."⁶⁵⁹ A visiting Agent instructed to inspect the post agreed with McDonald's observations and concerns, and this agent also recommended the trappers even be compensated for their poor treatment as a way to ensure better relations, particularly if the First Nations received assistance as recommended by St. Albert's bishop.⁶⁶⁰ But even with all of these matters flagged, the HBC still would not change its mind to better provision the post.⁶⁶¹

Perhaps the HBC felt insulted by the agent's report that included the observation that the agent was "unaware of anything that has yet been accomplished by our (HBC) rulers there... since the [Rupert's Land] territory was transferred to Canada."⁶⁶² But most of his report scolded Canada more than the HBC for not realizing the area needed a process that recognized land transfer.⁶⁶³ He concluded

⁶⁵⁹ B.89/b/11 (June 16 1883), Île-à-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, HBCA, n.p.; Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant*, 197.

⁶⁶⁰ Miller Arthur J. Ray, et. al, *Bounty and Benevolence*, 170.

⁶⁶¹ Kenneth Coates and William Morrison, *Treaty Research Report: Treaty Ten, 1906* (Ottawa: Treaties and Historical Research Centre, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1986), 2. Even though the Indian agents considered the Indians' conditions "Wretched" and worthy of improvement.

⁶⁶² B.89.b/6 (April 24 1882) Île-à-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, HBCA, 57. The agent's name is given as "Macfarlane" without a first name provided.

⁶⁶³ MIKAN 2059135, RG 10, vol. 4006, file 241209-1 (July 28, 1883) "Samuel Egon and Michel Deneyou to John A. Macdonald," General Housekeeping Records and Correspondence Regarding Ile-a-la-Crosse Treaty (Maps and Charts), Black Series R216-245-8-E, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Fonds, LAC. Ottawa officials told their local agents that Canada did

that if Canada did not provide scrip – and soon – locals would develop an even stronger independence and give even more legitimacy to their view about Canada's illegal claim to sovereignty over the village.⁶⁶⁴ In considering the importance of negotiating scrip, the agent knew Canadian law would make it vital to give scrip to Métis before First Nations obtained treaty since no First Nation culture dominated Île-à-la-Crosse, and that conditions of non-dominance by First Nations had existed as long as people gathered around Île-à-la-Crosse.⁶⁶⁵

As more outsiders called for Île-à-la-Crosse to receive scrip, some villagers in another community had concerns of their own about Canadian law. In Batoche, which was much closer to non-Indigenous settlement, rail line expansion, and grain farming than Île-à-la-Crosse, residents watched as their hunting practices and land use appeared threatened by an influx of immigrants.⁶⁶⁶ Moreover, and just as Île-à-la-Crosse villagers did, Batoche residents understood well how their location in the North West Territories meant Canada had legal obligations to establish certain functions for them. And because nearly two decades had passed since

not want a treaty there," ... until there is a likelihood of the country being requested for settlement purposes."

⁶⁶⁴ At the time, this point was confirmed by Factor Ewen McDonald. Wright, *Saskatchewan, the History of a Province*, 47.

⁶⁶⁵ MIKAN 2059135, RG 10, vol. 4006, file 241209-1 (May 28, 1883) "Information by L. Clarke," General Housekeeping Records and Correspondence Regarding Ile-a-la-Crosse Treaty (Maps and Charts) Black Series R216-245-8-E, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Fonds, LAC; Coates and Morrison, *Treaty Research Report*, 16. Documents for these years at Île-à-la-Crosse are located in B.89/d/244-253 (1881-1886) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA. See in particular the correspondence of 1882 located at B.89/b/4 (1872-1891) Île-à-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, HBCA. No mention appears of open talks with Métis. In fact, Clarke records these conversations with government representatives in his private remarks.

⁶⁶⁶ Steven Lyn Williams, "Smudging the Book: The Role of Cultural Authority in Tribal Historical Narratives and Revitalization at Rocky Boy" (Ph. D diss., University of Iowa, 2012), 19.

Confederation, the Batoche Métis considered their concerns utterly justified just as Île-à-la-Crosse contended. In 1883, the local Indian agent's report about Île-à-la-Crosse made its way to Ottawa. That same year, Batoche villagers decided they could not wait any longer for the federal government to enforce its own obligations. A few months later, and on behalf of himself and his neighbours, Batoche villager Gabriel Dumont helped organize a petition to send to Prime Minister Macdonald which demanded to know why Batoche residents did not have scrip, a Crown-established school, and protection of their language and religious practices.⁶⁶⁷

Already renowned as a translator for Crown-First Nations talks, an incomparable hunter, and even a negotiator for other communities, Dumont presumed his reputation would ensure that the Crown would provide a reply quickly. After waiting several months for a response, Dumont and his neighbours decided to send a second petition. Not receiving a reply to either message, Dumont sent a third letter that also did not inspire any response. After nearly two years had passed, Batoche villagers made new plans.⁶⁶⁸ Since they had waited nearly thirty months for word of a Crown strategy, and settlers and railway expansion were apparently not waiting on government instructions about the Métis, Dumont and a few other men travelled to Montana to explain their plight to the self-exiled Louis Riel.⁶⁶⁹ The men's stories about Batoche conditions inspired Riel to travel back with them and achieve proper

⁶⁶⁷ House of Commons, Official Report of the Debates, Volume 1, (12 March 1886), 106.

⁶⁶⁸ Joseph Boyden, *Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont* (Toronto: Penguin Group, 2010), 174 and George Woodcock, *Gabriel Dumont* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 178; Coates and Morrison, *Treaty Research Report*, 10; John L. Tobias, "Canada's Subjugation of the Plains Cree, 1879–1885," *Canadian Historical Review* 64, no. 4 (1983): 521.

⁶⁶⁹ Woodcock, *Gabriel Dumont*, 98.

redress.⁶⁷⁰ As he had argued earlier in Manitoba, Riel contended the Métis did not automatically reject Crown governance. But they did, as well, have the right to challenge Crown authority when that same government did not fulfill its own proclaimed obligations.

Batoche events during the winter and spring of 1884-85 have been well studied.⁶⁷¹ When Île-à-la-Crosse's own evolution is integrated into this information, however, some circumstances' context shifts. After weeks of low-level aggression on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River between the North West Mounted Police and Batoche residents, open warfare broke out. For nearly three days in May, and with the Crown's forces numbering eight times as many as the Batoche insurgents, Métis fighters kept the Canadian military out of the village. By the time the NWMP took over Batoche, found Riel, and arrested him for treason, Dumont had escaped their reach and he would remain in hiding for a number of years.⁶⁷² Île-à-la-Crosse

⁶⁷⁰ Boyden, *Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont*, 174. For the source often cited as the government's realization of this stage, see NMC24372 and NMC24373. "Map of the seat of Riel's insurrection showing the connection of Prince Albert with other points in the North West ... compiled from the latest authorities by W. H. Holland, C.E., Ottawa, 31st March, 1885. Second edition. Entered according to Act of Parliament of Canada, in the year 1885, by W. H. Holland, in the office of the Minister of Agriculture. A. Mortimer and Co. Lith., Ottawa," Collection: Maps, Plans and Charts. Northwest Territories, south of 60 degrees North: provinces within groupings, single territories, sub-provincial units, 1691-1977, Library and Archives Canada. See also Kelly L. Saunders, "No Other Weapon: Métis Political Organization and Governance in Canada," in Christopher Adams, et al, eds., *Métis in Canada: History, Identity, Law and Politics* (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 2013), 346.

⁶⁷¹ More recent presentations not yet mentioned include Lawrence J. Barkwell, *1885: The Militia of the Metis Liberation Movement* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Metis Federation, 2005), Beverly J. Bayle, *Battle Cry at Batoche: a novel* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2008), Wayne Brown, *Sam Steele and the Northwest Rebellion: the Trail of 1885* (Toronto: Heritage House, 2013), Sharon Stewart, *Louis Riel: Firebrand* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2007).

⁶⁷² This self-imposed exile took certain public forms. In 1886, after the death of his wife, Dumont joined Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and performed feats in both Canada and the United States. Woodcock, *Gabriel Dumont*, 237.

residents knew about the battle, but as important, they fully comprehended Batoche families' understanding of Canadian law.

Before the battle, Île-à-la-Crosse villagers helped ensure Batoche residents had food supplies, and HBC men in Île-à-la-Crosse also ensured that posts closer to Batoche did not run out of tradeable products. Post workers themselves travelled to other stations with goods such as flour and sundry items, and as a result people interacted somewhat peacefully in places such as Green Lake and Frog Lake as rumours of guns and violence travelled from community to community. Even more significant than how the village post provided goods for other posts closer to the tension, Chief Factor Roderick Ross ordered some Île-à-la-Crosse Servants to relocate at these posts as well.⁶⁷³ As an effect of Ross' decision for business stability, he also made certain that Métis and non-Métis remembered that they still had the ability to co-exist regardless of what the Crown's military presence represented.⁶⁷⁴

People in Île-à-la-Crosse also adjusted some of their activities. For example, Ross cancelled all orders for guns so as to prevent Île-à-la-Crosse from developing a reputation as an armament centre for either volunteers helping the NWMP or Métis

⁶⁷³ B.89/b/9 (March 10 1885) Île-à-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, HBCA, 9 and 19: notice difficult conditions in Green Lake, with both difficulty of people getting there and of goods. "Île-à-la-Crosse picking up the slack," 19.

⁶⁷⁴ Île-à-la-Crosse workers, such as W. J. McLean went further south to Fort Pitt early 1885 on special duty. See descriptions in Kitty McLean, Duncan McLean, "The adventures of Kitty," *The Nor'-Wester Centennial Edition* 10, no. 1 (July 15 1970): 37-46. See also D.20/35/1b (1885) "file currently unnamed" Commissioner's Correspondence Inward (General), HBCA, n.d., 150-158.

at Batoche.⁶⁷⁵ As well, Ross obtained promises from his neighbours that they would volunteer even more at the village's library, school, oratory, student dorm, and community kitchen to make certain their "solitary spot" remained undisturbed during these uncertain months.⁶⁷⁶ Just as Ross inadvertently helped limit socializing away from the village, Ross also (perhaps accidentally) helped the Île-à-la-Crosse Métis avoid getting the reputation for being potentially violent and anti-law (as some Métis across the North West unfortunately experienced).⁶⁷⁷ Ottawa might have believed Ross' decisions improved the Dominion's position, but he could not have done so without local cooperation founded on the belief that having a peaceful place to organize their own challenges against the Crown had its own benefits.⁶⁷⁸

By the end of 1885, and after assisting in various ways to continue trade and peaceful social relations, HBC Servants in Île-à-la-Crosse felt openly confident enough to acknowledge to their employer their "country wives" (and the Métis

⁶⁷⁵ Roderick Ross was not comfortable being the conduit for "a case of guns" HBCA, B.89/b10 (March 18, 1885) Ile-a-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, , HBCA, 31-32.

⁶⁷⁶ William Francis Butler, *The Wild North Land*, 103-108. Notably, Batoche's educational facilities were not well funded and not connected to a mission. In that way Île-à-la-Crosse was in a different position in that it could not claim it did not have a school. Many different parties, including government agents, used a kitchen constructed by the community as a public facility.

⁶⁷⁷ While rumours spread about Riel's disappointment in the community after his sister's death, and some mission workers feared an insurrection against them might occur, no such event ever happened because of locals' concern to keep the peace. HEF 1345 .J94C 6. J. Teston to Mon Rev. et bien cher Pere Maotre, manuscript letter. July 20, 1885. G LPP (Lettres des Premiers Pères) Letters from the first Oblate Fathers in Canada, inside a folder of A. Fafard. Archives Deschatelets, Richelieu QC. See also Raymond Huel, "The Oblates, the Métis, and 1885: The Breakdown of Traditional Relationships," *CCHA Historical Studies*, 56 (1989): 14

⁶⁷⁸ Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place," 190. Accession no. 84.400, Item 928, Box 33, Grandin to Lawrence Clarke, Saint-Laurent de Grandin (October 14, 1884) "Notes et Correspondences Affaires Indiennes B-VIII-100e," Grandin Papers, O.M.I. Collection, currently housed at Provincial Archives of Alberta. See also Jarvenpa and Brumbach, "Socio-Spatial Organization and Decision-Making Processes: Observations from the Chipewyan," 601, where B.89/a/36 (1805-1940) Ile-a-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA is cited. See also Dion, *My Tribe, the Crees*, 113; B.89/d/260a (1879-1887) Ile-a-la-Crosse Account Books, n.d., n.p.

children that subsequently arrived).⁶⁷⁹ Moreover, the Honourable Company frequently employed these men's sons; as a result, the HBC was even more influenced by Métis perspectives than ever. These families working for and with the HBC had already helped mission workers strategize to get a bigger budget from Ottawa, assisted with the mission school's renovations for the infirmary and the chapel, and had participated in discussions about whether a rail line should reach the village.⁶⁸⁰ In other words, the Métis villagers had ties to all village functions and those ties reinforced cultural concepts.

While participating in these processes, villagers never relented in their view about Crown impropriety. Villagers would not take up guns like residents of Batoche; however, that difference did not mean villagers of Île-à-la-Crosse would stop their plans to keep making arguments based on Canadian law and originally sought by Riel at Red River and re-presented by Dumont a decade later. With such a strong foundation to their argument about Canada's failure to implement Crown definitions of land title, Île-à-la-Crosse families hoped Canada's claim to the North West would make scrip discussions unfold very quickly after 1885. After all, how could their perspectives about Canadian law *not* be recognized, and Canada's illegitimate claim go on?

III. 5. d. Overlooked Again- to 1898

⁶⁷⁹ Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, 203.

⁶⁸⁰ Waiser, *Saskatchewan: A New History*, 27. Coates and Morrison, *Treaty Research Report*, 2.

After Canadian forces moved into Batoche, Île-à-la-Crosse villagers lamented the plight of Métis elsewhere but they also wondered whether such complaints about others would actually improve their own local circumstances. Still adamant that the Crown must provide scrip to villagers in order to legitimize its legal role, but not interested in government interference if that intervention damaged community norms, it was difficult to decide whether being forgotten was a boon or a hindrance. As villagers anticipated the arrival of government officials, HBC workers heard word from their own supervisors that they would be forced to tell villagers about another matter. In early 1886, Servants informed villagers the HBC would no longer permit credit relationships between trappers and the company.⁶⁸¹

Since the first Servants arrived in Île-à-la-Crosse decades earlier, they had run credit. Originally provided to compete against the NWC, Factors maintained the view that the availability of credit instilled loyalty in the trappers, interest in HBC products, superior furs from the trappers and consequently more profit for the company. As they learned about this policy change, Servants decried it. Unsurprisingly, villagers showed their displeasure even more strongly. A consequence of this announcement, in 1887 the Île-à-la-Crosse Post reported its lowest returns in more than twenty years.⁶⁸² Servants believed profits dropped due to trappers choosing not to trade. But those Servants knew another point about the source of lower profit margins.

⁶⁸¹ Brumbach and Jarvenpa, *Ethno Archeological and Cultural Frontiers*, 61-67.

⁶⁸² B.89/d/210a and 211 (1887-1888) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.. B.89/e/6 (1888) Île-à-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

Post records immediately after the abolition of credit detail how trappers rarely ventured into the post in 1886 and 1887, and when they did, they bought fewer HBC goods. But management also showed its shortsightedness by not realizing who all ran tabs; almost all the Servants ran credit lines with the HBC because, like their fellow Indigenous neighbours, HBC employees did not have much disposable income.⁶⁸³ So not only did the credit abolition annoy trappers, it also created more worker distrust for company administration.⁶⁸⁴ Both groups felt mistreated and had less money to spend in the meantime (even if that money was future funds). Infuriated with the change, some Servants even quit their jobs.⁶⁸⁵ As if to scorn their former employer further, a few of these former ex-Servants became “freemen” and they stationed themselves on the village’s outskirts to make deals with the few trappers who bothered to venture to Île-à-la-Crosse.⁶⁸⁶ In sum, the HBC policy actually inspired a type of competition.

With all this negative response, HBC officials in Winnipeg still justified their decision by contending that the number of purchases would not decrease. In 1887, the company auditor claimed account books showed such was the case.⁶⁸⁷ But in quick response to this self-congratulatory observation, Île-à-la-Crosse Servants sent a communication to management and explained how the auditor did not know how to

⁶⁸³ B.89/d/267b (1885-1888) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p. Robert Jarvenpa “Silot’ine: An Insurance Perspective on Northern Dene Kinship Networks in Recent History,” 156.

⁶⁸⁴ B.89/d/276-78 (1885-1888) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

⁶⁸⁵ B.89/d/275 and B.89/d/282 (1885-1888) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

⁶⁸⁶ B.89/d/269 (1885-1888) Ile-a-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

⁶⁸⁷ B.89/e/5 (August 30, 1886) Île-à-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA, n.p., report by Joseph Fortescue dated 30 August 1886.

count.⁶⁸⁸ By explaining how four small bags of flour equaled two large sacks of flour, and half a yard of fabric purchased eight times did not equal twelve yards bought once, the workers showed how the auditor had little ability to interpret profit properly.⁶⁸⁹ They argued that locals' immediate disposable income decreased, but those same locals had little dependency upon product. As a result, villagers responded by purchasing smaller sizes of goods and those amounts rarely added up to one large purchase previously made on credit. But even with this revelation flagged, HBC officials did not change their mind about credit abolition. As if to take attention away from the auditor's poor accounting analysis, management informed village Servants that if they only did a better job of selling product to a new customer called the "Canadian Government," results would return to levels achieved during the days when credit existed.⁶⁹⁰

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid. Winnipeg's comment that the Post's "inventory of 1885 cannot be correct" in this report was likely fueled by their concern about the "all time low" fur prices had hit that same year. A. A. den Otter, "Transportation and Transformation: The Hudson's Bay Company, 1857-1885," *Great Plains Quarterly* 3, no. 3 (Summer 1983): 181 and A.12/27 (November 10, 1885), "Wrigley to Armit, 10 November 1885," folio 456, HBCA, n.p.

⁶⁸⁹ To find more details about the more specific categorization of products and record-keeping devised by village workers, see B.89/d/327-329 (1881-1893) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA. This categorization differs from the typewritten sheets acquired from elsewhere and located in B.89/d/330-339 (1881-1893) Ile-a-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA.

⁶⁹⁰ B.89/e/5 (1886-1888) Ile-a-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA, n.d., n.p. Fortescue admitted freight moved "satisfactorily" but refused to approve the expansion of this service out of Île-à-la-Crosse. He also rebuffed the idea to expand the sale of tea and did not believe that any "natural" decline in animal population justified the lower number of pelts brought to the Post. See also B.89/d/279 (1885-1888) Ile-a-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p. Few details were written about these parties' purposes, but it appears that (mainly) men who took time away from their own work often decided to visit Île-à-la-Crosse and, as such, did not receive status as a servant when they traded in the village. Both concepts appear in B.89/d/262 (1879-1887) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

In 1888, standards for trade were intensified further. That year, Servants learned they must bring back the “surcharge”.⁶⁹¹ In hearing about this announcement, the few trappers who still traded with the post met together and calculated their net profit would decrease by approximately twelve per cent. Unsurprisingly, then, only the most fur trade dependent trappers continued to knock on the post’s door.⁶⁹² But one person protested this policy even more than the trappers. Île-à-la-Crosse’s Chief Factor, Joseph Fortescue, decried the surcharge as an affront to the fundamental reason the HBC located itself in the village: to ensure the entire company’s financial stability. After his strong words, Fortescue soon learned he would get some reprieve; management would allow him (but him alone) to set up credit relationships and it must be done on a discretionary – and confidential – basis.

Somehow word got out about Fortescue’s different arrangements. How trappers learned about this secret opportunity remains unclear, but however they did, trappers from across the West came to Île-à-la-Crosse in droves to get the credit treatment.⁶⁹³ Fortescue happily provided it to everyone because doing so helped swell his account book numbers. Also unsurprisingly, HBC management was not

⁶⁹¹ B.89/d/271 and B.89/d/274 (1885-1888) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p. and B.89/d/358 (1890-1895) Ile-a-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p..

⁶⁹² A. A. den Otter contends that the HBC’s sluggish circumstances had less to do with the company itself and more part of a larger downward trend of economic conditions during the 1880s. A. A. den Otter, “Transportation and Transformation: The Hudson’s Bay Company, 1857-1885,” 182-183.

⁶⁹³ B.89/d/269 and B.89/d/283-284 (1885-1888) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

pleased about how many trappers across the North West changed their post venue and somehow met Fortescue's standards as a credit-worthy contact.⁶⁹⁴

With account numbers showing that extending the secret credit to almost everyone paid off for the post, Fortescue's confidence grew so much he told his fellow employees that he would also soon abolish the surcharge.⁶⁹⁵ With the higher number of trappers who were in a better mood (demonstrated not least by the quality of what they brought in to trade), Fortescue predicted profits acquired from additional trappers would compensate for any monies collected as surcharges during the same period. Even more confidently, Fortescue imagined that the surcharge's abolition would reap reward for the company in less than one year.⁶⁹⁶ Without approval from HBC headquarters, Fortescue stopped the surcharge altogether.

Fortescue's predictions proved correct and, bolstering his self-confidence further, he watched as most competing freemen who hovered around the village decided to go elsewhere for business. The surcharge's disappearance was so significant, the most successful independent trader stationed close to Île-à-la-Crosse, Solomon Venne, lost all his village customers and those trappers came back to knock on the

⁶⁹⁴ B.89/d/258 (1881-1887) and B.89/d/280 (1885-1888) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

⁶⁹⁵ B.89/d/304 (1873-1891) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p. (note: documented as part of the 1889 account books).

⁶⁹⁶ B.89/e/6 (1886-1904) Île-à-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

post's door because they no longer "took umbrage" with the HBC.⁶⁹⁷ With all of these results from Fortescue's bold decision, HBC management allowed Fortescue's no-surcharge policy to continue. Overall company profits had plummeted 17.5 per cent in 1888 – but the Île-à-la-Crosse post made a strong profit, so the company found itself unable to justify the surcharge's return.⁶⁹⁸ Apart from a less positive response from other HBC Factors who likely lost traders to the Île-à-la-Crosse post, Fortescue's rebellious activities ultimately continued to place him in good HBC stead.⁶⁹⁹

Fortescue was not an *anti* 'company man' in every regard. For example, the Île-à-la-Crosse Factor agreed he should collect what the HBC called "bad debt."⁷⁰⁰ But Fortescue found himself taking frequent exception to other Winnipeg policies, such as when management told him and other village Servants to make a record in a "Day blotter" of any conversation held with anyone who entered the post.⁷⁰¹

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid. Fortescue claimed the value of furs dropped by 50% since 1887, thanks to competition from an independent Solomon Venne.

⁶⁹⁸ HBC workers at Île-à-la-Crosse detail this point by the low amount of returns to the Post, the high amount of products brought to Île-à-la-Crosse as advanced purchases, and the number of purchases made by HBC servants who worked elsewhere but visited Île-à-la-Crosse's and obtained products in the village. See B.89/d/345 (1890-1895) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p. for "returns;" and see B.89/d/348-349 and B.89/d/252 (1890-1895) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, n.d., n.p. for items going elsewhere; and B.89/d/346-347 (1890-1895) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, n.d., n.p. for private purchases by men including HBC employees.

⁶⁹⁹ Some of the other parties who decided to visit the Post at Île-à-la-Crosse included nineteen "freemen" and eleven "unclassified" customers. B.89/d/279 (1885-1888) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p. For mention of the church's business there, see Canada, *Department of the Interior Annual Report 1887*, Ottawa: Department of the Interior, 77.

⁷⁰⁰ B.89/d/336-337 (1881-1893), Île-à-la-Crosse Account Book, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

⁷⁰¹ Day blotters appear in B.89/d/267a (1879-1887), B.89/d/281b (1885-1888), B.89/d/355a (1890-1895), B.89/d/341b (1885-1893), and B.89/d/36 (1832-1843), Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA n.d., n.p.

Ironically for Fortescue, the day blotter became the record that illustrated how Fortescue's no-surcharge policy improved HBC finances. In April 1889, blotter pages documented how more than two hundred and fifty different First Nations traders had visited the Île-à-la-Crosse post in three months,⁷⁰² and those visitors brought what Winnipeg headquarters labeled as the most "impressive" fur from the entire North West.⁷⁰³ These traders came to take advantage of the different surcharge and credit conditions, and their quantity of trade compensated for any anticipated losses the policies may have created in the immediate term. With the proof of the blotter, management was forced to (quietly) permit the Factor's risk-taking to continue.⁷⁰⁴

Much to Fortescue's frustration, his outstanding results still compelled company management to insist further that the Île-à-la-Crosse post should help compensate for the losses experienced at other HBC locations.⁷⁰⁵ Fortescue did not take kindly to this understanding, but it gave him a reason to justify a continued elimination of the surcharge into 1890. Fortescue wrote that if the HBC expected him and his workers to help improve the "deplorable" results the company experienced overall,⁷⁰⁶ he should be given more discretion than other Factors.⁷⁰⁷ With the HBC's concerns about First Nations' "uprisings" at other posts, Fortescue also argued management

⁷⁰² For mention of the First Nations, see B.89/d/260a (1879-1887) Ile-a-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA n.d., n.p. The journal contains names of 247 men who claimed they would trade at Île-à-la-Crosse before any other depot. The blotters also illustrated how much debt Servants owed.

B.89/d/281a (1885-1888), Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA n.d., n.p.

⁷⁰³ B.89/d/331a-335b (1881-1893) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

⁷⁰⁴ B.89.a/6 (1819-1861) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

⁷⁰⁵ Jarvenpa and Brumbach, "Socio-Spatial Organization and Decision-Making Processes: Observations from the Chipewyan," 601; B.89.a/6 (1819-1861) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, n.d., n.p.

⁷⁰⁶ B.89/d/338 (August 20, 1888) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.p.

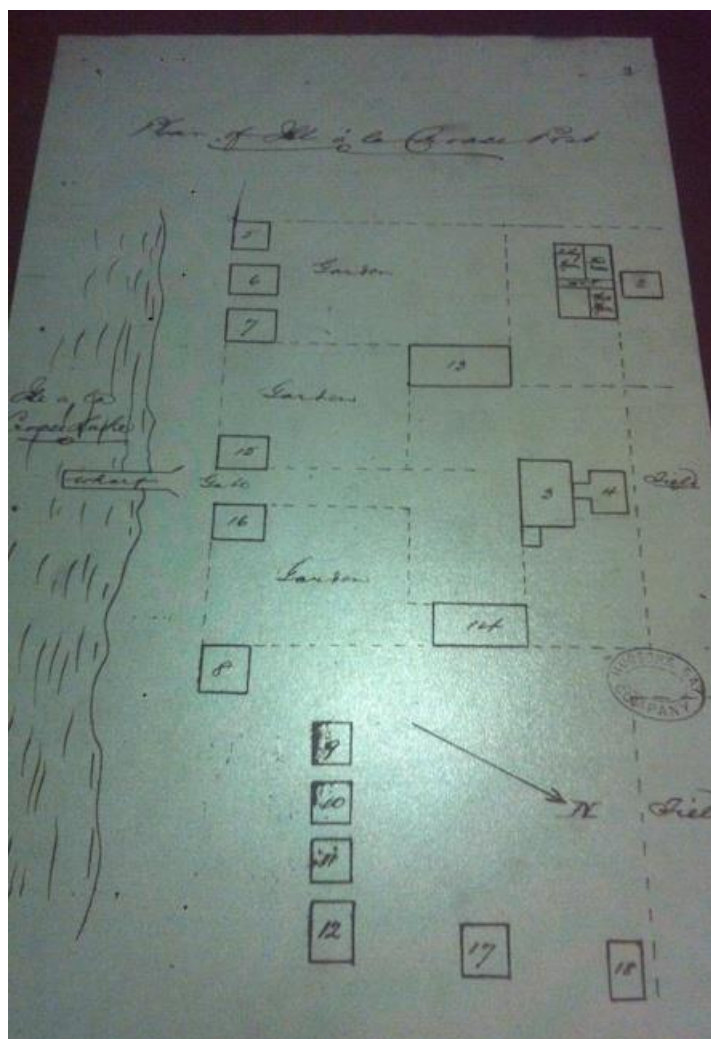
⁷⁰⁷ B.89/d/338 (1885-1893), Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA n.d., n.p.

should be even more concerned that the Île-à-la-Crosse location be understood as a peaceful HBC hub, and that the peace could be improved by giving Fortescue more autonomy.⁷⁰⁸ Some freemen considered “unfair” by HBC men located themselves in the bush just outside the village, other posts apparently did not work as hard,⁷⁰⁹ and Fortescue also contended occasional Servant attrition still negatively impacted the post’s momentum.⁷¹⁰ With all these factors for Fortescue to consider, the Île-à-la-Crosse Factor argued that he, more than ever, needed the power to make policies at a local level without interference from headquarters.

⁷⁰⁸ See passages from B.89/d/338 (August 20, 1888) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.p.

⁷⁰⁹ B.89/d/352 (1890-1895) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d. Page 8 details the workers’ concern about slowness in the La Loche depot, and Fortescue also accuses Post Factors from Cold Lake and Sandy Point as intentionally slowing how quickly goods get to Île-à-la-Crosse in order to make their own Posts appear more productive and the Île-à-la-Crosse Post seem disorganized. See also generally B.89/a/37 (1805-1904) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.d.

⁷¹⁰ B.89/d/355b, B.89/d/356, and B.89/d/357 (1890-1895) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.



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While Fortescue and his management bickered back and forth about the best strategies for HBC survival, Ottawa deliberated about its own function in the village and in parts of the North West Territories. A number of bureaucrats and politicians worried that Canadian legal sovereignty was not still not properly established, so Ottawa sent out more agents to meet potential Indigenous signatories. As it had concluded before, the Crown determined Île-à-la-Crosse was a peaceful place in the

⁷¹¹ Figure 5 - Map made by Fortescue explaining setup of HBC in village. From HBCA post reports, *Ibid*, B.89/e/10b, n.d., 2. Notice that Fortescue was in charge of activities in eighteen buildings. Buildings included dwelling houses, kitchens, "Indian houses," a flour store, an ice house and a byre. Image by author.

North West. But during these set of treaty talks, it could be even more known for its stability by hosting talks as well.⁷¹² When villagers learned of agents' and various Indigenous family representatives' pending arrival, the residents presumed the village's space and people would at last be included in the talks' results. During these months, Fortescue had openly supported the provision of scrip to Île-à-la-Crosse residents before any treaty became implemented. Because the HBC had had eighteen buildings in Île-à-la-Crosse, and an obvious commitment to community matters given the higher number of Servant-local marriages, Fortescue thought the government at long last would implement his and villagers' view about the priority of scrip.⁷¹³

Fortescue and his neighbours again assumed wrongly. After obtaining more First Nations' marks, and even providing scrip to a few outlying Métis families, Ottawa decided to exclude the village from a formalized land settlement yet again. Now even closer to the edges of treaty land, Île-à-la-Crosse's circumstance of obvious Métis land use with no history of First Nation dominance did not fit Canada's planning. But the exclusion of that history in discussions meant the Crown still could not legitimately claim it governed all of the West.

⁷¹² See the final parts of Chapter 2 in Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place" for more details on how the mission witnessed treaty discussions.

⁷¹³ B.89/e/10a (1888-1904) Île-à-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA, n.d., n.p.



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Incensed that neither the HBC nor Ottawa implemented his recommendations about how to profit and follow the law, Fortescue wondered if he should leave the HBC. He put little faith in Canada's benevolence and the HBC's efforts because he believed the HBC survived only because "the half-breeds and the Indians love to gather about the mission...and cultivate a small field to assure to their families a living during their hunting expeditions."⁷¹⁵ Fortescue wondered why he should remain in the community if he kept facing such negative responses to his opinions when he

⁷¹⁴ Figure 6 - Signa Daum Shanks, "Map of Canada's numbered treaties in 1889," 2015. Notice the adhesion to Treaty 6 stretches approximately seventy kilometers south of Île-à-la-Crosse and makes Treaty 6 the most expansive treaty of its time.

⁷¹⁵ "Notes on the the Region of Isle a la Crosse by L. F. Laflèche, Bishop of Three Rivers, Q.C." Canada, Senate Papers, 51 Vict. A. (1888), Appendix No. 1, 228 and B.89/e/6, (1888-1904) Île-à-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

viewed his beliefs to be aimed solely at getting the results the HBC and the new federal government desired.

How the highest level of HBC management learned of Fortescue's possible intentions remains unclear, but almost immediately after Fortescue wrote about potentially leaving the HBC, the Honourable Company provided some leeway that allowed space for the Chief Factor's views. As it did frequently, the HBC sent out a notice in 1890 to all Factors to explain how every Servant must follow management instructions or face severe reprimand (likely in the form of job termination).⁷¹⁶

With the copy sent to Fortescue, however, an additional note appeared. It read "Should they [the instructions], however, contain any order which does not approve itself to your [Île-à-la-Crosse Factor's] judgment you are authorized to suspend its execution."⁷¹⁷ In other words, Fortescue had finally received official and unconditional approval to do whatever he saw fit to gain profit at Île-à-la-Crosse.

⁷¹⁶ B.89/e/10b (1885-1891) Ile-a-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA n.d., n.p. Also with the notice, J. McDougall writes the Post is "too big, and will cost more \$\$ in future. Work done for Ins should be terminated. Stop issuing debts. 20 men with outstandings balances, ranked as bad, doubtful and disallowed. Overvaluation of country made goods, 10% gratuity paid to prevent opposition trade not necessary, 3.5 pages of 'unsaleable goods.'"

⁷¹⁷ B.89/e/11 (1890) Île-à-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA n.p.



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As a result of this news, Fortescue boldly announced that a surcharge would never exist while he was stationed in Île-à-la-Crosse. As well, he told locals he would re-establish credit relationships with everyone, and any new employees would be hired based on his approval alone. But as important to villagers, Fortescue told them that not only did he think scrip should be allocated, he would work proactively to get scrip agreements instead of merely stating his view that scrip should be provided.⁷¹⁹ Moreover, because Ottawa had finally concluded Île-à-la-Crosse was “fit for (immigrant) settlement,”⁷²⁰ and because some Métis close to the village had received scrip,⁷²¹ Fortescue argued scrip must be immediately implemented in Île-à-la-Crosse lest locals ignore Canada’s authority on any matter altogether.

⁷¹⁸ Image 23 - Joseph Fortescue, Site Officiel des Familles Françaises et Anglaises, <http://www.fortescu.net/blog-13/blog-25/files/57e878779fda02a22cecc71db4c7e7d6-15.html>.

⁷¹⁹ B.89/e/9 (July 25 1889) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA n.p. Fortescue called the HBC’s annual state one of immense “serious losses.” Fortescue recommended courting Métis families to make up for the lower numbers and that supporting their pursuit of scrip was financially strategic.

⁷²⁰ Canada, Senate Papers, 51 Vict. A. (1888), Appendix No. 1, 116.

⁷²¹ B.89/d/264b (1879-1887) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

By early 1890, and after the HBC performed a typical transfer of lower management by transferring Fortescue to Moose Factory,⁷²² his replacement Isaac Cowie reached the same conclusions as had Fortescue about both the HBC's constrictive nature and the Crown's illegal presence in Île-à-la-Crosse. After Cowie learned more about how the village post was so successful in bringing in the highest profit margins in the North West,⁷²³ he also received word that HBC management actually had not lobbied Canada for scrip in the village despite his and Fortescue's pleas.⁷²⁴ Since his own management would not do so, Cowie decided to ask government officials himself. Ottawa responded with an announcement that it would provide what it called a "special grant" to the mission for its school.⁷²⁵ As well, government officials explained how it considered Île-à-la-Crosse pivotal for Canada's future because the village acted as a midway point to the "inexhaustible" natural resources in the Athabasca region.⁷²⁶ But even with these signs of recognizing the village's value to the country, the government told the newly appointed Chief Factor it would not

⁷²² Joseph Fortescue (1833-1899), Biographical Sheets, HBCA, accessed on July 18, 2015, http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/biographical/f/fortescue_joseph.pdf

⁷²³ As an example, Fortescue found himself justifying the employment of sixteen servants but the HBC did not stop the Factor's decision. See B.89/e/7 (1888-1904) Île-à-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA, n.d., n.p. Even when Fortescue learned Winnipeg management did not consider his books well kept, he kept his 1890 salary budget as planned. B.89/e/8 (1888-1904) Île-à-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

⁷²⁴ B.89/e/13(1888-1904) Île-à-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

⁷²⁵ In the 1887-1888 federal budget Île-à-la-Crosse receives what is called a "Special Grant," and the grant is designated for schools not in a province or on a reserve. See P-56/186/5, *Certain Statistics Concerning North -West Territories Indians for the Year 1888*, SAB, 44-45. It is important to note that Canada imagined these grants for schools it considered institutions for Indians.

⁷²⁶ Reports from the Geological Survey detailed how the region around Lake Athabasca held great promise for mineral exploitation. Called "inexhaustible," the tar sands were already well explored and actually called "... the most extensive petroleum field in America, if not the world." Senate Papers, 51 Vict. A. (1888), Appendix No. 1. It was predicted that the petroleum reserves in the sands under Athabasca would rank "... among the chief assets comprised in the Crown Domain of the Dominion," Canada, Senate, *Journal*, 1888, 163.

include the village when formalizing land transfer with locals and creating the adhesion to *Treaty 6*.⁷²⁷



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Besides this disappointment, Cowie also heard word that Winnipeg management planned to have Henry Moberly travel across the North West, inspect every HBC station, and then make a final report about how the company should proceed. As part of this assignment, Moberly had the discretion to fire anyone on the spot, abolish any policy specific to an individual post, and report on any surviving Servant's capabilities for promotion. In Cowie's mind, Moberly's efforts essentially erased the autonomy given to him and his predecessors. Cowie also learned that for completing this work, and submitting his final report, Moberly would receive a

⁷²⁷ See examples of "all hands" meeting at the church to produce fish in order that products can be consumed and sold and given to school for food. See B.89/a/36(b) (June 30, 1889) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.p.

⁷²⁸ Image 24 - Isaac Cowie circa 1894. Image courtesy Manitoba Historical Society.

“significant” promotion within company ranks.⁷²⁹ Given that prize, Cowie feared Moberly would be the most demonstrative ‘company man’ Cowie had ever met.

Before Moberly arrived in Île-à-la-Crosse, rumours preceded him about multiple firings and local policy abolishment elsewhere. During his inspections, Moberly had apparently found what he labeled “overstock” at many posts and he sent messages to HBC headquarters that the overstock likely represented poor post accounting and trading practices by employees.⁷³⁰ With this interim gossip on his mind, Cowie feared that the surcharge-free Île-à-la-Crosse post would receive Moberly’s harshest criticism yet.

Moberly arrived at Île-à-la-Crosse near the end of 1890. He read Cowie’s account books, watched Servants trade with local trappers, wrote a report, and sent that report to Winnipeg. After approximately fourteen days, Moberly did not fire anyone and he left without giving Cowie any indications about what he had observed. For weeks, Cowie heard nothing about Moberly’s opinion regarding the Île-à-la-Crosse operation. The lack of positive response, Cowie presumed, meant that it was only a number of weeks until the company announced the dismantling of the village post’s structure. But when Moberly gave his final report to HBC headquarters, and much to the relief of Cowie, the inspector did not find anything significantly incorrect about

⁷²⁹ In accepting this position, Moberly was told by Joseph Wrigley that improvements in the district under his leadership would lead to a promotion to Chief Factor in three years. See Henry John Moberly, *When Fur Was King* (Toronto: J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1929), 175-177 and Foran, “Les Gens de Cette Place,” 133.

⁷³⁰ B.89/e/9 (1888-1904) Île-à-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA n.d., n.p detailing 1889 and the high surcharge, losses, and then small number of furs that arrive the next season.

Île-à-la-Crosse's activities. Yet approval of Cowie's ways was not the biggest surprise: Moberly concluded Île-à-la-Crosse's processes should be used at all the HBC stations across the North West.⁷³¹

Cowie had not realized Moberly had studied many of the company's records before he even started his inspections. When he had scrutinized Île-à-la-Crosse's records before he arrived there, Moberly had wondered whether the HBC goods Fortescue and Cowie labeled as "damaged" or "withheld" were actually surplus goods in categorical disguise.⁷³² So Moberly was indeed skeptical of the village's results.

But when he arrived at the village, Moberly learned for himself that the Factors' categorization made perfect sense. With his own eyes, Moberly saw products arrive poorly packed and subsequently damaged. He also saw packages of damaged goods arrive from other posts in the hopes that the Île-à-la-Crosse men would somehow find a way to trade the irregular items. In that way, not only did Fortescue and Cowie show sound management by eliminating their own imperfect products, they also aided other posts in a way HBC headquarters had not realized (or admitted). Definitely, this matter of poor HBC product meant Fortescue and Cowie needed more power to make decisions without management approval. Even with the markdowns the Factors placed on the damaged goods, the HBC still profited at the post and Servants reported that locals took the markdowns as a demonstration of

⁷³¹ More of this point is explained by Moberly later in his career and, as is revealed later, while he was stationed in the village. B.89/b/1-20 (1892-1894) Île-à-la-Crosse Correspondence books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

⁷³² B.89/e/11 (1888-1904) Île-à-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

honesty by the HBC men in the village.⁷³³ As they sold products apparently unsellable elsewhere, the credit relationships continued and also paid for themselves.⁷³⁴ In other words, Fortescue and Cowie had instilled trust, and that trust (literally) paid off in ways the account books did not fully reveal. Except for Cowie's poor penmanship, Moberly's determined the HBC had a lot to learn from the Fortescue and Cowie ways of doing business.⁷³⁵

To justify this recommendation, Moberly explained some specific points. First, he recommended the company restore a credit policy at *all* its posts. He imagined this policy worthy of imitation based on how quickly the perceived immediate financial loss from the credit was actually regained. Second, Moberly advised the HBC *to abolish the surcharge altogether*. Just as the credit policy had illustrated in Île-à-la-Crosse, the no-surcharge policy appeared to pay for itself almost immediately, and then reinforced positive relationships that appeared to increase the number of total transactions and profit for the HBC. Bluntly put, trappers who felt trusted arrived with more pelts to exchange.⁷³⁶

⁷³³ As an example, see the nearly eight pages of overstock that sells and the profit made by the Post selling "country made and country produce." See D.25/10 (May 9 1890) "1890 Plan," Île-à-la-Crosse Post Inspection Reports, HBCA, 50.

⁷³⁴ Today, economists' evidence of such a development an example of "deadweight loss." In basic terms, deadweight loss is considered an unavoidable cost experienced by a party attempting to have a monopolistic role. See generally Karl Aiginger and Michael Pfaffermayr, "Looking at the Cost Side of 'Monopoly,'" *The Journal of Industrial Economics* 45, no. 3 (September 1997): 245-267.

⁷³⁵ B.89/d/362 (1889-1895) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p. in both the account books and the saleshop Blotter for 1892 and 1894. Moberly's view were a sharp contrast to the 1890 report with recommendations such as charging Servants for firewood and abolishing the debt system. D.25/10 (1890) "1890 Plan," Île-à-la-Crosse Post Inspection Reports, HBCA n.d., 49.

⁷³⁶ Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place," 134. Moberly provided few details about how providing credit was different from a debt, but it appeared he believed credit relationships would be simpler to reinforce.

For his final recommendation, Moberly developed an idea all his own: the benefits of establishing what he called a “relief” system. He described how it should take the form of free temporary housing, free food, and free communication for any Servants deemed worthy of such assistance. As well, Moberly envisioned the Île-à-la-Crosse post as the first location to implement this Moberly version of relief.⁷³⁷ In writing about this proposal, Moberly pre-emptively assuaged any potential claim by HBC headquarters about every Servant demanding relief by explaining that fellow residents would perceive getting such relief negatively. With such a potential stigma, those interested in actually receiving the relief would think long and hard about whether to make a request and would very likely maintain confidentiality in the meantime. At the same time, that confidential relationship could help Post Factors improve “the trust” between Servants and trappers.⁷³⁸ Moberly understood that the Île-à-la-Crosse Post “held up its own as a port of call for provisions for the Athabaska brigades, and for Green Lake as an outpost linking up the District with the Saskatchewan.”⁷³⁹ As such, the village’s post was the ideal place to start such an assistance program.⁷⁴⁰

Moberly’s recommendations directly and implicitly took aim at management’s claim it could interpret accounting data accurately.⁷⁴¹ Had managers read numbers

⁷³⁷ B.89/e/14 (August 19 1891) Île-à-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA, n.p.

⁷³⁸ B.89/e/12 (December 6 1890) Île-à-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA, n.p.

⁷³⁹ Morton, *A History of the Canadian West*, 704.

⁷⁴⁰ B.89/e/14 (August 19 1891) Île-à-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA, n.p.

⁷⁴¹ D.25/16 (1891-1894) “1892 Plan,” Île-à-la-Crosse Post Inspection Reports, HBCA, n.d., 115. Moberly observes that he believes Winnipeg reads the account books improperly.

properly, Moberly argued, the HBC would have patterned other posts after Île-à-la-Crosse's functions long ago. Like every other business, the HBC made its share of mistakes. But the most significant errors in this company happened at the senior level, and it was those mistakes that stifled company growth and jeopardized the HBC's very existence.⁷⁴²

Winnipeg management did not take kindly to the inspector's recommendations. Supervisors retorted Île-à-la-Crosse Servants must have "erroneously valued" many products, Fortescue's construction of eighteen buildings was done only to impress inspectors, and they concluded that both these factors proved how the village's Post was "badly planned for the economy."⁷⁴³ Although the Winnipeg managers wrote that the village could still allow credit and not have a surcharge, they responded that such leeway would happen at Île-à-la-Crosse only.⁷⁴⁴ Finally, the HBC advised Moberly of another point: despite the fact that he met the conditions of his assignment as Inspector, Moberly would not receive the promotion the HBC had promised to give him upon receipt of the report.

At the same time Moberly learned of management's lukewarm reception and broken promise to him about his professional future, Île-à-la-Crosse missionaries wondered about their status within a larger organization in Canada. Without financial

⁷⁴² Ibid., 128. D.25/10 (1890) "1890 Plan," Île-à-la-Crosse Post Inspection Reports, HBCA n.d., 67.

⁷⁴³ Ibid., 31.

⁷⁴⁴ B.89/z/1-6 (1814-1909) Île-à-la-Crosse Miscellaneous Items, HBCA n.d., n.p. D.25/16 (1891-1894) "1892 Plan," Île-à-la-Crosse Post Inspection Reports, HBCA, n.d., 122.

assistance from the Catholic Church, the priests and nuns lamented that their 1890 situation differed only minimally from what missionaries first experienced in 1846.⁷⁴⁵ There might be obvious connections to local families, such as Louis Riel's sister Sara becoming the first Métis nun in Canada and stationing herself there, but the mission had gained few regular and participating parishioners.⁷⁴⁶ Locals wanted a school, a hospital, a church, and a library,⁷⁴⁷ and missionaries provided these functions as best their budget allowed.

At the same time, the missionaries also believed that without all these functions, the Church would not have *any* community approval.⁷⁴⁸ As the priests watched Métis construct new walls, pews, and student desks for the mission in the first months of 1892, the missionaries knew they needed to take serious heed of the implicit price of this labour. The flock demanded the Church always consider what helped the village to continue and prosper, and that flock helped with matters that cost money and helped the missionaries keep this upstanding reputation with the Catholic Church.⁷⁴⁹ Being in Île-à-la-Crosse had a price – even to those close to God. And

⁷⁴⁵ This dependence also revealed itself in the HBC account books, as the mission is listed as the highest debtor, with a significant \$1639.60 owed to the company in 1890. Ibid., “1892 Plan,” 126.

⁷⁴⁶ See “Sister Sara Riel (1848-83),” in Bernadette Ballantyne, et al, *Women of the Metis Nation* (Winnipeg: Louis Riel Institute, 2009), 158-9.

⁷⁴⁷ B.89/a/36 (August 21 1889) “Île-à-la-Crosse Journal 1889-1891,” Île-a-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.p.. See also B.89/e/6-21 (July 29, 1890) “English River District Annual Report, Île-à-la-Crosse,” HBCA. Notably, the Bishop concluded that any local he met was Métis unless otherwise announced as a “settler” or an “Indian.”

⁷⁴⁸ Brenda Macdougall, *One of the Family: Metis Culture in Nineteenth-Century Northwestern Saskatchewan* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2011), 190 and 209.

⁷⁴⁹ These efforts of construction followed successful cooperation amongst locals, Post workers and missionaries the year previous with the smaller project of rebuilding the main boat launch in 1891. B.89/a/36 (1889-1904) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.d., 180.

because no coffers existed at all for the mission, its workers wondered if their functions would continue into 1892.



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As Moberly remained with the HBC but did not rise in the ranks, and as the mission workers fretted about their own future, the pursuit of wealth had taken another new form in the region. The federal government realized financial benefits might come from what lay below the ground, and it sent lawyer-turned-geologist J. B. Tyrrell to investigate the North West. As part of his efforts, Tyrrell ventured to Île-à-la-Crosse. Upon filing an interim report about the village's region, Tyrrell provided details about a school with over fifty students, storage space of over sixteen hundred square feet for fur products that were replenished frequently, and the most

⁷⁵⁰ Image 25 - Photo of Sara Riel, "Sarah Catherine Riel," Ancestry.com Accessed on July 18, 2015 <http://mediasvc.ancestry.com/image/05471993-1f4a-413d-b42b-3e06c55808fc.jpg?Client=MCCManager&NamespaceID=1093&MaxSide=160>. Despite that she had died in 1883, her name was often mentioned to explain the strong links between Métis families and the Church. Today, the village's palliative care home is named after her.

efficient land use system in the North West.⁷⁵¹ Notably, Tyrrell also decided to mention in his report that scrip was vital for Canada's economic and legal purposes. Tyrrell concluded that villagers were "not so easily guided and influenced...as is usual at other Posts." He wanted the Crown to know that instead of making it more powerful, not applying the law actually hurt the strength of Crown governance in Île-à-la-Crosse.⁷⁵² Tyrrell recorded local observations about the land and, in an important aside, information about the people on that land. Villagers had found, yet again, a government worker vocal about the government's shortcomings.

The Dominion bureaucracy considered Tyrrell's geological data accurate, but they scoffed at Tyrrell's conclusions about law and scrip. According to Ottawa, Île-à-la-Crosse was a helpful place to gather meteorological data,⁷⁵³ and it certainly had what Robert Jarvenpa and Hetty Jo Brumbach called "interdigitation...for over 100 years."⁷⁵⁴ But Ottawa informed Tyrrell that scrip was only given to recognize ad-hoc "discretion relationships" between Métis families and the Crown. In other words, the Crown would only admit to Tyrrell that scrip was *possible*, instead of a *necessity*, as events at Red River had illustrated.⁷⁵⁵

⁷⁵¹ Tyrrell arrived in Île-à-la-Crosse 14 Sept 1892. Marchildon and Robinson, *Canoeing the Churchill*, 65. For Tyrrell's report, see J. Tyrrell, "An Expedition through the Barren Lands of Northern Canada," 437.

⁷⁵² HBCA, "Reports on Districts (1822-1904)," B.89/e/16, J. McDougall Inspecting Officer letter, April 1894, n.d., n.p.

⁷⁵³ *Ibid*, B/89/a/37 (1889-1904) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journal, HBCA, n.d., n.p., contains data for weather statistics. See also B.89/d/353-361 (1890- 1895) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d. for commentary about peaceful conditions amongst locals while gathering data.

⁷⁵⁴ Jarvenpa and Brumbach, "Socio-Spatial Organization and Decision-Making Processes: Observations from the Chipewyan," 613.

⁷⁵⁵ B.89/e/15 (April 8 1892) Île-à-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA, n.p.

In the meantime, Moberly still had not been promoted. He did, however, get assigned to the community he admired the most after Cowie resigned and moved to Edmonton. There, Moberly became Île-à-la-Crosse's new Chief Factor. Upon learning of Tyrrell's recommendations about scrip, Moberly decided he would also support the view that locals deserved a formal agreement with the federal government. But instead of challenging his management to take up the issue as his predecessors had done, Moberly decided to go straight to national officials.

He did it cleverly. By using the announcement of a piece of legislation as a starting point, Moberly confronted Crown officials in a way that put more light on the village's place in law. Contained within the *North-West Game Act*, a section explained restrictions regarding hunting during "the close season."⁷⁵⁶ The restrictions did not apply to First Nations, but made no provision for Metis. Besides indicating how such a section violated treaty arrangements, Moberly contended that the legislation did not apply in unceded territories. Because the village was not in territory mentioned either in a treaty or recognized via scrip, it then followed that Île-à-la-Crosse's residents had no obligation to adhere to the Act. Moreover, Moberly wrote, if Metis peoples could not live off "game" throughout the year, they would surely cost the Crown money due to the expensive government assistance that would invariably be needed in the community.⁷⁵⁷

⁷⁵⁶ *Unorganized Territories Games Preservation Act*, 57 & 58 Vict., c. 31 (1894), s3(3).

⁷⁵⁷ MIKAN 97878, R7344-0-X-E, (April 30, 1894) MacFarlane Papers, MG29, A11, vol. 1. Roderick MacFarlane Fonds, LAC, 1829-1830.

Just as the HBC had rejected the recommendations in Moberly's inspection report, the federal government also spurned Moberly's understanding about the law, economic relationships, and Île-à-la-Crosse. Ottawa stated:

[T]here is no necessity for the government to make Treaty with Indians.... the treaties made have been merely to bring about a peaceful, happy and speedy conclusion of the entry of Whites into lands formerly occupied by Indians... [T]he whole Northwest of Canada belongs to Her Majesty, it is her property, and she has absolute rights to do whatever she wishes...⁷⁵⁸

Indeed, the response did not even acknowledge the topic of scrip. Instead of admitting that some previous Crown efforts did acknowledge Métis title,⁷⁵⁹ Ottawa simply ignored the community altogether, and claimed that other circumstances unique to the village allowed residents to achieve the same conditions they claimed scrip would help them attain.

In the meantime, the village's attributes diversified further. Telegraphic communication made Île-à-la-Crosse the most northern location in Canada with that service.⁷⁶⁰ Locals traded so much, and they had such a refined purchasing pattern, that the Post ordered goods all the way from New York City (including the continent's most expensive tobacco) to impress trappers.⁷⁶¹ These same trappers learned that if they participated in "prompt trade" (an immediate purchase after

⁷⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁹ Waiser, *Saskatchewan: A New History*, 30. For the observation that circumstances "makes them (locals) feel that they are being treated differently," see also Ray, et. al., *Bounty and Benevolence*, 171.

⁷⁶⁰ B.89/d/363 (1889-1895) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., 1.

⁷⁶¹ B.89/d/366 (1893) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.p. Nearly \$1500 of this import sold in one year. Post workers also found that a buyer's likelihood of purchasing other goods when obtaining the tobacco appeared high.

getting pelts valued), the Chief Factor would guarantee a “set price” for pelts delivered to the post the following year.⁷⁶² With these additional attractions, and Moberly’s adamancy that he use his own set of unique trading practices, more trappers arrived at Île-à-la-Crosse and HBC returns kept growing.

Moberly did not prove as stubborn as the HBC feared. Although he argued for village-specific policies, Moberly nevertheless re-introduced a surcharge in Île-à-la-Crosse in 1895. Still, the version of this surcharge reflected his belief that Île-à-la-Crosse necessitated company flexibility. Moberly only placed it on goods shipped to Île-à-la-Crosse that needed to be shipped further. Audaciously (or consistently), Moberly even charged this surcharge on other Factors’ orders.⁷⁶³ When explaining the intra-company charge, Moberly noted that his decision encouraged more efficiency at other posts. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Winnipeg management agreed with this justification.⁷⁶⁴

By the time Moberly officially finished his assignment at Île-à-la-Crosse at the end of 1895, “the HBC [management] believed there was a possibility that some Métis families wielded enough socio-economic power to threaten its sense of economic

⁷⁶² B.89/d/365, (1889-1895) Ile-a-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p. “Indian ledgers,” 1893-94: undated but for discussions that happened in 1892; As an example of a high increase, in 1894 Baptiste Laliberte arrived more than 120 times to pick up a product or products. Ibid., B.89/d/364 (1889-1895) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., 31.

⁷⁶³ B.89/d/391 (1890-1899) Ile-a-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.p., surcharge evidence. Pages Postdated, and then are not used. See also B/89/e/18 (1888-1904) Ile-a-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA, for details for the La Loche trip from 1895 to 1897. By 1897, even that surcharge was abandoned as unhelpful due to a predicted “scaricity” of goods and more regular profits at Buffalo Narrows. Also B/89/e/19 (September 3 1897) “Inspection Report,” Île-à-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA, n.p.

⁷⁶⁴ B.89/d/375 (1894-5) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, 12.

security... [by] the interfamilial loyalty within the community at large and the demands of the reciprocal family model structures that bound them in an intricate network.”⁷⁶⁵ The support village HBC Factors showed for scrip had many influences. For one matter, more Servants were themselves Métis. Moreover, Servants also imagined scrip would give more residents additional disposable income that would bolster post profits and keep them employed.

But whatever the sources for the villagers’ interest in scrip, Moberly observed locals reinforcing processes that represented what they considered the essence of living off the land *properly*: they helped each other regarding the soil’s conditions,⁷⁶⁶ working hard but not overworking an area or themselves,⁷⁶⁷ and justifying their values on a daily basis.⁷⁶⁸ In other words, Île-à-la-Crosse showed few signs of subservience to foreign (or Canadian) ways.⁷⁶⁹

Moberly did not stay long in his role as Factor in the village. But his impact upon the community’s self-awareness was monumental. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous

⁷⁶⁵ Macdougall, “The Comforts of Married Life,” 37 - 38.

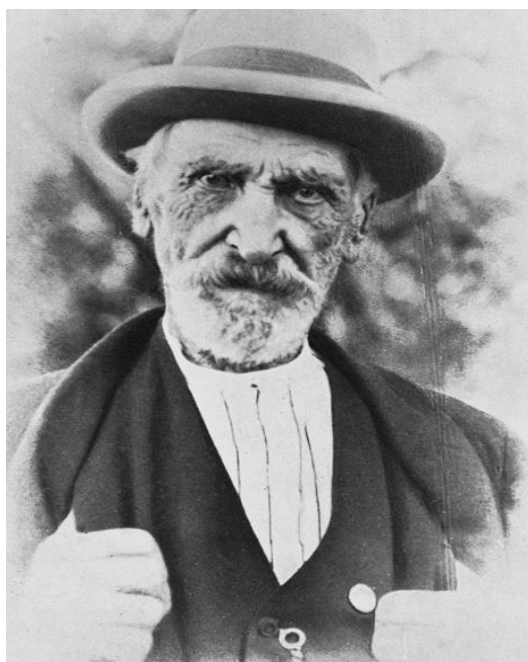
⁷⁶⁶ Foran, “Les Gens de Cette Place,” 89. “Codex Historicus de l’Île-à-la-Crosse,” (1845-1897) Fonds Oblats de Marie-Immaculée Keewatin-Le Pas, ASHSB, Centre du patrimoine, 207-208, 216-217. Foran, *Ibid.* 87-89. Foran notes how the priests also helped with activities and by effect, “Saint-Jean-Baptiste was consequently left without ordained clergy for several weeks on end.” Not only doing work in the parish itself, the priests went elsewhere to provide hospice care, and missionaries recorded how they and villagers helped each other work land for harvesting purposes and doing so meant leaving parish activities for a later time.

⁷⁶⁷ B.89/a/38 (December 26 1896) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals HBCA, HBCA, n.p. See also Theriau, *Lost Land of the Caribou*, 45.

⁷⁶⁸ Foran, “Les Gens de Cette Place,” 2 and 246.

⁷⁶⁹ See B.89/a/38 (1896 and 1897) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA n.p.. Notably, many people must have contributed to these records as the penmanship (and legibility) changes regularly; B.89/e/19 (1888-1904) Île-à-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA, n.p. E. K. Beeston during the summer of 1897 concludes that the mission workers’ own activities helped the church’s coffers and, as another effect, kept Métis interlopers less critical of the HBC. Jarvenpa, “Silot’ine: An Insurance Perspective on Northern Dene Kinship Networks in Recent History,” 156.

residents alike in Île-à-la-Crosse received commendation for their daily, seasonal, and annual decision-making. Villagers never rejected outsiders' ways simply because they did not originate from the village. Moberly's original skepticism about Île-à-la-Crosse, followed by his approval of village processes, revealed how the HBC's refusal to follow the village's lead seemed increasingly more difficult to reconcile. At the same time, the HBC and the Crown would not quite acknowledge the village's local knowledge about how to ensure Crown and company prerogatives. Thanks to Moberly, villagers would not relent in their challenges against those who rejected local ideas. By the time he left Île-à-la-Crosse and then retired, Moberly had further mobilized locals to challenge Canada's shortcomings.



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For the rest of the 1890s, Île-à-la-Crosse's records document how the community

⁷⁷⁰ Image 26 - Photo of Henry Moberly taken circa 1926. Image courtesy of Glenbow Archives. Document NA-789-112. Compared to other HBC men who used photography to document their efforts, Moberly did not submit any photographs to his company's headquarters.

kept its reputation as a place both profitable and peaceful. During these same years, Crown discussions elsewhere illustrate how Canada fully realized that it must gain more agreements with Indigenous peoples to justify its claim of title to the North West. Ottawa kept searching for signatories to join the 1877 negotiated *Treaty 7*, and agents and the North West Mounted Police also contacted families about joining *Treaty 6*. And yet again, the Crown concluded Île-à-la-Crosse would be an opportune place to meet people to discuss formal agreements. During the summers of 1897 and 1898, agents hosted meetings in the village to negotiate with First Nations families who lived close to the Churchill River.⁷⁷¹ During the conversations, the Crown officials promised families that their children could attend what the officials referred to as the village's "residential" school.⁷⁷² As another reassurance, agents told these families that the treaty would not impact Indigenous customs.⁷⁷³ At the same time as making these promises, the Crown agents told their supervisors back in Ottawa: "A treaty claim cannot be successfully negotiated with the Indians [at Île-

⁷⁷¹ Hugh Brody, *Maps and Dreams: Indians and the British Columbia Frontier*, 69.

⁷⁷² B.89/e/19 (September 3-6 1897) Île-à-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA, n.p.

Unsurprisingly, Moberly still had the matter of company profit on his mind when stating his opinion about treaty-making. He hoped in creating a treaty, the First Nations around Île-à-la-Crosse would likely spend their annual payments at the Post. Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place," 9. Then, those same First Nations could visit the school and then trade at the Post. As a result, Post workers supported the idea of using the school as the institution for families located elsewhere. This role is subsequently described in the "Education" documents for the Northwest Territories. See "Attendance record 29th Dec 1899," Department of Education, Early Education documents, Schools in Unorganized Territories, 1899-1904, SAB.

⁷⁷³ Jeffrey S. Murray, "Hard Bargains: The Making of Treaty Eight," *Archivist*, no. 117 (1998): 2 and Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place," 194. By focusing particularly on the children called "des orphelins sauvages," Rapet and Vicar Apostolic Albert Pascal requested funding for the school again with the claim that these students were easier to civilize and promising to take in First Nations students from as far away as Cold Lake (Dene) and Green Lake (Cree) at what was called "the most ancient school now existing in the North West" to help these talks move along. "Codex Historicus de l'Île-à-la-Crosse," (1845-1897) Fonds Oblats de Marie-Immaculée Keewatin-Le Pas, ASHSB, Centre du patrimoine, 134 and Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place," 185.

à-la-Crosse] unless the Half-Breed claims are also considered.”⁷⁷⁴



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But, as it had before, Ottawa did not agree with the agents' plea and instead had senior civil servants announce the boundaries of *Treaty 8* in 1899. Instead of negotiating scrip to ensure a proper legality for treaty lands, *Treaty 8's* boundaries did not stretch over the village. When explaining why such an exclusion occurred yet again, the government justified its decision to exclude the village from scrip and then treaty matters by claiming the existing school, church, and post ensured Île-à-la-Crosse did not need government aid nor did the community need to be

⁷⁷⁴ Forget wrote to the Secretary of Indian Affairs on 1 June 1898: "A treaty claim cannot be successfully negotiated with the Indians unless the Half-Breed claims are also considered." MIKAN 2061036, RG10, vol. 3848, file 75236-1 (June 1, 1898) "Forget to Secretary of Indian Affairs," Treaty 8-Treaty Negotiations between the Indian Affairs Department and the Native People (Maps), Black Series R216-245-8-E, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Fonds, LAC. This comment appears similar to Forget's view about providing "the same privileges as the pure-blooded Indians." See Ibid. MIKAN 2061036 "Forget to Secretary of Indian Affairs" (January 12, 1898).

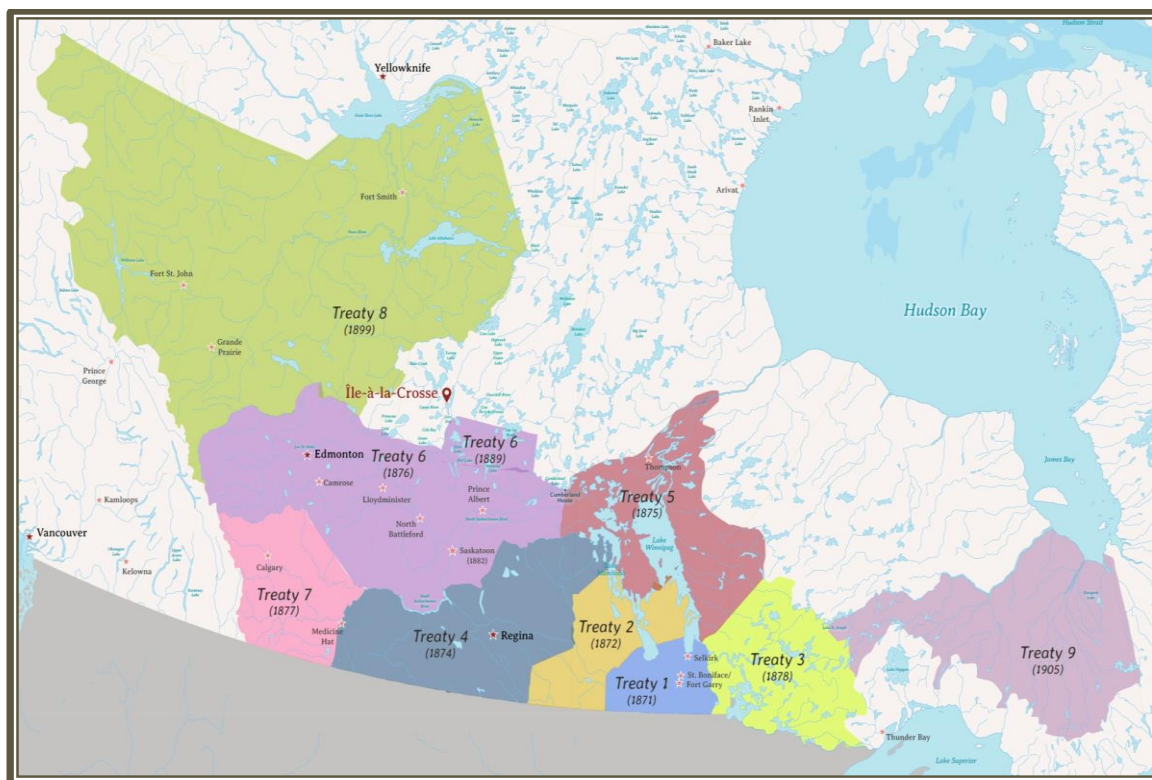
⁷⁷⁵ Image 27 - Section of village cemetery plots dating from the end of the nineteenth century. Photo courtesy of Elisabeth Poscher.

“controlled.”⁷⁷⁶ Nevertheless, and contrary to requirements in law pertaining to land transfer, Canada claimed the village’s space as part of the Dominion. While such an illogical position continued, Servants and missionaries in the village fretfully wondered how they would survive into the twentieth century without the monies that treaties and scrip certificates provided, and such anxiety often triggered competition between each institution.⁷⁷⁷ Their Métis neighbours were less concerned about the financial circumstances that exclusion ensured. But they also worried about what the future would bring if Canada continued to claim the village was part of the country but not provide the village with the functions that the country was supposed to make available.⁷⁷⁸ Île-à-la-Crosse could survive without Canadian largesse and, although Ottawa did not openly admit it, the village’s location was still not officially within the metes and bounds that Canada claimed its laws controlled. But how long could Canada claim such a false role, and could being left alone also have its benefits? In other words, how exactly can a place be independent and recognized at the same time?

⁷⁷⁶ MIKAN 2059135, RG 10, vol. 4006, file 241209-1 (April 29, 1897) “JD McLean to Borthwick,” General Housekeeping Records and Correspondence Regarding Ile-a-la-Crosse Treaty (Maps and Charts), Black Series R216-245-8-E, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Fonds, LAC; B.89/a/38 (April 9 1898) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.p.

⁷⁷⁷ B.89/e/19 (1888-1904) Île-à-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA, n.d., n.p. Post workers are actually encouraged to “look upon them (mission workers) as rival traders, and not give them any advantage over their other competitors.” Of particular note, priests and Servants had different understandings about whether workers should not work on religious holidays. Foran, “Les Gens de Cette Place,” 131.

⁷⁷⁸ Robert Jarvenpa and Hetty Jo Brumbach, “The Chipewyan-Cree-Métis Interaction Sphere and the Fur Trade Political Economy: Archaeological, Ethnohistorical and Ethnographic Approaches,” in *Networks, Interaction and Emerging Identities in Fennoscandia and Beyond Papers from the Conference held in Tromsø, Norway, October 13-16 2009*, ed. Charlotte Damm and Janne Saarikivi, (Finland: Société Finno-Ougrienne, 2012), 71.



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III. 5. e. Entering an Era on its Own Terms – Again: To 1906

As locals entered the twentieth century, some signs of despondency appeared at Île-à-la-Crosse. Post workers believed their employer distrusted them more than ever,⁷⁸⁰ missionaries learned the paltry funding they obtained from their Church would be decreased yet again, and visiting Crown officials received orders to tell these workers that they should make sure visiting treated peoples were treated as

⁷⁷⁹ Figure 7 - Signa Daum Shanks, "Map of Canada's numbered treaties areas in 1899," 2015. Treaty 8's metes and bounds stretch within eighty miles of Île-à-la-Crosse.

⁷⁸⁰ See many comments throughout B.89/e/20 (1888-1904) Île-à-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA. Still whenever Winnipeg supervisors noticed any relationship considered a type of credit arrangement, they still discouraged its discontinuation, especially if such an arrangement would be an advance to a Servant. See B.89/d/402 (1899-1900) "Servants' ledger 1899-1900," Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.p.

well as (or even better than) Île-à-la-Crosse residents.⁷⁸¹ Still, the HBC post's profit margins continued to trump other station's efforts.⁷⁸² As well, the Dominion kept relating to various government officials how the village's completely unfunded residential school was a role model for other "Indian" educational institutions across the west.⁷⁸³ As many villagers wondered when they would get formal recognition of their existence, they also learned that people living elsewhere were told Île-à-la-Crosse was a community worth emulating. How could, villagers pondered, Île-à-la-Crosse possibly be both? ⁷⁸⁴

Autonomy still flourished inside the post's walls and in casual conversation.

Servants worked diligently to provide sufficient quantity of a variety of goods for trappers,⁷⁸⁵ and the Post's managers maintained their view that permitting credit reinforced better social relationships and higher profits.⁷⁸⁶ On occasion, locals

⁷⁸¹ MIKAN 2059135, RG 10, vol. 4006, file 241209-1, General Housekeeping Records and Correspondence Regarding Ile-a-la-Crosse Treaty (Maps and Charts), Black Series R216-245-8-E, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Fonds, LAC.

⁷⁸² B.89/e/20 (1900-1901) "Post reports 1900-1901," Île-à-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA, n.p.: "greater abundance of furs, to a less reckless opposition; to a more friendly attitude on the part of the priests.. This year, outposts made it profitable." See also B.89/a/38 (May 28, 1900) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.p., B.89/e/21 (1888-1904) Île-à-la-Crosse Reports on Districts, HBCA, n.d. The village's profits still exceeded other posts' efforts by approximately seven thousand dollars, with the highest difference between the village and other posts during 1904. Parker, "Re-Conceptualizing the Traditional Economy," 379.

⁷⁸³ B.89/a/38 (September 14 1898) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journal, HBCA, n.p.; Parker, "Re-Conceptualizing the Traditional Economy," 379. Additional explanations about the federal belief of the school being a "residential school" appear in "Codex Historicus de l'Île-à-la-Crosse," (1845-1897) Fonds Oblats de Marie-Immaculée Keewatin-Le Pas, SHSB/Arch, Centre du patrimoine, 295.

⁷⁸⁴ Over time, the failure to acknowledge community leadership develops a sense of distrust, including over cultural lines. See Daron Acemoglu and Matthew O. Jackson, "History, Expectations, and Leadership in the Evolution of Social Norms," *Review of Economic Studies* 82, no. 2 (April 2015): 7.

⁷⁸⁵ B.89/d/459 (1899) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

⁷⁸⁶ Parker, "Re-Conceptualizing the Traditional Economy," 262. See B.89/b/24 (November 5, 1904) Île-à-la-Crosse Correspondence Books, HBCA, Letter, 5 Nov 1904 between Father Lacorre and Île-à-la-Crosse HBC explaining an exchange of goods, fish for wood, n.p.; See excerpts from

bickered about trap lines or contacts with First Nations hunters, but they also showed they could reach informal and binding agreements amongst themselves about disputes that developed within the community.⁷⁸⁷ As a Post worker observed while acknowledging the assistance he received from mission customers and local trappers, spring returned as it always did with “[t]he Canadian Nightingales commenc[ing] their music in the Swamps.”⁷⁸⁸ Locals had witnessed outsiders both criticize and praise village ways, but these residents maintained their own set of beliefs and processes and kept Île-à-la-Crosse returning to its core form and interests season after season.

Re-inspired by Moberly’s and others’ views about the village’s land tenure, residents decided their informal conversations about scrip should transform into something

B.89/a/38 (1903-1904) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journal, HBCA, n.p. October 20, 1903 reports “a wild time” in bush. But furs still good. January 19 1904: 2 men come to get priest to go to Souris River to meet men dying with small pox. November 2 1903: “I am making promise to priests that our men will behave themselves”; December 22 1903: “clear out carpenter’s shop so Chips can stay for Christmas.” Directives from Winnipeg still arrived frequently about how “Expenses should be only for what they are for,” suggesting more skepticism about the debt/credit system. See the 1901-1902 account books in B.89/d/426-427 (1901-1902) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA opening remark instructions number 5, n.p. A number of men rotated as the manager without employees resenting the rotation.

⁷⁸⁷ Certainly, the church complained about *désordres*. Yet as church attendance never appeared in jeopardy, and school use continued, the fear of chaos was more pervasive than an actual church closure. Foran, “Les Gens de Cette Place,” 235. Fishing activities influenced the time and location of church services and showed how parties met with each other to reach a compromise. B.89/a/38 (October 1902) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.p.: “Halfbreeds on the Point are leaving for their fall fishing.” See also Foran, “Les Gens de Cette Place,” 131. “Lettre du R. P. Pénard au T.R.P. Général,” in *Missions de la Congrégation des Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée*, no. 151 (September 1900): 261; Abel, *Drum Songs*, 181. Some of the most critical comments come from the HBC Post about the local doctor’s (in)action regarding diseases amongst First Nations trappers. See especially February 1904, including the 10 February entry where the HBC writer complains “The Doctor lay in bed all day from the “hard work” of the last two days.” For rest of month, the writer records the doctor was “as usual doing nothing.” B.89/a/38 (February 1904) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.p. The HBC workers noticed this effort by the doctor, and numerous people visiting the village and describing small pox outbreaks.

⁷⁸⁸ B.89/a/38 (April 29 1901) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.p.

more noticeable than hoping that others might take up their cause.⁷⁸⁹ After some community meetings in 1902, residents collaborated to write a formal complaint letter to the federal government about the legal necessity of scrip.⁷⁹⁰ Métis-organized, this effort received a public endorsement from HBC Inspector Sam Iserhoff, and his comments inspired village Servants to sign the letter as well.⁷⁹¹ Soon after villagers sent the petition, the federally appointed authority called the “Half-Breed Commission” advised Ottawa it was both prudent and necessary to provide scrip to Île-à-la-Crosse Métis immediately.⁷⁹² With such strong support, residents felt confident that their complaint would lead to scrip settlement no later than the end of 1903.⁷⁹³

Almost unbelievably, and as an additional recommendation for stretching *Treaty 8* was rejected,⁷⁹⁴ Ottawa continued to refuse to acknowledge the complaint and provide scrip.⁷⁹⁵ Perhaps if villagers had taken up arms, or the community’s schools and churches were not so well grounded, some type of representative from Canada

⁷⁸⁹ Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant*, 215.

⁷⁹⁰ To appreciate the Métis push in the village before treaties imagined for the village region’s space, see MIKAN 2059135, RG 10, vol. 4006, file 241209-1 (1902) “Petition to the Governor-General of Canada in Council and to Sir Wilfred Laurier,” General Housekeeping Records and Correspondence Regarding Ile-a-la-Crosse Treaty (Maps and Charts), black series R216-245-8-E, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Fonds, LAC. See also Coates and Morrison, *Treaty Research Report*, 11. These two authors contend the Métis scrip matter triggered treaty talks for all of the region that became Treaty 10 territory.

⁷⁹¹ Sam Iserhoff’s 1901 inspection report appears in B.375/e/4 (1901) English River Reports on Districts, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

⁷⁹² Fumoleau, *As Long as This Land Shall Last*, 46.

⁷⁹³ Foran, “Les Gens de Cette Place,” 143.

⁷⁹⁴ Arthur J. Ray, et. al., *Bounty and Benevolence*, 173-4.

⁷⁹⁵ MIKAN 2059135, RG 10, vol. 4006, file 241209-1 (April 7, 1902) “McKenna to Laurier,” General Housekeeping Records and Correspondence Regarding Ile-a-la-Crosse Treaty (Maps and Charts), black series R216-245-8-E, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Fonds, LAC

might have arrived.⁷⁹⁶ But as it stood in 1903 and early 1904, Île-à-la-Crosse was just too peaceful, and too far away from other issues the government considered more important than for the Crown to care about the village witnessing the rule of law.⁷⁹⁷

Many historians of this era have theorized about various pressures facing (then) Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier at this time. As he appeased Official Opposition MPs and even fellow cabinet Ministers, Laurier also faced significant financial difficulties when he and his government attempted to construct the administrative functions an expanding country invariably required. While deliberating about these difficulties, Laurier received acclaim and disdain for what became called his “sunny way” of considering many different views before making (or not making) a decision.⁷⁹⁸ On his prime ministerial plate, he had to contend with the issue of Canada implementing federal functions in areas considered territories. If he encouraged the birth of new provinces, he could also delegate many of the responsibilities detailed in the *British North America Act* to provincial legislatures.

⁷⁹⁹ By showing he could provide what western elected MPs wanted and appease federal officials lamenting his budgetary decisions, Laurier made plans for the North

⁷⁹⁶ Jarvenpa and Brumbach, “Socio-Spatial Organization and Decision-Making Processes: Observations from the Chipewyan,” 613.

⁷⁹⁷ Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant*, 198.

⁷⁹⁸ For more discussion about the benefits and shortcomings of such a strategy, see Oscar Douglas Skelton, *Life and Letters of Sir Wilfrid Laurier*, vol. 1, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1921), 464-465 and 485.

⁷⁹⁹ Eugene Beaulieu and J. C. Herbert Emery, “Pork Packers, Reciprocity, and Laurier’s Defeat in the 1911 Canadian General Election,” *The Journal of Economic History* 61, no. 4 (Dec 2001): 1083.

West Territories to be cut up and for Saskatchewan and Alberta to arrive on the scene.⁸⁰⁰

An evolution of historical documentation suggests Laurier clearly realized Canada needed to acquire more formal agreements that detailed legal land transfer to the Crown. The failure to achieve these agreements became even more starkly obvious to him as plans to make two more prairie provinces progressed. For example, as Laurier received the complaint from Île-à-la-Crosse residents, the prime minister had representatives negotiating with families north of the Great Lakes to secure agreement for what was already dubbed *Treaty 9*.⁸⁰¹ But more than any other prime minister, Laurier faced the difficult issue of what to do if a place must be scripped first and treated second. Laurier sent Assistant Indian Commissioner James McKenna to travel across the West and ensure the Crown actually had title to every region inside Saskatchewan's and Alberta's pending boundaries.⁸⁰² But McKenna's agenda included more than meeting with First Nations. As quickly as he could, McKenna also made his way to the Churchill River to gather information about the more complicated process of bringing Île-à-la-Crosse into treaty territory.⁸⁰³

⁸⁰⁰ *Alberta Act*, 4 Edward V11, c.3 (1905), 77; *Saskatchewan Act*, 4 Edward V11, c. 42 (1905), 201.

⁸⁰¹ For a helpful summary of *Treaty 9*, see generally Patrick Macklem, "The Impact of Treaty 9 on Natural Resource Development in Northern Ontario," *Aboriginal and Treaty Rights in Canada: Essays on Law, Equity, and Respect for Difference*, ed. in Michael Asch (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998).

⁸⁰² Coates and Morrison, *Treaty Research Report*, 38. Arthur J. Ray, et al., *Bounty and Benevolence*, 213.

⁸⁰³ *Ibid.*, 35.

When McKenna arrived, he learned how the community had functioned for years despite the arrival of strong institutions from elsewhere.⁸⁰⁴ He heard from post and mission workers about their small budgets,⁸⁰⁵ and he also watched how those same workers took pride in how their efforts represented the best results. McKenna also quickly observed how the locals' respect for the post's and mission's efforts was incredibly conditional. Even more a sign of the community's strength, McKenna realized that without official recognition of the village by the Crown, locals had no respect for the idea of a "Crown". Moreover, even when Canada finally admitted it could not legally govern in the village's region as it currently did, these villagers could survive– and *thrive* – perfectly fine without Canada. Layered on top of these circumstances, villagers knew full well any treaty arrangements could not happen without scrip settlement first. With such acuity, the villagers showed McKenna an enviable capability to take full advantage of their respective political and legal power. As McKenna would recall, that Métis leverage started the moment McKenna arrived.⁸⁰⁶

When McKenna first reached Île-à-la-Crosse, and much to his surprise, many First Nations were there waiting for him. True enough, McKenna had sent a message that he wished to meet potential treaty signatories at the village. But he found himself without any time to prepare after he arrived. After chatting with some of these Cree and Dene people, McKenna then learned that while the First Nations indeed wanted

⁸⁰⁴ B.89/d/470 (1891-1909) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p. Many products are listed as going elsewhere or consumed privately.

⁸⁰⁵ *Treaty No. 10 and Reports of Commissioners* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1906), 5.

⁸⁰⁶ Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant*, 215.

treaty, it was actually the village's Métis who encouraged them to be there when McKenna arrived.⁸⁰⁷ Because the First Nations pressured McKenna, that pressure then triggered McKenna's need to start scrip discussions more quickly than he had wished or planned to do.⁸⁰⁸ For fear of appearing underprepared in front of his own employer, "McKenna never indicated to Ottawa that the leaders at Île-à-la-Crosse essentially threatened to terminate [treaty] proceedings if he [McKenna] did not slow down and deal with their [the Métis] concerns."⁸⁰⁹

Just as his predecessors had done before him, McKenna promised locals that their lives would not change after receiving either scrip or treaty. Apart from that similarity, McKenna's talks were distinguished by concern about acknowledging Métis land relationships first.⁸¹⁰ During those scrip-centred discussions, McKenna also had to realize that whatever amenities he could have mentioned elsewhere to court parties would not have any sway at Île-à-la-Crosse, since the village had many of those products or institutions already. So, while wanting scrip recognition, the

⁸⁰⁷ *Treaty No. 10 and Reports of Commissioners*, 5 where McKenna explains how "there had been at work an influence ..." upon the First Nations. See also Fumoleau, *As Long as This Land Shall Last*, 192, 216; see also how Church leaders helped this strategy in "Indiens-Traité avec eux," (November 27, 1937) Roman Catholic Archives, Edmonton, Alberta.

⁸⁰⁸ *Treaty No. 10 and Reports of Commissioners*, 5. As an important aside McKenna himself wrote, "The Indians and halfbreeds might be and even look the same, but their cultures can be distinguished," noted by Treaty Commissioner McKenna himself in *Treaty No. 10 and Reports of Commissioners*, 8.

⁸⁰⁹ J. R. Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant*, 218.

⁸¹⁰ Anthony Gulig, "In Whose Interest?: Government-Indian Relations in Northern Saskatchewan and Wisconsin, 1900-1940," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Saskatchewan, 1997) 97. Gulig mentions NAC RG 2, Order in Council No. 1459, 20 July 1906, 7. See also "It was not until after 1900, when the mixed-blood people of northern Saskatchewan began to demand compensation for loss of aboriginal rights, and particularly after the creation of the Province of Saskatchewan in 1905, that the federal government to extend treaty provisions of that area." Coates and Morrison, *Treaty Research Report*, i.

village Métis reinforced what Gerald Friesen has rightly considered one of Canada's strongest "inelastic" relationships in the West.⁸¹¹

Instead of briefly promising schools, health benefits and good hunting, McKenna repeatedly emphasized the matter of the Crown's more overarching potential: protection from future circumstances that might hurt the *community's* condition of self-reliance.⁸¹² Although the scrip would let people get a piece of land or large sum of money, McKenna could not have reached the point of giving out the certificates unless he showed an appreciation for the balance that the community had and which brought out the success of those who lived there.⁸¹³ Villagers wanted to hear about how the economies, the family ties, and the longer-range understanding of land use would carry on. McKenna was forced to describe these matters, so he did so.⁸¹⁴

⁸¹¹ Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 176.

⁸¹² R-5954, Accession no. R81-216 (March 3, 1980) Philomine Piche, Chipewyan and Metis People of La Loche Oral History Project, SAB, para. 336; R5952, Accession no. R81-216, (June 10, 1980) Lucia Montgrand, Chipewyan and Metis People of La Loche Oral History Project, SAB, n. para. Within the whirlwind of colonialism, sometimes some space for calm/peace and independence forms. See Cole Harris, "How Did Colonialism Disposess? Comments from an Edge of Empire," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 94, no. 1 (March 2004): 167.

⁸¹³ Guillaume Charette, *Vanishing Spaces: Memoirs of a Prairie Métis-Louis Goulet*, trans. Ray Ellenwood (Winnipeg: Editions Bois-Brûles, 1980), 158. See also Waiser, *Saskatchewan: A New History*, 21.

⁸¹⁴ "familiar structure constrained individual choice....[and] institutional structure and individual coping strategy [were] intimately wedded as part of a larger adaptive process," Jarvenpa and Brumbach, "Socio-Spatial Organization and Decision-Making Processes: Observations from the Chipewyan," 609. Mentions (Bennett 1976, 273; Barlett 1980, 549).

On 6 June, with an attendance of nearly four hundred people,⁸¹⁵ Île-à-la-Crosse hosted scrip talks for village residents to obtain a certificate allowing them to acquire a piece of farmland or four hundred and forty dollars.⁸¹⁶ On 28 August, several men placed their mark on *Treaty 10* and learned they would soon go across the river and live under direct Crown supervision.⁸¹⁷ McKenna got Canada its treaty. But for the first time known to McKenna, villagers got their scrip talks first. Then the treated people learned they could go to the newly created 'protected' reserve area across the river and access the village for various treaty functions.⁸¹⁸ Scrippied families heard from McKenna himself that the village's space, and how the Métis families had lived there, was theirs to keep and continue.⁸¹⁹ In talks, and in the practical understandings of daily life, no one in Île-à-la-Crosse had surrendered.⁸²⁰

⁸¹⁵ Canada, *Census of the Northwest Provinces, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, 1906*, Third Session of the 10th Parliament, Volume 6, Sessional paper No. 17a), 55. The census lists the village with a population of approximately 357 people.

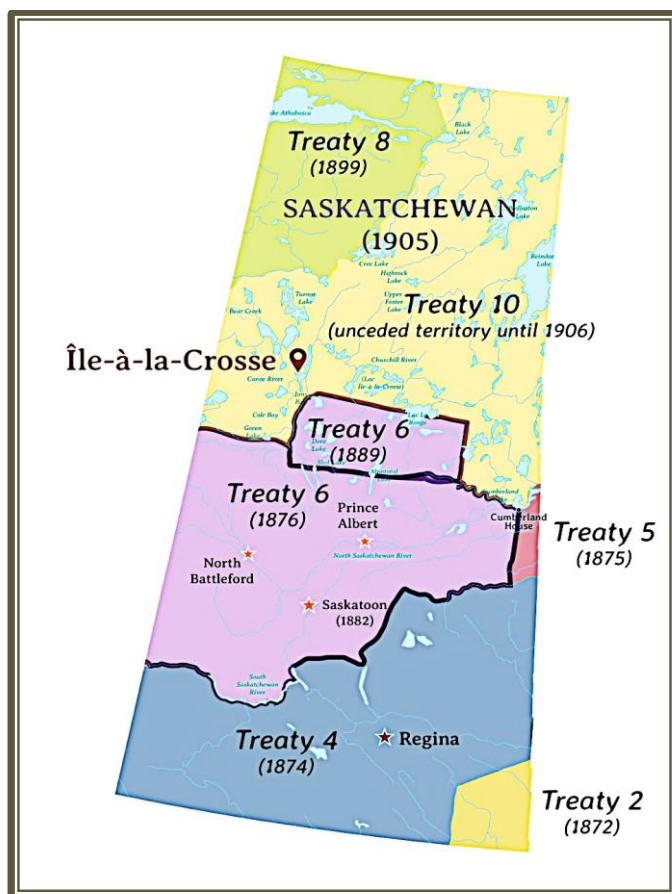
⁸¹⁶ For this date, the scrip settlement talks were aimed at only for Île-à-la-Crosse and La Loche residents. See *The Phoenix*, "Métis Scrip Settlements," 29 March 1907.

⁸¹⁷ MIKAN 2059135, RG 10, vol. 4006, file 241209-1 (January 18, 1907) "McKenna's Report," General Housekeeping Records and Correspondence Regarding Ile-a-la-Crosse Treaty (Maps and Charts) Black Series R216-245-8-E, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Fonds, LAC. Details illustrate how scrip talks were already complete. See also Ray, et. al., *Bounty and Benevolence*, 178. It was possible that some Métis became treaty Indians and vice versa. "It was generally the case, however, that the Métis of mixed Indian-White ancestry, who lived in and near the large fur trade centers, elected to take the one-time scrip payment of \$240. The small bands of bush- oriented Chipewyan and Cree generally signed for Treaty status and, reserve and other in perpetuity." Jarvenpa, "Intergroup Behavior and Imagery." Jarvenpa and Brumbach, "Socio-Spatial Organization and Decision-Making Processes: Observations from the Chipewyan," 613. McKenna's successor (Thomas Borthwick) replied "they would not at any time be prevented from hunting and fishing for their own use as heretofore." MIKAN 2035104, RG10, vol. 1618, "Memoranda re: the Indians of Treaty No. 10 for the Year 1907, English River Band at the meeting with the Commissioner 29 June 1907," Carlton Agency, Subject Files - Wahspaton Sioux, Treaty 10, Annuities, Membership Britains, Schools, Timber, General operational records R216-406-6-E, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Fonds, LAC, 2. The treaty was signed in Île-à-la-Crosse on 28 August 1906 but the Crown understood the treaty being its implementation as of 19 August. Coates and Morrison, *Treaty Research Report*, 21-22.

⁸¹⁸ Ray, et. al., *Bounty and Benevolence*, 182.

⁸¹⁹ Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant*, 218.

⁸²⁰ Frank Tough, *'As Their Natural Resources Fail': Native Peoples and the Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1870-1930*, 141. For remarks about how too few studies highlight these



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qualities, see Eve-Marie Garrouette, *Real Indians: Identity and the Survival of Native America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 67.

⁸²¹ Image 8 - Signa Daum Shanks, "Saskatchewan, with references to treaty lands within province's metes and bounds as of 1905," 2015. Note how Saskatchewan's boundaries existed before all the province's lands also received mention in a treaty.



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⁸²² Figure 9 - Signa Daum Shanks, "Lower region of Churchill River with reference to village of Île-à-la-Crosse and reserve land mentioned to villagers, Summer 1906, with a distance of approximately 8.5 kilometres across the water (5.28 miles)," 2015. This reserve region would be imagined in other areas further south-east during the next decades, with a set of reserves acting as potential locations for families, such as the nearby La Plonge reserve (reserve 192) and Wapachewunak (192D). The spot on this peninsula became known as Île-à-la-Crosse Reserve 192e.

Part IV

Aftermath

It is to be regretted that...a very painful duty devolves on the narrator...for lawyers and commissioners will not be satisfied with 'I was informed of this,' or 'I was told of that,' but 'Who were the persons that informed you,' is the point in question.⁸²³

1. Introduction

As it had for centuries past, a spring thaw started in Île-à-la-Crosse during the early months of 1907. Once it began, meltwater flowed copiously. The land absorbed what it could; what remained made its way to the Churchill River or to the more southern Beaver waterway. Plants started to bud, animals became more active, and people pursued more activities outside than they had during the previous months. But as also happened for years, the winter days had not prevented residents from trading or socializing, and elders had told more stories during the cold evenings because they kept to the tradition of telling tales only while snow was on the ground.⁸²⁴ As the comings and goings never quite ground to a halt, spring meant ongoings could certainly happen more easily but had never quite stopped.

⁸²³ Colin Robertson to Peter Irving, December 1818, on page 28 of E. E. Rich, ed., *Colin Robertson's Correspondence Book, September 1817 to September 1818* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1939).

⁸²⁴ Storytelling was considered an activity saved for winter. See Lua Young, "First Nations Weather," (paper prepared for the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre & the Western Development Museum, September 2003), accessed on July 20, 2015 http://www.wdm.ca/skteacherguide/SICCRsearch/FNWeather_TeacherGuide.pdf.

As spring turned into summer during 1907, the impact of another event made its presence known. Except for the few non-Indigenous people who inhabited the area, everyone's family was either treated or had acquired scrip. Talks the previous summer had unfolded peacefully, and during these talks the Crown had had no choice but to demonstrate more flexibility than it had before – particularly when the scrip discussions occurred.⁸²⁵ Whatever the future contained, locals would have some fresh responsibilities to which they had to adhere. But Ottawa had acquired responsibilities as well, and villagers remained some of the most aware signatories the Crown had ever met. So as the government wanted to move forward as the sovereign it claimed to be, locals remained attuned to their own rights and how they believed those rights should be articulated.

In keeping to the structure of many doctoral and book projects, this study of Île-à-la-Crosse could end here. On previous pages, themes about economic trends, the development of cultural traits, and the impact of geographical space upon individuals' and groups' activities have hopefully helped the times of a village "get a historical" life. These events, in a generally linear format, have introduced Indigenous peoples, their visitors and the activities that ensued because of this interaction in a way that it is hoped can help our understandings of Canada become

⁸²⁵ Father Rapport reported how villagers managed to get \$440 for scrip by discussing the land values elsewhere in Saskatchewan. "They were offered \$440 for land that was going for \$1400 in P.A." MIKAN 2059135, RG 10, vol. 4006, file 241209-1 (July 24, 1907) "Jackson to Pedley," General Housekeeping Records and Correspondence Regarding Ile-a-la-Crosse Treaty (Maps and Charts) Black Series R216-245-8-E, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Fonds, LAC. P.A. is often the abbreviation for Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. Foran, "Les Gens de Cette Place," 240, "they persisted in categorizing the residents of Île-à-la-Crosse as *des métis* over the following decades."

more robust. When examining sources, I found former premier of Saskatchewan Jimmy Gardiner wanting more research completed and more base knowledge about the North known by all of the province's residents.⁸²⁶ Scholar Gerald Friesen called for all Canadians to realize prairie communities had an "inherent openness in public affairs" that should be emulated elsewhere today.⁸²⁷ Keith Thor Carlson concluded Saskatchewan had an immensely strong "history of sharing in Métis society," and that "northwestern Saskatchewan became an integral node in an international commodities exchange that spanned the Atlantic world" and, today, "the Métis remain" an economic and cultural force under-appreciated for what they can demonstrate to others.⁸²⁸ Hopefully, the previous pages have provided a helpful response to all these preliminary but important observations.

But more pages are here. I've chosen to extend my analysis by now introducing some reflections about how the previous Parts might resonate beyond more standard historical circles. This Part's remarks could be understood as akin to a type of conclusion. But they also could be imagined as a way to envisage how historical efforts impact other areas of discussion and debate. This Part contains final observations about methodology, the urgency to complete more research about Indigenous peoples, and the role standard historical efforts about Indigenous

⁸²⁶ The Hon. James Gardiner, "Forward" in Robert Jefferson, *Fifty Years on the Saskatchewan: being a History of the Cree Indian Domestic Life and the Difficulties which Led to Serious Agitation and Conflict of 1885 in the Battleford Locality* (Battleford, SK: Canadian North-West Historical Society, 1929), 5. Notably (considering the year of this forward's publication), Gardiner actually recommended focusing on Cree histories to comprehend the entire province's foundation.

⁸²⁷ Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, xiii.

⁸²⁸ See Keith Thor Carlson's editorial, "Glimpses of Métis Society and History in Northwest Saskatchewan," in *Saskatchewan History* 61, no. 2 (Fall 2009), 5.

peoples can have on Canadian legal discourse. But it also is an argument about using the first three Parts as a set of tools for working on a very difficult modern moment called a “land claim.”⁸²⁹ Because Canada’s highest court has recently demanded that historical data be used as both helpful context and as a type of evidence,⁸³⁰ a blending of history and common law is constitutionally required when a land claim is evaluated properly. So what follows could be considered final thoughts about Part III’s impact upon modern times, but it can also be understood as analysis interacting directly with Canadian law.

⁸²⁹ However “pure” our research, it may have later practical consequences. Smith, “The Western Woods Cree: Anthropological Myth and Historical Reality,” 445.

⁸³⁰ For another Saskatchewan-specific example of a historical study with a final section pertaining to law, see the “Epilogue” in Gulig’s “In Whose Interest?”; Tom Beauchamp goes so far as to assert, that rather than increasing adversarial tendencies, evaluating the law helps eliminate some of the problems a social study reveals. See the section of his introduction entitled Moral Controversy and Moral Justification in Tom Beauchamp et al., *Ethical Issues in Social Science Research* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).

2. The Village's Form as the Twentieth Century Passes

Immediately following the scrip/treaty final discussions in 1906, HBC Winnipeg management evaluated Île-à-la-Crosse records, concluding that the year was one with “heavy losses.” Despite Servants managing to sell overstock from other posts in the West,⁸³¹ Winnipeg officials had wrongly predicted village profits would be higher from the circulation of treaty monies and scrip certificates.⁸³² So when management noticed no significant increase in profit in Île-à-la-Crosse, it blamed HBC employees in the village.⁸³³ Despite the fact that nearly fifty Servants worked in the village, and regardless of how they had facilitated exchanges with more than one hundred and twenty regular traders for five consecutive years,⁸³⁴ Winnipeg supervisors would not relent from their high standards about the village station's capability to save the entire company.⁸³⁵ And the company would again refuse to state the fault likely lay with HBC regulations.

⁸³¹ Recommendation Île-à-la-Crosse be inspected because they “show a heavy loss.” B.89/d/460-462 (1907-1908) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d. n.p.

⁸³² A.6/82, (November 1906- July 1907) Official General Outward Correspondence series, Governor and Committee official outward correspondence fonds, HBCA, n.d., 592.

⁸³³ A.6/83, (July 1907 to February 1908) Official General Outward Correspondence series, Governor and Committee official outward correspondence fonds, HBCA n.d., n.p.; B.89/d/460-462 (1907-1908) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., 167.

⁸³⁴ See B.89/d/477 (1891-1909) Ile-a-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., n.p. for this statistic of traders and B.89/d/461 (1891-1908) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.d., 150, for claim of trade still being higher than other locations. B.89/d/474 (1891-1909) “HBCA Indian ledger 1907-1908” Ile-a-la-Crosse Account Books, n.d., n.p. The issue of it being off-reserve Indians is notable since at this time, the Indian Act stated reserve Indians needed a pass to leave their respective reserve. Agents claimed to rarely give passes, so the number at Île-à-la-Crosse triggers questions about whether the pass system was applied consistently in the North West.

⁸³⁵ MIKAN 2059135, RG 10, vol. 4006, file 241209-1 (April 29, 1907) “JD McLean to Borthwick,” General Housekeeping Records and Correspondence Regarding Île-à-la-Crosse Treaty (Maps and Charts) Black Series R216-245-8-E, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Fonds, LAC; Coates and Morrison, *Treaty Research Report*, 37.

While the HBC showed disappointment in the scrip and treaty result, the federal government boasted about its own successes. Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier announced scrip and treaty arrangements at Île-à-la-Crosse worked in the “public interest” to demonstrate peace and mutually approved relationships.⁸³⁶ He touted the talks as a step forward instilling Canada’s proper legal form across the West. Never before had scrip negotiations had such a prominence in a prime minister’s announcements. As a reinforcement of this point, Laurier sent representatives to the village to provide treaty annuities and maintain contact with Métis locals every year during his time as prime minister.⁸³⁷ Still, Laurier did not openly admit how McKenna and his accompanying negotiators had “guaranteed that the treaty would not lead to any forced interference with their mode of life.”⁸³⁸ Doing so would have created a sharp contradiction with what the country claimed the West would show to the rest of Canada about immigration, settlement patterns and natural resource development.

In the meantime, the newly created legislature in Saskatchewan passed Acts it felt fell within the province’s jurisdiction. In 1907, MLAs quickly approved *The Game Act* under the assumption this statute helped Saskatchewan demonstrate its power over

⁸³⁶ OIC No. 1459 called it “in the public interest” to make scrip and treaty. Appears in “*Treaty No. 10 and Reports of Commissioners*, ” 1907, Aboriginal Affairs & Northern Development Canada, accessed July 20, 2015, <https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100028874/1100100028906>.

⁸³⁷ Jill St. Germain, *Broken Treaties: United States and Canadian Relations with the Lakotas and the Plains Cree, 1868-1885*, (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 101.

⁸³⁸ *Treaty No. 10 and Reports of Commissioners*. Ottawa: King’s Printer, 1906, 7.

hunting and animal control.⁸³⁹ Within the Act, a section explained that some parts of the year would be known as “out of season” and during these times, people located in Saskatchewan could not harvest wildlife.⁸⁴⁰ Coming as a shock to the MLAs, the Act’s implementation triggered the first constitutional challenge to the legislature’s legal authority. The MLAs soon learned that the challengers lived in a place called Île-à-la-Crosse.

After learning about this Act, many Indigenous peoples concluded that the document violated every numbered treaty and scrip agreement made within Saskatchewan.⁸⁴¹ As villagers already had experience in protesting such a challenge to their activities in 1894, they took up the task of challenging the legislation quickly and efficiently. Almost immediately upon its passing, Île-à-la-Crosse residents openly chastised provincial officials about this conflict of law, and they told federal agents to inform Saskatchewan about the problem.⁸⁴² Unfortunately, federal officials did not work to support Indigenous complaints on this matter – although provincial authority via this Act would have been an uncomplicated argument in law. Perhaps

⁸³⁹ F. Laurie Barron, “The Indian Pass System in the Canadian West, 1882-1935,” in *Immigration and Settlement, 1870-1939*, ed. Gregory P. Marchildon, (Regina, SK: Canadian Plains Research Centre 2009) 229.

⁸⁴⁰ *An Act to Amend Chapter 29 of the Ordinances of 1903 (second session) intituled “An Ordinance for the Protection of Game.” Statutes of Saskatchewan, 1st Legislature, 2nd Session, 1907, c. 27 (April 3, 1907).* Section 4 prohibits hunting bison and buffalo, and limits the hunting of caribou, moose, elk, wapiti, deer or other deer family to 15 days a year and only 2 animals per person. Compare this reference to Anthony Gulig’s claim that the sections in the Game Act are, Section 6 refers to buffalo, and section 7 refers to “all other animals respectively” regarding “out of season” hunting. He cites the Act as “*Statutes of the Province of Saskatchewan*. ch. 27, *Game Act*, (Regina: Government Printer, 1907), 257-262.

⁸⁴¹ For a helpful description of this point see Anthony Gulig, “Yesterday’s Promise: The Negotiation of Treaty 10,” *Saskatchewan History* 50, No 1, Spring 1998, 36.

⁸⁴² E. Brian Titley, “McKenna, James Andrew Joseph,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 14 (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto, 2003), accessed July 20, 2015, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/mckenna_james_andrew_joseph_14E.html.

such a challenge seemed hypocritical to the federal Crown because at this same time, Canada had adjusted the *Indian Act* to suit its shifting views about Crown activities and many of that Act's changes also violated scrip and treaty conditions.⁸⁴³ As more non-Indigenous activities in the West commenced, such as those inspired by the Torrens land system and animal farming, Canada was not in a strong position to tell another government of its disrespect for obligations coming out of land title transfer.⁸⁴⁴

Fearing retribution, and rarely getting much support for their claim about one government from the other Crown, many Indigenous peoples decided that the risk of challenging the Crown had too many dangers. But around Île-à-la-Crosse, locals showed few signs of feeling intimidated by the Crown. They knew about Canada's claim that treated people could not leave their respective reserves without a pass.⁸⁴⁵ But given how treaty agents required that their children must attend the village school, those same villagers believed that demand was neither justified nor practical (and it was not even enforced.) So given the community's ability to demonstrate self-sufficiency, villagers continued to hunt and then illustrated how letting them do so actually saved money for the financially challenged provincial government.⁸⁴⁶ For whatever reasons, the legislation's life was short lived as by

⁸⁴³ See Chapter 5 entitled "Schooling and Civilization," in Brian Titley, *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1988).

⁸⁴⁴ See generally Greg Taylor, *The Law of the Land*.

⁸⁴⁵ Shelley Gavigan, *Hunger, Horses, and Government Men: Criminal Law on the Aboriginal Plains, 1870 -1905*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012), 21.

⁸⁴⁶ See the account comments, B.89/d/462 (January 18, 1908) Île-à-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.p.; For attendance information see also HBCA, "Account Books (1810-1920),"

1910, Saskatchewan abandoned the issue of regulating hunting seasons altogether.

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As the decades passed, both federal and provincial governments continued to show their lack of interest in Île-à-la-Crosse. Not only did the Crowns fail to implement their laws there, neither government kept statistical track of the village as they did for other communities in Saskatchewan. Government agents did not record populations, names, farming patterns, or other topics typical of analysis for places further south and even close to Île-à-la-Crosse. So exploring the village's times in the early twentieth century only becomes possible by returning to HBC records and also deducing that no instance considered problematic to the Crown happened there, either. As a result, information that does exist reveals more progressive autonomy rather than social strife or economic challenge. For example, post workers found that First Nations still had little need for items that ensured their respective survival in the bush. In fact, traders at Île-à-la-Crosse developed a penchant for more expensive "made to order" items, given the value of their furs and their lack of dependency for other goods typically sold at posts. Locals bought so many luxury products, post workers even invented a separate "Indian ledger" for those transactions.⁸⁴⁸ As well, they also demanded the debt system continue,⁸⁴⁹ and post

B.89/d//85, from Sept 1908 to April 1909; B.89/d//86 May to Dec. 1909.; B.89/d//87 Jan. to July 1910.

⁸⁴⁷ Michael Cottrell, "History of Saskatchewan," in *The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan* (Regina, SK: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 2006), 29.

⁸⁴⁸ The activities that demonstrate hesitation in imposing Canada's laws are in the account book's specific section labeled "Indian Ledger." See the 1907-08 ledger in B.89/d/462 (1891-1908) Ile-a-la-Crosse Account Books, HBCA, n.p., n.d. and the frequent requests for custom made products.

workers wanted this policy to stay as well, as they attributed the post's top profits to the debt policy.⁸⁵⁰ Perhaps Ottawa did not think the community represented a place worth observing in ways the Crown evaluated other locales. But given what Île-à-la-Crosse illustrated, Canada could have also kept track of the village as it illustrated many traits Canada hoped the entire country would demonstrate: people volunteered, they kept to local regulatory regimes, and they maintained functions akin to a municipal government.⁸⁵¹

Amongst mentions that do exist about community events, post and mission records kept information about how the village retained its relatively peaceful or socially supportive circumstances. For example, village residents encouraged young local men to join the British forces during World War One, and women in Île-à-la-Crosse organized activities to make gifts to send to Canadian troops overseas.⁸⁵² Villagers also demonstrated what post workers called "big excitement" during campaign debates just before the 1917 provincial election.⁸⁵³ Even more illustrative of the community's assertive but calm independence, First Nations regularly visited the village in violation of the *Indian Act's* pass system. These 'violators' claimed their

⁸⁴⁹ B.89/a/39 (1909-1923) "Île-à-la-Crosse Post 1909-1911," Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

⁸⁵⁰ B.375/e/5 (1910-1911) English River (Ontario) Post, Reports on Districts, HBCA, n.d., n.p.

⁸⁵¹ Jarvenpa, "Silot'ine: An Insurance Perspective on Northern Dene Kinship Networks in Recent History," 156. Notably, the HBC noticed how the Church only called those who tithed the "Good" Catholics. (underling the Post's marking). B.89/a/39 (November 1, 1910) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journal, HBCA, n.p.

⁸⁵² "losing a few men who are reporting for military service," B.89/a/40, (September 29, 1918) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.p.

⁸⁵³ "provincial election on – everyone out and big excitement in village – young priest very much excited." B.89/a/40, (September 20, 1917) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.p.

treaty rights allowed such behaviour.⁸⁵⁴ Local women showed visiting men how they had the ability to “run things to suit [themselves]” as much as their husbands and sons.⁸⁵⁵ In tandem with Indigenous rejection of external concepts, Servants continually broke their own employer’s rules and organized ad-hoc methods for collecting and evaluating fur products.⁸⁵⁶ By the end of the second decade, HBC Servants and their neighbours concluded Île-à-la-Crosse had experienced a “Good Year”,⁸⁵⁷ and government officials concluded they did not need to keep track of the village because its residents did not behave badly.⁸⁵⁸

During the 1920s, the village maintained its place in Saskatchewan of being stable locally while being curiously absent in provincial and federal planning. Given Saskatchewan’s experience after the stock market crash in 1929 and then the worst drought in residents’ memories soon thereafter,⁸⁵⁹ the community did appear in

⁸⁵⁴ “Chief from Canoe Lake comes. No pass. Not stopped by mission or HBC. Local rules take over the moments that seem very illogical.” B.89/a/40, (September 11 & 12, 1917) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.p. For more information about the pass system which made First Nations required to obtain a ‘pass’ from an Indian Agent to leave a reserve, see Sidney L. Haring, *White Man’s Law: Native People in Nineteenth-Century Canadian Jurisprudence*, (Toronto, Ontario: Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History, 1998), 266 and B. Bennett, *Study of Passes for Indians to Leave Their Reserves*, (Ottawa: Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Treaties and Historical Research Centre, 1974) 6.

⁸⁵⁵ “Priest bring four sisters to take over boarding school.” B.89/a/40, (September 21, 1917) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.p.; “It seems that women run things to suit herself.” B.89/a/40, (March 13, 1918) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.p.

⁸⁵⁶ For example, “we are always late in getting the news of the market. So going to plan without Winnipeg reports.” B.89/a/40, (November, 3, 1916) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journals, HBCA, n.p.

⁸⁵⁷ B.89/a/40, (December 31 1919) Île-à-la-Crosse Post Journal, HBCA. December 31, n.p.

⁸⁵⁸ “Pre-1941: Vital statistics not available prior to 1941.” Brown, “Geographic Survey,” 43.

⁸⁵⁹ “Bad times Two: 1937 the worst financial year for farmers because of a number of bad years. Average was 2.5 bushels per acre.” Edward McCourt, “Desolation,” in *The Middle of Nowhere: Rediscovering Saskatchewan*, ed. Dennis Gruending, (Saskatoon, SK: Fifth House, 1996) 108-09. Saskatchewan suffered more from the Great Depression than any other jurisdiction in North America.

documentary information sporadically. But how the village was recorded reinforced the village's elusive and enviable role both provincially and nationally.

Definitely, the Great Depression impacted the HBC's financial shape, particularly in the exchange of what the HBC considered "luxury" pelts.⁸⁶⁰ Additionally, and not surprisingly, the mission struggled to stay open. But as these difficulties mounted, the village's diversity and cooperation pulled Île-à-la-Crosse through some onerous months and seasons. Trappers demonstrated their agility by harvesting different furs depending on pelt prices, and their families suffered less disparity because they had still not developed a full dependency upon the trade.⁸⁶¹ Mission workers asked for volunteers; in response, villagers provided free labour when mission buildings required improvement. With so many functions having either a small or non-existent financial component, the circumstances of little money or decrease in product values elsewhere impacted villagers minimally. The post kept its account books in the black, Servants stayed employed, and those functions considered "municipal" elsewhere that disappeared during the decade or existed minimally (such as schools, water access, and transportation) kept moving on in Île-à-la-Crosse. Except for a school closure during the 1933-34 year,⁸⁶² the village

⁸⁶⁰ See generally David Monod, "Bay Days: The Managerial Revolutions and the Hudson's Bay Company Department Stores 1912-1939," *Historical Papers* 21, no. 1 (1986): 173-196.

⁸⁶¹ James D. Winkel, *Northern Saskatchewan - A Transformation* (Regina: Saskatchewan Northern Affairs, 2002), 9.

⁸⁶² File #159, Ed. Add, "Report on School Situation in Certain Northern Settlements to Dr. J. H. McKechnie," (October 4, 1939) Reid Report on Northern Schools, 1939 (xerox copy), Department of Education records, SAB. McKechnie claims the province provided some funding and then stopped the funds in 1931, but he does not provide any reference for that comment.

functioned as well as it had before the Great Depression and, as a result, distinguished itself from much of Saskatchewan.⁸⁶³

The village's ability to withstand strong international trends eventually caught the provincial Crown's attention. In 1939, provincial official J. H. McKechnie visited Île-à-la-Crosse to learn about its ability to survive. In determining how to learn from the community's agility, he recommended the school stay independent of the school "district" because locals showed enough ability to determine how to create a learning environment that appeared to reinforce important skills. To justify his view that Saskatchewan not interfere with a federally (and religiously) funded off-reserve school, he explained "(w)hat might work satisfactorily at one place would not be satisfactory at another place, and as there can be no definite formula applicable everywhere, the conditions vary".⁸⁶⁴ Although its Catholic slant displeased provincial government representatives, McKechnie informed his department Saskatchewan could not accuse the school of teaching students poorly or using provincial funds improperly (since it received none).⁸⁶⁵ McKechnie's views meant the Department of Education left Île-à-la-Crosse alone and approved the version of "social ownership" the school promoted.⁸⁶⁶ Because locals showed skepticism about

⁸⁶³ Ibid. See also R-5951, Accession no. R81-216, Chipewyan and Metis People of La Loche, André Montgrand, translation, Chipewyan and Metis People of La Loche Oral History Project, SAB.

⁸⁶⁴ File #159, Ed. Add, "N. L. Reid to Dr. J. H. McKechnie" (October 4, 1939) Reid Report on Northern Schools, 1939 (xerox copy), Department of Education records, SAB.

⁸⁶⁵ File #159, Ed. Add, "Department Memo from J H. McKechnie to Hon. Mr. Estey," (October 18, 1939), Reid Report on Northern Schools, 1939 (xerox copy), Department of Education records, SAB.

⁸⁶⁶ Winkel, *Northern Saskatchewan*, 9 and 14. Saskatchewan thought the village was a very good example of "social ownership".

almost all provincial policies about schooling, residents found McKechnie's conclusions a great relief.⁸⁶⁷

But this non-intervention in schools did not mean Saskatchewan continued its absence altogether. The province asserted its authority in the topic of transportation, and in 1940 road workers arrived to build an official and permanent "highway." Locals approved of this policy, but only until they learned the province expected villagers to maintain the road.⁸⁶⁸ Because villagers did not celebrate maintaining an infrastructure they did not ask for and did not even need, Saskatchewan's reputation for not appreciating the village's special form reappeared. Although residents certainly showed the ability to organize community activities, filling potholes and smoothing out what became known as "Highway 908" was not an enthusiastically accepted task.⁸⁶⁹ The province was right about schools, but Saskatchewan did not understand how some school supporters got around perfectly well without a provincial road.

⁸⁶⁷ As a result of this point, few provincial records exist for the decade as well. Teacher salaries remained part of the mission's budget. The mission continued to receive grants from Canada based on the school acting as a residential school.

⁸⁶⁸ M. Rossignol, "The Religion of the Saskatchewan and Western Manitoba Cree," *Primitive Man* 11, no. 3/4, (July - October, 1938), 67 and 68.

⁸⁶⁹ R-5940- R-5942, Accession no. R81-216 (May 31 1980) Joe Bag, Chipewyan and Metis People of La Loche Oral History Project, SAB 192 Side B Tape 3: "Whiskey only came recently when the road came." 192 Side B. Tape 3; R-5943, Accession no. R81-216, Jonas Clark, Chipewyan and Metis People of La Loche Oral History Project, SAB, page 27 of transcript ".... the only main trail the one from Île-à-la-Crosse."



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Government interventions and exclusions, and then deft challenges from villagers as responses to those moments, continued throughout the following decades. For example, in 1942 the province with Canada's approval implemented what it called a "trapline system." As with the 1907 provincial *Game Act*, and the 1894 Act before that, this system had an "off season" policy.⁸⁷¹ Villagers realized the system was not a legal requirement, and then they also decided that the system violated scrip and treaty arrangements as no one who took scrip or treaty understood that doing so impaired their hunting patterns. Besides noting these problems, villagers also explained that if hunting would not be permitted, the province would find itself

⁸⁷⁰ Image 28 - The signage at the intersection of the highway that continues north to Buffalo Narrows and the 1940 created highway to Île-à-la-Crosse. Notice the difference in numbers that illustrates how Saskatchewan funded 753 roads before returning up north and providing villagers funded access to the provincial road system. Photograph courtesy of Leanne LaPrise.

⁸⁷¹ *Unorganized Territories Games Preservation Act*, 57 & 58 Vict., c. 31 (1894). See also Abel, *Drum Songs*, 220-223.

funding more social programs for those unable to sustain themselves. In other words, permitting harvesting for Île-à-la-Crosse was both the most financially efficient decision and the legal decision.⁸⁷² With little economic or legal leg to stand on, Saskatchewan abandoned the policy within a year of its announcement.

As Île-à-la-Crosse kept its community functions without much ire from the Crown while it did so, one particular event did impact how provincial officials would contemplate the community's existence. In 1944, the CCF party won the provincial election. Immediately after his party victory, (then) Premier Tommy Douglas challenged other politicians' opinions about government debt loads and the Crown's concerns about inequity amongst citizens. Given Douglas' concerns, he took a great interest in Saskatchewan's North and in the differences he noted between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. To appreciate better the paradigms he devised, Douglas came to consider the views of V. F. Valentine.

Valentine argued that the province's North had a systemic inability to link to Saskatchewan's southern regions. Because of this supposed disconnection that Valentine concluded was impossible to eliminate, he argued against the establishment of programs to improve northern economic conditions. Valentine wrote how before 1944, northern Saskatchewan had

only two people, the trapper and the trader, and two items, the raw fur and the trade goods, involved. Now there are three of each: the trapper,

⁸⁷² Brenda Macdougall, "Power and Co-management Agreements: The Beverly Qumanirguag Caribou Management Board and the Role of Aboriginal People," (unpublished manuscript, April 1998, on file with author), 3.

the field officer, and the trader; the raw fur, dollars, and the trade goods. The trader is not sure that he will get the dollars, especially in a settlement where there is more than one trader.⁸⁷³

He considered any proposals unviable unless they included either more introduction of southern ways or the physical removal of residents to more southern communities. Valentine also reported Northerners distrusted Crown workers without justification.⁸⁷⁴ Amongst those living in the North, Valentine reported that the “Métis [were] not prepared to simply comply with whatever arrangements the state decided upon,”⁸⁷⁵ even if the arrangement was to their benefit.

Valentine’s conclusions contained dubious generalizations about Indigenous cultural traits, economic activities, and physical geography. For example, he believed any hunting practices evident were actually new to locals instead of activities that had happened for years. Moreover, Valentine deemed Métis communities particularly troubling and, as a result, argued that the Crown should eliminate any of their more Indigenous components. Although it is possible to surmise Valentine’s views represented assumptions about race and the superiority of urban ways, his conclusions are particularly dubious when compared with Île-à-la-Crosse at the time.⁸⁷⁶ He chided northern residents for how they used government financial help, but that assistance had never been experienced in Île-à-la-Crosse. Moreover,

⁸⁷³ Valentine, “Some Problems of the Métis,” 89.

⁸⁷⁴ Ibid., 91.

⁸⁷⁵ See page 20 of MacDougall’s “Power and Co-management Agreements,” citing, RG 10, vol 6759, file 420-11-2-2, LAC.

⁸⁷⁶ David M. Quiring, *CCF Colonialism in Northern Saskatchewan* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2007), p. 160. Valentine would be hired later the summer of 1952 in an official capacity, p. 159.

because the post did relatively well economically, whatever economic stresses Valentine witnessed were not part of the village's experience. Whether Valentine excluded Île-à-la-Crosse from his study from the beginning, or whether he decided to leave it out of his final observations because it did not reinforce his conclusions, the point here is that recalling Île-à-la-Crosse's circumstances gives even more context for concluding that Valentine created substandard efforts. The few statistical data about the village appeared in federal records but not in Valentine's work: the success at the "West Side's" only hospital, its high rate of community volunteerism,⁸⁷⁷ or the village residents' ability to deflate social tensions before they led to more aggressive behaviour.⁸⁷⁸

⁸⁷⁷ Page 32 of *The New North: Saskatchewan's Northern Development Program, 1945-1948* (Regina: Bureau of Publications, 1948). Allan Blakeney speculated Valentine submitted information to Douglas after learning about two job opportunities – neither of which Valentine obtained. Blakeney described how he he was told of Valentine's voluntary submissions and their questionable contents soon after Blakeney started to work for the government in 1950. For information about those opportunities, see details of the "field man" in 1948 and employees for the "Special works" program that same year. S-NR 1/4. File 235. (June 2, 1948) "Ile a la Crosse," A. K. Quandt to J. L. Phelps, SAB. It is likely this interest on Valentine's part inspired the topic of his graduate work.

⁸⁷⁸ MIKAN 161921, RG10, vol. 6759, file 420-11-2-2, First Series, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Fonds, LAC. No documents in this file contain evidence of arrests or warnings, and these types of files have typically contained recordings of arrests and warnings for other matters.



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No document details whether Valentine's methods or substance impressed Douglas. Whatever the case, the premier decided he would not formally integrate any of Valentine's first findings into government policies- nor to hire him officially.⁸⁸⁰ Douglas stood by his own belief that the "North," and not a particular culture, needed distinctive attention. The premier saw Saskatchewan as a set of *regions* rather than a conglomeration of different *peoples*. As an extension of this perspective, Douglas and his government implemented the *Northern Administration Act* in 1948.⁸⁸¹

Claiming that local conditions influenced individual circumstances more than macro trends, the premier viewed strong municipal administrations as key to inspire socially vibrant and economical locales. When he then learned that not all small

⁸⁷⁹ Image 29 - Île-à-la-Crosse's mission buildings, 1946. Photo source: SHSB/Arch., reference: I.C. 33.

⁸⁸⁰ Commentary from Allan Blakeney with author, 27 January 2010.

⁸⁸¹ *Northern Administration Act*, R.S.S., ch. 373 (1953).

communities had a local government, Douglas determined that his government should develop municipal authorities. The discussions and regulations which eventually led to the passing of the *Northern Administration Act* gave Saskatchewan the power to introduce an administration in some form such as a board, council, or even a provincially appointed mayor. During this planning, Saskatchewan determined Île-à-la-Crosse had a municipal government in place already – whether or not the village’s residents called it such.⁸⁸² Île-à-la-Crosse residents feared, however, that civil servants in Regina could arrive and appoint some village leader without their approval. Referring to Saskatchewan’s enthusiasm to build a road, call it a provincial highway, and then not maintain it, villagers showed skepticism for the province’s claim to know how to achieve municipal efficiency. Because villagers had, in the meantime, established a fire department, how could Saskatchewan think it could do a better job than what villagers managed to organize themselves?⁸⁸³ All this open distrust about the Act’s potential impact worked; within fewer than two years Saskatchewan agreed to exclude Île-à-la-Crosse from a list of potential communities where the Act might be implemented.⁸⁸⁴ Perhaps having confidence in the village’s higher percentage of a “White” population compared with other northern locales,⁸⁸⁵ Saskatchewan decided it could be at peace with Île-à-la-Crosse’s

⁸⁸² File #49, Ed. Add. “Métis Schools, Hon. J. Estey to Hon. I. Schultz” (June 17, 1941). Department of Education, SAB.

⁸⁸³ Explanations about the village’s status at this time are in “Fish and Fur... We Make our Living,” Sakitawak Bi-Centennial Ile-A-La-Crosse 1776-1796, accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.jkcc.com/living.html>.

⁸⁸⁴ “Black Robes and Grey Dresses,” Sakitawak Bi-Centennial Ile-A-La-Crosse 1776-1796, accessed August 11, 2015, <http://www.jkcc.com/robes.html>.

⁸⁸⁵ C.S. Brown, “A Geographic Survey and Analysis of the Buffalo Region of Northern Saskatchewan,” 35, figure 8.

ability to organize local self-governance. In this matter, villagers worked hard to be forgotten.

This reinforcement of exclusion yet again – this time done by community members – meant Île-à-la-Crosse often continued to be absent from statistical data collected by both Saskatchewan and Ottawa. No government kept track of its population, its businesses, or its public amenities. Because Douglas' interest in the North and Indigenous peoples remained part of his agenda (and Saskatchewan re-elected him repeatedly), the premier eventually learned more about Île-à-la-Crosse by the actual hiring of Valentine. Douglas waited for Valentine's next set of conclusions. After a few visits to a few locales, Valentine submitted "The Métis of Northern Saskatchewan" to Premier Douglas in May, 1955.⁸⁸⁶ There, the village's circumstances were presented bluntly for all of Valentine's readers to see.

In this report, Valentine picked a set of communities he considered Métis, chose a list of topics to investigate in each place, and compared those results. Within these parameters, Valentine concluded some of Île-à-la-Crosse's attributes fared well not only when compared with the other chosen communities but also when compared with Saskatchewan in general. For example, Valentine claimed at least sixty per cent of Saskatchewan's entire fur trade occurred in and around the village.⁸⁸⁷

Additionally, the anthropologist noticed village residents often had "novel solutions"

⁸⁸⁶ Valentine, *The Métis of Northern Saskatchewan*.

⁸⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.

to problems that continued to plague other locales.⁸⁸⁸ Even more impressive to Valentine, residents maintained a land-use system that he called “an articulation which works.”⁸⁸⁹ The village-invented credit system encouraged trade and responsibility for others,⁸⁹⁰ and during that trade community members did not exclude welcoming anyone. Someone was either a “local” (positive label) or “from away” (unhelpful) and labeling happened by actions rather than the passing of time. In this way, village acceptance was based on whether someone worked in tandem with, or against, village processes.⁸⁹¹

Despite these accolades for Île-à-la-Crosse and despite concluding these qualities shared much in common with what values he thought Douglas wanted to support, Valentine recommended that Île-à-la-Crosse undergo significant change. Writing how “the Bay [the HBC] and the mission have fostered an aboriginal-like adaptation among Indians and Métis,” Valentine condemned any non-Indigenous adoption of community (and therefore Métis) practices. Valentine theorized that locals did not appreciate the benefits of more southern communities because they rarely travelled, and then had little actual knowledge about how to make the village succeed. In other words, the community’s stability was an accidental aberration not an inherent condition that locals worked hard to reinforce. He recommended Saskatchewan should neither tacitly nor publicly approve the village’s processes because doing so

⁸⁸⁸ Ibid., 107.

⁸⁸⁹ Ibid., 138.

⁸⁹⁰ Ibid., 11.

⁸⁹¹ Ibid., 13.

would “only perpetuate Île-à-la-Crosse as a comfortable place to hide from the rest of the world. Therein lies the dilemma.”⁸⁹²

Valentine considered himself adept enough to introduce processes to Île-à-la-Crosse himself that were aimed at improving or eliminating the problematic conditions he perceived. For example, he established a co-op store to take on what he considered the HBC’s monopolistic grip on the community’s economic form.⁸⁹³ In response, however, most locals decided not to purchase items at the co-op and instead still traded and purchased at the local post. Valentine concluded villagers did not have the capability to comprehend the long-term benefits of supporting a non-corporate entity.⁸⁹⁴ If Valentine had asked villagers about their decision to ignore him, he would have learned that his co-op’s wares paled significantly compared to HBC products. Indeed, the HBC products were not only better, Servants brought in wares that locals considered superior in quality and then slashed their prices by nearly thirty-five per cent.⁸⁹⁵ Valentine called the village a place of “overlapping” and non-conflicting goals with “no sharp break between generations.”⁸⁹⁶ And those generations rejected his interpretations of how to get along and how to set prices as consumers. At best, Valentine’s interest in the North was a mixed blessing for Douglas.

⁸⁹² Ibid., 139.

⁸⁹³ Ibid., 124.

⁸⁹⁴ S-A1035, File 500, “The Fort Black Co-operative Store,” VF Valentine (confidential), Fort Black Co-op Native Store: A Social Experiment Among the Ile A La Crosse Metis, 1955, Robert Doucette Fonds F-400, SAB.

⁸⁹⁵ Spaulding, “The Métis of Île-à-la-Crosse,” 124.

⁸⁹⁶ Valentine, *The Métis of Northern Saskatchewan*, 111.

In the few other documents that exist about Île-à-la-Crosse during the middle of the twentieth century, school records reveal that missionaries taught at least two hundred and twenty-six students during the 1950s.⁸⁹⁷ In 1961, when Canada finally decided to estimate the village's population, the Crown claimed Île-à-la-Crosse had more than 1300 residents. By that year, the village also had an airport, a large rebuilt dock, and a (still) provincially labeled highway that community volunteers maintained (albeit reluctantly).⁸⁹⁸ In addition, Canada provided grants to the school's library. Notably, because Saskatchewan recorded how the village school had First Nations students, the provincial Crown determined it did not need to contribute to the school's budget.

By the time the Douglas era was over in 1961, and then continuing during the years of Liberal Premier Ross Thatcher, (and Douglas' successor Woodrow Lloyd), provincial officials wrote how some Métis locations (including Île-à-la-Crosse) demonstrated an effective form of "self-government."⁸⁹⁹ While making this observation, the province also concluded that some other Métis communities, such as Green Lake, did not reinforce strong economic or social relationships and therefore failed to become healthy "colonies." In this way, the province's analysis suggested that the Crown simultaneously considered Île-à-la-Crosse more similar to non-Indigenous communities than First Nations or Métis places. With observable

⁸⁹⁷ Arthur K. Davis, ed., *A Northern Dilemma: Reference Papers* (Bellingham: Western Washington State College, 1967), 296.

⁸⁹⁸ Spaulding, "The Metis of Ile-a-la-Crosse," 21; David M Quiring, "Battling Parish Priests, Bootleggers, And Fur Sharks: CCF Colonialism In Northern Saskatchewan," PhD diss., University of Saskatchewan, 2002, 83.

⁸⁹⁹ Barron, "The CCF and the Development of Métis Colonies in Southern Saskatchewan," 251.

functions such as its equivalent “rate-payers association” and vibrant “independent developments” in trade with external parties such as the HBC, the village appeared to the provincial Crown as the most non-Indigenous Indigenous location in Saskatchewan. As an effect of this Crown understanding, Saskatchewan decided it still did not need to interfere with village functions.⁹⁰⁰ While obtaining this reputation for success, the village was still not integrated into statistical information. In that way, and like other Indigenous locales, Île-à-la-Crosse’s success was lost to those who wanted to learn the finer details of how the village maintained its stability.

Later during the 1960s, and as Île-à-la-Crosse continued to be off the government’s statistical radar, researcher Philip Spaulding obtained provincial funding to investigate northern Saskatchewan. During his visits to that part of the province, Spaulding visited Île-à-la-Crosse. Although primarily interested in investigating the region’s geological conditions, Spaulding observed other matters that he considered imperative to mention.

As he took rock samples around the village, Spaulding noticed what he considered “secrecy” amongst villagers when “Whites” arrived. Whatever residents supposedly hid from him, Spaulding determined that they did not want him to learn about the locally, efficient, “economic support” residents provided for each other. He surmised that their reluctance to reveal these relationships was linked to previous times

⁹⁰⁰ Vernon C. Serl, “Action and Reaction: An Overview of Provincial Policies and Programs in Northern Saskatchewan,” in *A Northern Dilemma*, ed. Arthur K. Davis, 42.

when outsiders arrived interested in immediate economic benefit but not interested in the village's long-term survival.⁹⁰¹ Spaulding inferred the Métis peoples of Saskatchewan's North acted as an example of cultural pluralism. He supported the recognition of a community by the provincial government as a Métis locale "only when a viable economy paying for the maintenance of a separate cultural or sub-cultural tradition can be found, and a live and 'fit to live' social structure exists to carry forward the old lifeway. Neither of these conditions exist today in most of the Canadian north."⁹⁰²

But even without analyzing the harshness of these remarks, it is also important to observe how Île-à-la-Crosse did not correlate with what Spaulding considered "most." Within his reports, Spaulding's conclusions did not fit the village. When Saskatchewan parliamentarians and officials examined Spaulding's report, they learned that the village acted as an exception to the many difficulties southerners presumed existed across the province's North. When one of these MLAs, Allan Blakeney, became premier in 1971, he announced a CCF recommitment to eliminating the socio-economic gap he and his "NDP" government perceived between Saskatchewan's north and south.⁹⁰³ And he kept the village in mind as he imagined how to make his political mark on Saskatchewan.

⁹⁰¹ Philip Spaulding, "The Social Integration of a Northern Community: White Mythology and Métis Reality," in *A Northern Dilemma*, ed. Arthur K. Davis, 99 and 111.

⁹⁰² "Prologue: The Parameters of a Northern Dilemma," in *A Northern Dilemma*, ed. Arthur K. Davis, 7.

⁹⁰³ M. Pitso, "The Thatcher Government in Saskatchewan and the Revival of Metis Nationalism, 1964-71," *Great Plains Quarterly* 17, no.3/4, (Summer/Fall 1997), 232.

Before becoming premier and while in the Douglas government, the Rhodes scholar and lawyer Blakeney had struggled with how to provide educational facilities after learning that the schools with Indigenous children seemed incapable of helping to improve those students' socio-economic conditions. Sometimes, the province noticed disparities amongst First Nations students and other students in Saskatchewan, but Saskatchewan knew the constitution demanded it tread lightly when evaluating schools that Canada had considered a federally-controlled institution. As Douglas' Minister of Education, and then even more as premier, Blakeney had observed that Île-à-la-Crosse had a long history of educating Métis and First Nations students together without much help (from Saskatchewan) and with relatively great success. So while Blakeney was part of a political party that had a strongly independent ideology, he also was quicker than Douglas to realize a CCF (and now "NDP") government could also actively choose not to participate in the name of socio-economic stability.⁹⁰⁴ As did Douglas, Blakeney believed that the province's entire economy lagged when the North's economy suffered. But Blakeney also showed more astuteness when taking note of places and moments that just might do better by being left alone. Blakeney believed Île-à-la-Crosse was one of those places.⁹⁰⁵

At the end of 1972, Blakeney's government sent word to the village that it was interested in providing assistance for education in Île-à-la-Crosse. While Blakeney

⁹⁰⁴ Allan Blakeney, email message to author, January 15, 2010.

⁹⁰⁵ "Statement by A. E. Blakeney to Department of Northern Saskatchewan Staff Conference, Prince Albert, December 12, 1972," SAB.

understood that making such outreach could be considered legally arguable given the historic role the institution had as a residential (and therefore federally-controlled) school, Blakeney considered Canada's failure to keep track of the school's efforts evidence of the federal government failing to keep to its obligations, and such a failure would make Saskatchewan's outreach perfectly legal. In response to the province's communication, the village's self-declared municipal council stated it certainly agreed with the province's interest in providing help with education to improve socio-economic conditions over a longer term. But in the short term, and based on one particular recommendation Saskatchewan mentioned about having the village school join a public school board, the same municipal leadership rejected these efforts from Blakeney's Department of Education. Villagers were so concerned with this potential imposition, they met secretly in January 1973 to organize a protest against any government "assistance" that would shut down the mission school, establish Saskatchewan's version of a "public school" and place it within an existing board district, and hire teachers unfamiliar with the community.⁹⁰⁶

Organized by Métis leaders Howard Adams and Jim Sinclair, the meeting inspired these two men to contact the press and proclaim villagers' views in newspapers even before the provincial Crown even learned about the protest. So as government officials read about how residents decried the potential link to a school board and

⁹⁰⁶ "Ile-A-La-Crosse Break Bureaucratic Bonds" *New Breed Magazine* (Metis Society of Saskatchewan) 3 (March 1973): 1.

Saskatchewan's views about curriculum,⁹⁰⁷ they also learned villagers had a plan of their own. Residents told Adams and Sinclair to announce their school would be its own school in its own district, and then be the first school district in Saskatchewan to require that its teachers be bilingual. Even more radical, rather than introducing French, the teachers must be bilingual in English and Cree.

Perhaps influenced by his earlier days as Minister of Education and his knowledge about Île-à-la-Crosse's historic ability to sustain numerous functions without Crown assistance, the premier informed officials within his Education ministry that all the villagers' demands must be met. Moreover, Blakeney also permitted the Île-à-la-Crosse school to be the only institution to have its very own school board. That way, it could interact with other school boards when helpful, while presenting its own functions as equal to different processes used elsewhere in Saskatchewan. With all of these village efforts and ultimate support from the premier, residents of Île-à-la-Crosse had established the first Indigenous-controlled school board in Saskatchewan history, the first school with teachers who had to function fluently in more than English, and the first school where an Indigenous language was given equal authority to English.⁹⁰⁸

⁹⁰⁷ Ibid., 1. The vote happened 29 Jan, and the journal reports 92% support. See MacDonald, "Community and Aboriginality," 22. Blakeney considered this confrontation the most significant anti-Crown protest he experienced during his entire premiership. Signa Daum Shanks, Personal correspondence, February 22, 2010.

⁹⁰⁸ Vern Greenshields, "Natives Optimistic about School Board," *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, April 23, 1973, 3.

How this bold development received acceptance from Blakeney's fellow MLAs and provincial department officials is not possible to trace. But when a Saskatoon reporter approached a government representative about the Île-à-la-Crosse school, that same unnamed Crown official explained how if Île-à-la-Crosse did not control its school system via its local government, "the possibility of self-government will be lost forever."⁹⁰⁹ While also mentioning the community had a group that functioned akin to a "ratepayers association," had diversified farming efforts, and had locally invented surcharge policies used to pay for a village doctor's salary, this senior Crown employee explained how surely villagers had the ability to maintain a school. While Saskatchewan officials still believed other northern communities had "problems," Blakeney and his cabinet decided Île-à-la-Crosse was not one of those communities.⁹¹⁰

These events in early 1973 ensured that by autumn of that year, the education building now named "Rossignol School" opened its doors as a Catholic-influenced and Cree-speaking facility. The institution had boarding facilities, Christian rituals, and a large library. The students' parents also often traded with the post using a credit system, and these parents had organized a fish-packing plant and a cooperative confectionery over the summer.⁹¹¹ By that fall, village coffers still paid for a doctor and they also budgeted for the services of an RCMP detachment.⁹¹² By

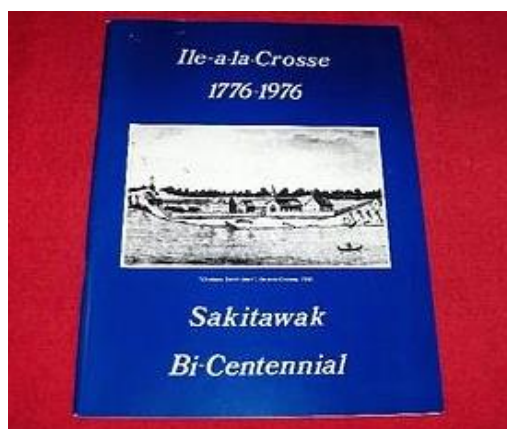
⁹⁰⁹ "Racial overtones in Native School Board Issue," *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, February 16, 1973, A3. Bureaucrat not named.

⁹¹⁰ Serl, "Action and Reaction," 26, 42, 45 and 57. No names are given for the bureaucrats.

⁹¹¹ Spaulding, "The Métis of Île-à-la-Crosse," 66-70.

⁹¹² Jarvenpa, "Intergroup Behavior and Imagery," 288.

that year's final days, with this victory for autonomy and Indigenous understandings, villagers had even more energy to begin planning for the largest celebration the community could host. If Americans could have a bicentennial to commemorate a revolution with guns, the villagers could host a fete recognizing their centuries of peace, profit, and inter-ethnic collaboration. Three years later, and the United States celebrated its 200th birthday about "independence", Île-à-la-Crosse did the same – but with a much different understanding of that word. Locals described their autonomy, cultural traditions, and connection to the land. Independence was observed at both the local level in modern times and in how locals regularly recalled failed or successful promises outsiders had made with them in the past.



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As the year-long village bicentennial carried on, provincial premiers and the prime minister ruminated about other matters. Regularly pressed by (then) Prime

⁹¹³ Image 30 - Cover of the book made after the bicentennial occurred. Sakitawak Bi-Centennial Committee, *Ile-a-la-Crosse, 1776-1976*, ed. Robert G. Longpré (Meadow Lake, SK: 1977).

Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau to help create a new constitution for Canada, premiers met amongst themselves several times and also with Trudeau as a group to envisage a document worthy of making a new agreement with the British Parliament.⁹¹⁴ During myriad talks, and keeping the obligatory “7/50” amendment formula in mind, the premiers sometimes brought up the topic of Canada’s Indigenous peoples. Occasionally influenced by Indigenous political leaders, sometimes taking their own budgetary concerns into account, and often challenging Trudeau’s own agenda based on ideological differences, certain premiers (including Blakeney) argued repeatedly that Indigenous peoples must be a part of any Canadian-developed constitution both for legal obligations and social concerns.⁹¹⁵

At first, Trudeau rejected the importance of the premiers’ concern. But after receiving advice from federal government lawyers who believed the mention of Indigenous peoples in the constitution would actually decrease litigation between Indigenous parties and the Crown, Trudeau agreed.⁹¹⁶ After much haggling about the section’s content, the majority of premiers eventually proposed what became known as “section 35”. It reads

35. (1) The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed.
(2) In this Act, "Aboriginal Peoples of Canada" includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.

⁹¹⁴ Adam Dodek, “Amending the Constitution: The Real Question before the Supreme Court,” *Policy Magazine* March/April 2014, 36.

⁹¹⁵ Brian Topp, “Allan Blakeney: Deftly Navigating Thunderstorms,” *Policy Options* 33, no 6, (June 2012): 42-49.

⁹¹⁶ See footnote 97 on page 58 of Michael B. Stein, “Canadian Constitutional Renewal, 1968-1981: A Case Study of Integrative Bargaining,” (Research Paper No. 27, Institute of Intergovernmental Relations, Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario, 1989).

(3) For greater certainty, in subsection (1) "treaty rights" includes rights that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired.

(4) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the aboriginal and treaty rights referred to in subsection (1) are guaranteed equally to male and female persons.⁹¹⁷

Although the concepts of "treaty rights" rang familiar to everyone participating in discussions, "aboriginal rights" appeared as a mysterious catch-all phrase for matters not translatable into treaty issues. By the time the new constitution became law on 17 April, 1982, every party involved in constitutional talks had already started formulating its own views about what the concept could mean. Amongst those speculating, people at Île-à-la-Crosse developed views about how this new part of a new constitution might help their own circumstances.⁹¹⁸

Prior to Canada's patriation of its constitution, the village had what Spaulding called the best example of a community "conceived as mutable and changing" and, by effect, most able to adapt to conditions any party forced upon it.⁹¹⁹ With what researchers labeled as "ten centers of activity,"⁹²⁰ and a version of the Métis language considered "so different that it seems to be a different language

⁹¹⁷ *Constitution Act, 1982*, RSC 1985, App. II, No. 44. Subsections 3 and 4 were added subsequent to the document's approval. Michael Asch, *Home and Native Land: Aboriginal Rights and the Canadian Constitution* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998), 30.

⁹¹⁸ Interview of Jim Sinclair, Jim Durocher and Ron Laliberte (2004) Tape 2, Gabriel Dumont Institute, Saskatoon.

⁹¹⁹ Spaulding, "Social Integration," 53.

⁹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 26.

altogether,"⁹²¹ Île-à-la-Crosse remained distinctive. About to be sold to a new company calling itself the "Northern," the HBC retained its reputation as a profitable store.⁹²² By the 1980s, the school that started as part of a mission system and then transformed into a part "residential school" program remained with such strength, it could still justify having its own board and its Indigenous language requirement for teachers. The village's airport provided yet another way for people to travel, the hospital remained the largest health care centre in the province's north west rural area, and visitors and locals harvested wildlife.⁹²³

Still, "[f]eelings of bitterness and cynicism touch[ed] their [locals'] memories."⁹²⁴

Although not concerned about any significant "cultural crisis" that other Indigenous communities sometimes claimed to have,⁹²⁵ some residents had an urge to talk about general civic rights and different rights for Indigenous peoples in particular. Amongst those villagers interested in what Canada thought about constitutionalism and Indigenous rights, a group met with other Métis families in the North West to deliberate how their general place under Canadian law could be improved. On 1

⁹²¹ Comment by Peter Bakker on pages 242-6, cited in Heather A. Blair, Donna Paskemin, and Barbara Laderoute, review of *A Language of Our Own: The Genesis of Michif, the Mixed Cree-French Language of the Canadian Métis*, by Peter Bakker, *International Journal of American Linguistics* 68, no. 2 (2002): 144-5. Some linguists have also theorized the Cree at Île-A-La-Crosse also is its own dialect; H. Christoph Wolfart, "Plains Cree: A Grammatical Study," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 63, no. 5 (1973): 9.; David Pentland, "Proto-Algonquian Stop Clusters in Cree-Montagnais," *International Journal of American Linguistics* 43, no. 2, (April 1977): 154-156. Truman Michelson, "A Report on a Linguistic Expedition to James and Hudson's Bays," *American Anthropologist* New Series 38, no. 4 (October-December 1936): 686.

⁹²² R-5954, Accession no. R81-216 (March 3, 1980 & June 10, 1980) Philomine Piche, Chipewyan and Metis People of La Loche Oral History Project, SAB.

⁹²³ Quiring, "Battling Parish Priests, Bootleggers, And Fur Sharks," 211.

⁹²⁴ Robert Jarvenpa and Hetty Jo Brumbach, *Circumpolar Lives and Livelihood: A Comparative Ethnoarchaeology of Gender and Subsistence* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 33.

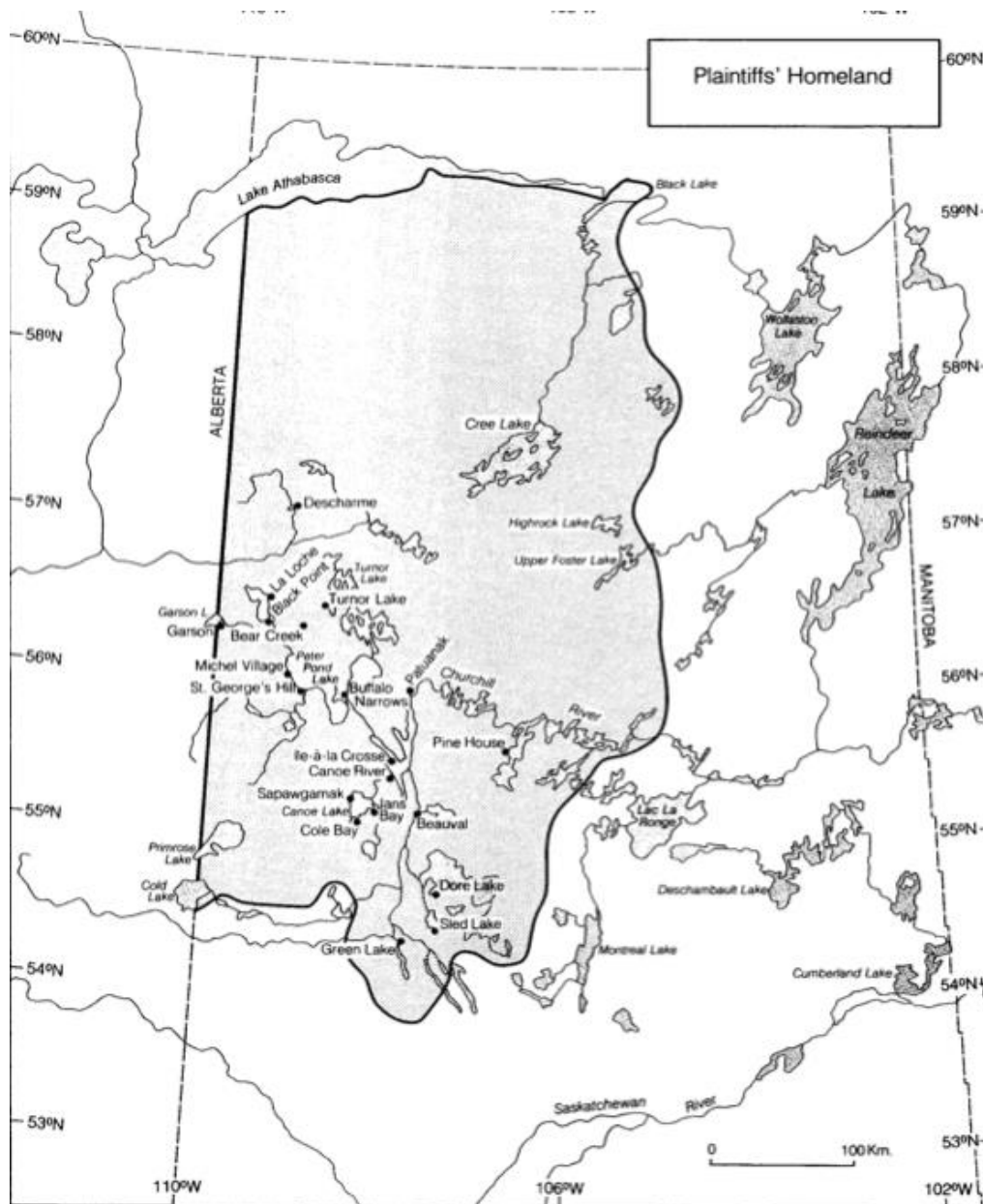
⁹²⁵ Amanda Fehr and MacKinley Darlington, "Encountering Mary: Apparitions, Roadside Shrines, the Métis of the Westside," special issue, *Saskatchewan History* 61, no. 2 (2009): 32.

March, 1994, that group filed a document in Saskatoon's courthouse. These people, recognized as the "plaintiffs" on this document, started proceedings for what turned out to likely be the largest Métis land claim in Canadian history.⁹²⁶

⁹²⁶ *Morin et al v. Her Majesty* (Statement of Claim).

3. The Statement of Claim

Within the document labeled a Statement of Claim (the “Claim”), which stated the arguments and sources for the argument’s legal relevance, the plaintiffs (“Morin et al”) argued that neither the province nor Canada had a legal right to control a specific area making up approximately one fifth of Saskatchewan. This argument, constructed by referencing s.35 and then explaining how control was understood as an example of “Aboriginal title”, was itself an example of an “Aboriginal right” and the first one to be presented by a Métis party. But not only were Morin et al not First Nations, they were also located in a part of Canada already treated. In that way, previous jurisprudence would be of assistance but still only contained guidelines. Arguing that their ancestors never surrendered title, Morin et al demanded compensation for all the Crown activities performed in a specific area that impaired Métis control in the meantime. Along with all the written argumentation that referred to case law and legislation, Morin et al attached a map to the Claim. For the Court to see, Île-à-la-Crosse appeared amongst the numerous communities within the claimed area.



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Between the time s.35 first appeared and when Morin et al filed the Claim, the Supreme Court of Canada had rendered a number of decisions about both Aboriginal and treaty rights. So when Morin et al constructed their argument, they had to take

⁹²⁷ Image 31 - This map appears as "Appendix A" of *Morin et al v. Her Majesty* (Statement of Claim).

these rulings into account. Soon after Canada's new constitutionalism became effective, the Supreme Court released *Guerin v. the Queen* (or "*Guerin*") in 1984.⁹²⁸ There, (then) Chief Justice Dickson concluded the nature of Aboriginal title required the constitutional recognition for the fiduciary duty owed to Indigenous peoples due to *The Royal Proclamation, 1763*.⁹²⁹ Dickson also ordered that courts interpret the section in a sui generis fashion.⁹³⁰ Moreover, because the Supreme Court had already determined a decade earlier that "Indian title" existed as an enforceable concept,⁹³¹ "title" was a type of "Aboriginal right."⁹³²

Six years after *Guerin*, the Supreme Court released *R. v. Sparrow* ("*Sparrow*").⁹³³ There, the Court's majority explained how Indigenous activities considered evidence of Aboriginal cultural heritage could be another type of "Aboriginal right."⁹³⁴ By examining the exact phrasing of s.35, the majority also wrote that the word "existing" in s.35 meant "unextinguished."⁹³⁵ Although (then) Chief Justice Dickson confirmed repeatedly in *Sparrow* that no Indigenous party could claim "sovereignty," an Indigenous party could still contend Crown activities must be done

⁹²⁸ *Guerin v. The Queen* [1984] 2 S.C.R. 335. (hereinafter "*Guerin*").

⁹²⁹ *Royal Proclamation of 1763*, 3 Geo. 3. Appendix II, no.1.

⁹³⁰ See Justice Wilson's explanation of "sui generis" relationships explains this point further on page 387 of *Guerin*.

⁹³¹ *Calder v. British Columbia (Attorney General)* [1973] S.C.R. 313. (hereinafter "*Calder*").

⁹³² See Justice Wilson at page 352 and (then) Chief Justice Dickson at 386 of *Guerin*.

⁹³³ *R. v. Sparrow* [1990] 1 S.C.R. 1075. (hereinafter "*Sparrow*").

⁹³⁴ *Sparrow*, in this decision, (then) Chief Justice Dickson relied heavily upon Brian Slattery, "Understanding Aboriginal Rights," *Canadian Bar Review* 66, no. 4 (December 1987): 727-83, which is considered the first academic article to provide guidance about the potential nature and scope of "Aboriginal Rights."

⁹³⁵ *Sparrow* at para 24.

with restraint to ensure that the protection acquired via the *Royal Proclamation, 1763* did not become jeopardized.⁹³⁶

Because Morin et al submitted their Claim after these decisions, they were bound to use the decisions' fundamental tenets. But as they and the Claim's defendants (Saskatchewan and Canada) also knew, another set of cases was making its way through the court system and those cases contained issues relevant to Morin et al's claim. In particular, all parties involved in the Claim wondered about the impact of a case named *R. v. Van der Peet*.⁹³⁷ Given that the interpretation of *Van der Peet* might provide guidance about the Claim, all parties agreed to a moratorium on the Claim's litigation. By August 1996, when the Supreme Court announced its decision in *Van der Peet*, all parties learned s.35 interpretation had shifted in very significant ways.⁹³⁸

Written by (then) Chief Justice Antonio Lamer, the majority decision detailed a set of requirements that any party arguing for s.35 Aboriginal right must provide. The party must prove the circumstance existed prior to contact with Europeans, it must be integral to the distinctive Aboriginal nature of the party presenting the argument,

⁹³⁶ *Sparrow* at para. 49.

⁹³⁷ *R. v. Van der Peet* [1996] 2 S.C.R. 507 (hereinafter "*Van der Peet*").

⁹³⁸ *Van der Peet* was accompanied by *R. v. N.T.C. Smokehouse Ltd.* [1996] 2 S.C.R. 672 and *R. v. Gladstone* [1996] 2 S.C.R. 723. *Smokehouse* and *Gladstone* both contain references to *Van der Peet* and include the use of what became known as the "Van der Peet test."

and the condition must have existed continuously since the European-Indigenous contact commenced.⁹³⁹

Lamer did provide some guidance about how to prove these standards. For example, the Chief Justice stated that the concept of “distinctiveness” did not mean “distinct.” As a result, even if an Aboriginal party’s trait appeared to be part of another party’s or nation’s character, the argument could still proceed.⁹⁴⁰ As well, for the continuity standard to be proven, the existence in question could have stopped during its history but only if due to imposed and unwelcome circumstances.⁹⁴¹ Finally, the Crown must have protected the Aboriginal party’s best interests due to the “sui generis” nature of s.35 rights demanded by the *Royal Proclamation, 1763*.⁹⁴²

Immediately upon its release, *Van der Peet* inspired immense criticism.⁹⁴³ Despite how Lamer mentioned *Sparrow*, some critics considered *Van der Peet* a complete rejection of the 1990 decision. Besides how *Van der Peet* claimed to keep to precedent but arguably did not do so, several observers also focused on the decision’s specific test for an Aboriginal right to flag the decision’s internal flaws. In particular, critics took great exception to Lamer’s understanding of “contact” in two significant ways.

⁹³⁹ See John Borrows, “The Trickster: Integral to a Distinctive Culture,” *Constitutional Forum* 8, no. 2 (Winter 1997): 29-38 for a helpful summation of the ten components’ more compact form.

⁹⁴⁰ *Van der Peet*, at para. 71.

⁹⁴¹ *Van der Peet*, at para. 89.

⁹⁴² *Van der Peet*, at para. 121.

⁹⁴³ See Russell Lawrence Barsh and James Youngblood Henderson, “The Supreme Court’s *Van der Peet* Trilogy: Naïve Imperialism and Ropes of Sand,” *McGill Law Journal* 42, no. 4 (September 1997): 993-1010; and Borrows, “Frozen Rights.”

First, Lamer's interpretation of the word reminded critics about the nature of hearsay in evidentiary matters. *Van der Peet*'s majority demanded that any topic worthy of s.35 protection must be a circumstance that had existed prior to an Aboriginal community's first meeting with newcomers. While this standard might not appear particularly difficult at first blush, parties would only know about these historic qualities because of information related by different generations over time and the telling of these stories would automatically be rejected as hearsay in Canadian courts. So unless a community had, for example, strong archaeological data or non-Indigenous witnesses who wrote about these issues at the time and the court accepted these writings as reasonable, no Aboriginal claim would ever succeed at proving what happened before any non-Indigenous person encountered any community member. But even if for some reason the archaeological sources and non-Indigenous historic writings were found, and even if such sources found favour, the party could get protection only for an issue in its historic form. As John Borrows and others lamented, this creation of a "frozen" right for Canada's most marginalized was not demanded of any other part of Canada's population.⁹⁴⁴

The second reason to take exception to *Van der Peet* lay in its semantic form. Given Lamer's normative understanding of "contact," the test's structure ensured it would be impossible for any Métis party to argue a s.35 right despite that s.35 was phrased

⁹⁴⁴ Borrows, "Frozen Rights;" Patricia Wallace, "Grave Digging: The Misuse of History in Aboriginal Rights Litigation," *The University of Miami Inter-American Law Review* 30, no. 2 (Winter 1999): 489-516.

to make it possible to prove Métis rights. Not only was Lamer's understanding of contact opposed to well-renowned historical researchers, but he also appeared unable to comprehend how his approach contradicted Section 35's basic nature and scope thereby eliminating Métis peoples' cultural form from Canadian constitutionalism altogether.

A strong dissent written by (then) Justice Beverly McLachlin challenged Lamer's views.⁹⁴⁵ But his test still became the new way to achieve s.35 protection. How that achievement would come to pass was another matter, because the possibility "was greatly dampened, if not extinguished," given the test's requirements.⁹⁴⁶ All parties involved in the Métis claim agreed to continue their own moratorium to have more time to think about *Van der Peet's* implications.

As the parties speculated what to do with *Van der Peet*, another hearing occurred at the Supreme Court. This case, called *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* (or "*Delgamuukw*"),⁹⁴⁷ originated from British Columbia and involved Aboriginal title. In addition to being about the broadest interpretation of an Aboriginal right, the case also included significant arguments about the matter of "oral evidence." When the

⁹⁴⁵ Justice McLachlin, as she then was: "One finds no mention in the text of s. 35(1) or in the jurisprudence of the moment of European contact as the definitive all-or-nothing time for establishing an aboriginal right. The governing concept is simply the traditional customs and laws of people prior to imposition of European law and customs. What must be established is continuity between the modern practice at issue and a traditional law or custom of the native people." *Van der Peet*, at para. 247. For whether (now) Chief Justice has maintained that position, see Kent McNeil, "Reconciliation and the Supreme Court: The Opposing Views of Chief Justices Lamer and McLachlin," *Indigenous Law Journal* 2 (2003):1-26.

⁹⁴⁶ Michael Murphy, "Culture and the Courts: A New Direction in Canadian Jurisprudence on Aboriginal Rights?" *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique* 34, no. 1 (March 2001): 110.

⁹⁴⁷ *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* [1997] 3 S.C.R. 1010. (hereinafter *Delgamuukw*)

Supreme Court released its decision in *Delgamuukw*, this case appeared to challenge the fundamental tenet in *Van der Peet* regarding “contact.” Although not abolishing *Van der Peet*’s test, *Delgamuukw*’s contents spoke to many of the criticisms launched against Lamer’s understandings of s.35.

Earlier during *Delgamuukw*’s trials, the Aboriginal parties’ legal counsel presented testimony from community members to argue that these residents’ information was a form of “oral evidence.” Carefully ensuring that this information did not contradict the results of more typical “expert witnesses” (such as academics), the lawyers argued s.35 cases’ sui generis nature demanded more flexibility in evidentiary processes. In that way, without community contributions about genealogy, spiritualism, and land use, any judiciary’s conclusions about s.35 rights would be incomplete. This data would, on its face, appear to challenge procedure about hearsay. But, *Delgamuukw*’s lawyers argued, that information was no less subjective than old written documents or modern day academics remarking about decades long before their own respective births. By making sure community input during the trial did not oppose the standard expert presentations, the lawyers deftly ensured that rejecting community information would mean rejecting data from accepted expert witnesses. Despite this planning, the trial judge indeed still rejected the oral evidence and dismissed the entire claim. At the British Columbia Court of Appeal, the justices had mixed views about the trial judge’s analysis, but they ultimately

reinforced the trial judge's findings.⁹⁴⁸ At the Supreme Court of Canada, however, the majority ordered a new trial and instructed the lower courts to consider the oral history as valid evidence.

Unlike *Van der Peet's* descriptors about "aboriginal right," no pronounced test exists in *Delgamuukw* about what "oral evidence" means. As a result, to this day any party making reference to *Delgamuukw* must explain her/his understanding of the term. Whether having no guidance is helpful or a hindrance likely remains dependent upon the specific circumstances of a case. But regardless of the argumentative hurdle which must be overcome every time oral evidence is introduced, the decision's use of sources also suggested Indigenous parties can be more confident about using sources such as modern interpretations of the *Royal Proclamation of 1763* and the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*.⁹⁴⁹

⁹⁴⁸ *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* [1991] 79 D.L.R. (4th) 374 (B.C.S.C.); *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* [1993] 30 B.C.A.C. 1.

⁹⁴⁹ Then Chief Justice Lamer and Justice Major discuss the source of Aboriginal title in Canada: "It had originally been thought that the source of aboriginal title in Canada was the *Royal Proclamation, 1763*: see *St. Catherine's Milling*. However, it is now clear that although aboriginal title was recognized by the *Proclamation*, it arises from the prior occupation of Canada by aboriginal peoples." *Delgamuukw*, at para. 114; see also para 33 where they refer to the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (1996), vol. 1 (*Looking Forward, Looking Back*) as it describes Aboriginal oral history: "Oral accounts of the past include a good deal of subjective experience. They are not simply a detached recounting of factual events but, rather, are 'facts enmeshed in the stories of a lifetime'. They are also likely to be rooted in particular locations, making reference to particular families and communities;" and see para. 190, where Justices La Forest and L'Heureux-Dubé discuss *sui generis* and the Crown's fiduciary duty: "'aboriginal title' is based on the continued occupation and use of the land as part of the aboriginal peoples' traditional way of life. This *sui generis* interest is not equated with fee simple ownership; nor can it be described with reference to traditional property law concepts... Dickson J. wrote in *Guerin*, *supra*, that the aboriginal right of occupancy is further characterized by two principal features. First, this *sui generis* interest in the land is personal in that it is generally inalienable except to the Crown. Second, in dealing with this interest, the Crown is subject to a fiduciary obligation to treat aboriginal peoples fairly." For the *St. Catherine's Milling* reference, see *St. Catherine's Milling and Lumber Co. v. The Queen* [1888] 14 A.C. 46 (P.C.).

Even with *Delgamuukw* to use, Morin et al and both Crowns agreed to delay litigation again. In the meantime, the Supreme Court rendered *R. v. Marshall* in 1999. There, the court's majority concluded that the Crown had not allowed a M'kmaw man his treaty right to harvest. (Then) Justice Ian Binnie determined on behalf of the majority that "a deal is a deal," and the treaty explained the Crown had an obligation to allow subsistence living.⁹⁵⁰ Binnie did not end with that theme; the justice also criticized academics whom he concluded did not well appreciate the judicial process. In chiding specific scholars for their supposed naïve hope for encouraging intellectual differences to be part of litigation and judicial analysis, Binnie concluded that expert witnesses and scholars did not appreciate that sometimes a solid conclusion was necessary for a topic to progress further.⁹⁵¹

Regardless of whether those interested in *Marshall* agreed with any or all of Binnie's reasoning, the decision immediately became troubling due to how almost all parties involved believed the Supreme Court approved of their actions – however conflicting. The weeks that ensued after the decision's release led to confrontations nicknamed the "lobster wars," with Indigenous, newcomer, and Crown interests all acting more forcefully while believing Canadian law was on their side.⁹⁵² Then,

⁹⁵⁰ "It seems harsh to put aboriginal people in a worse legal position where land has been taken without their formal cession than where they have agreed to terms of cession. A deal is a deal." *R. v. Marshall* (No. 1) [1999] 3 S.C.R. 456 at para. 21 (hereinafter *Marshall* (No. 1)).

⁹⁵¹ See *Marshall* (No. 1) at para. 36: "The courts have attracted a certain amount of criticism from professional historians for what these historians see as an occasional tendency on the part of judges to assemble a 'cut and paste' version of history: A. J. Ray, 'Creating the Image of the Savage in Defence of the Crown: The Ethnohistorian in Court,' *Native Studies Review*, VI (1990), 13."

⁹⁵² Kevin Cox and Daniel LeBlanc, "Anger Explodes Over Fishing Rights: N.B. Fishermen Destroy Native Traps in Reaction to Off-season Lobster Catch Endorsed by Supreme Court." *The Globe and Mail*, October 4, 1999. A1.

unprecedentedly, the Supreme Court released what it considered a further explanation of the decision. This unanimously written document, which obtained the nickname “*Marshall 2*” (the name given to the first addendum written by Supreme Court in its history, then transforming *R. v. Marshall* into “*Marshall 1*,”)⁹⁵³ explained that Crown sovereignty always must prevail over any issue of constitutional interpretation – including treaties. As such, *Marshall 1* should not be read as a decision to approve Indigenous sovereignty over any topic. Although *Marshall 2* might have provided clarity, the Court failed to provide any guidance about how to utilize 1 and 2 simultaneously despite their significant differences. But even with the interpretive difficulties *Marshall 1* and *Marshall 2* created, they also inspired Indigenous parties to imagine that the issue of trade could be brought forward as a s.35 matter in the future. Back in Saskatchewan, the moratorium on the Morin et al file remained.

That same year, the Supreme Court released another decision pertaining to trade. In *Mitchell v. Minister of National Revenue*,⁹⁵⁴ all justices rejected a Mohawk Grand Chief’s claim about his modern interpretation of a historic practice. In particular, Chief Justice McLachlin chastised the Grand Chief’s mention of facts that occurred outside Canada.⁹⁵⁵ *Mitchell* was, at that point, the most obvious evaluation of

⁹⁵³ *R. v. Marshall* [1999] 3 S.C.R. 533.

⁹⁵⁴ *Mitchell v. Minister of National Revenue* [2001] 1 S.C.R. 911 (hereinafter cited as “*Mitchell*”). For the original trial decision, see *Mitchell v. Minister of National Revenue* [1999] 1 F.C. 375.

⁹⁵⁵ Treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation, Between His Britannick Majesty; - and the United States of America, By Their President, with the advice and consent of Their Senate, 33 Geo. III (November 19th, 1794) [hereinafter Jay Treaty]’s signatories include Great Britain and the United States, but “Indians” are described in Article III: “It is agreed, that it shall at all times be free to His Majesty’s subjects, and to the citizens of the United States, and also to the Indians dwelling on either side of the said boundary line, freely to pass and repass, by land or inland navigation into the respective territories and countries of the two parties on the continent of America, (the country within the limits of the Hudson Bay company only excepted) ... and freely carry on trade and

economic matters and Indigenous parties that Canada's highest court evaluated. Yet while the Court rejected Chief Mitchell's argument, they did not reject the possibility of accepting an argument about trade.⁹⁵⁶ *Mitchell* was indeed helpful, but a case (finally) involving Métis parties was making its way to Ottawa and would likely have even more in common with the Saskatchewan land claim. With this case having a cultural similarity to Morin et al's argument, all parties involved in the litigation unsurprisingly agreed to an even longer moratorium.

Known as "*Powley*,"⁹⁵⁷ the case involved a Métis man and his adult son who lived in the Sault Ste. Marie area of northern Ontario. At trial, an Ontario General Division judge had found Steve and Roddy Powley not guilty of violating provincial hunting regulations when they "harvested" a moose in the nearby woods without a license. During this trial, both men successfully avoided the criminal conviction by contending their hunt represented a traditional Métis activity deserving s. 35 protection.⁹⁵⁸

commerce with each other;" and see Karl S. Hele, *Lines Drawn upon the Water: First Nations and the Great Lakes Borders and Borderlands* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008), 127.

⁹⁵⁶ Mitchell received particular scorn for how he determined events outside Canada's boundaries must be considered by a Canadian court: "the respondent's claim, despite the concessions made in argument, is not just about physical movement of people or goods in and about Akwesasne. It is about pushing the envelope of Mohawk autonomy within the Canadian Constitution. It is about the Mohawks' aspiration to live as if the international boundary did not exist. Whatever financial benefit accrues from the ability to move goods across the border without payment of duty is clearly incidental to this larger vision." *Mitchell*, at paras. 87, 118 and 125; see Audra Simpson, "Subjects of Sovereignty: Indigeneity, the Revenue Rule, and Juridics of Failed Consent," *Law and Contemporary Problems* 71, no. 3 (Summer 2008): 197; and Caroline Dick, "Culture and the Courts' Revisited: Group-Rights Scholarship and the Evolution of s.35(1)," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 42, no. 4 (December 2009): 970.

⁹⁵⁷ *R. v. Powley* [2003] S.C.R. 207 (hereinafter *Powley*).

⁹⁵⁸ *R. v. Powley* [1999] 58 C.R.R. (2d) 149 (Gen.Div.). The "win" meant the judge threw out charges against them for hunting without a license.

Ontario appealed to the Ontario Superior Court, and Ontario found their arguments rejected again.⁹⁵⁹ A number of months later, the Ontario Court of Appeal had the same response. At this higher level, however, the justices provided more details about why they would not convict the Powleys. In constructing this unanimous decision, the justices found a way to apply *Van der Peet* and simultaneously recognize Métis rights.⁹⁶⁰

By explaining that no “golden moment” exists to determine first contact between Indigenous peoples and newcomers,⁹⁶¹ the Court of Appeal constructed a test for “pre-contact” that helped to reconcile the concept of “sovereignty” with Indigenous existences in Canada. The justices wrote how “post-contact” times do not commence until after a non-Indigenous party gains sovereignty. To indicate the moment of sovereignty, some event must demonstrate a transfer of control. When considering the Powleys’ historic territory, and then learning that treaty talks between First Nations and the Crown were finalized by 1851, the justices determined that existence up and until 1851 was prior to control and therefore “precontact”. Because the Powleys proved their family hunted moose before 1851, the two men were participating in an activity that met *Van der Peet* standards as the hunting happened before contact, was integral to their distinctive culture and had occurred continuously since that time. When Ontario appealed this decision, and a hearing evaluated the Powley case at the Supreme Court of Canada, the highest court

⁹⁵⁹ *R. v. Powley* [2000] 47 O.R. (3d) 30 (Sup. Ct.).

⁹⁶⁰ *R. v. Powley* [2001] 53 O.R. (3d) 35 (CA).

⁹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, at para. 99.

concluded that the Ontario Court of Appeal's analysis should stand as valid jurisprudence.⁹⁶²

Soon after the release of *Powley*, the Supreme Court rendered *Haida Nation v. British Columbia (Ministry of Forests)*.⁹⁶³ There, the Court maintained that the protection often referred to as a fiduciary obligation and derived from the *Royal Proclamation, 1763* could also be understood as a "duty to consult." Consultation could be necessary if a Crown activity unavoidably jeopardized a proven or likely s.35 right that still must occur for the benefit of Canada. The form consultation must take depended upon the nature of the violation and the s.35 matter in question.⁹⁶⁴

Perhaps inspired by this concern for evidence of consultation for Aboriginal title arguments, Morin et al parties agreed to continue the moratorium yet again. In the meantime, some Métis parties had successfully negotiated arrangements with government officials,⁹⁶⁵ while others tried to create better conditions for Métis and failed.⁹⁶⁶ As these political events occurred, some other court cases about Métis

⁹⁶² The Supreme Court acknowledged: "This case raises the issue of whether members of the Métis community in and around Sault Ste. Marie enjoy a constitutionally protected right to hunt for food under s. 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*. We conclude that they do." *Powley at para. 1*; and see para. 55 where, in response to the constitutional question as to whether "ss. 46 and 47(1) of the *Game and Fish Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. G.1, as they read on October 22, 1993, [were] of no force or effect with respect to the respondents, being Métis, in the circumstances of this case, by reason of their aboriginal rights under s. 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*?", the answer was yes.

⁹⁶³ *Haida Nation v. British Columbia (Ministry of Forests)* [2004] 3 S.C.R. 511.

⁹⁶⁴ The Court used Sonia Lawrence's and Patrick Macklem's "From Consultation to Reconciliation: Aboriginal Rights and the Crown's Duty to Consult," *Canadian Bar Review* 79, no. 1 (February 2000): 252-279 to explain a 'sliding scale' idea of consultation.

⁹⁶⁵ Melanie Paradis, "What the Manitoba Métis Agreement Means For Canada," *National-blog*, October 23, 2012, <http://www.national.ca/Bold-Thinking/What-the-Manitoba-Metis-Agreement-Means-for-Canada.aspx>; and Dawn Walton and Josh Wingrove, "\$85 –million earmarked for Alberta Métis," *The Globe and Mail*, March 13, 2013, A6.

⁹⁶⁶ *R. v. Blais* [2003] 2 S.C.R. 236.

peoples made their way through the appellate system. In early 2013, the Supreme Court of Canada provided analysis in a court case involving the Manitoba Métis Federation (hereinafter the “MMF”).⁹⁶⁷ Framed as a declaration rather than a response to criminal charges or a civil action, *Manitoba Métis Federation Inc. v. Canada* detailed that Canada failed to implement the land granting program required by s.31 of the *Manitoba Act, 1870*. The Supreme Court’s majority concluded that the honour of the Crown required such implementation. By finding that the honour of the Crown was not demonstrated during the Act’s implementation, the Court provided a decision that confirmed that the fiduciary duty from the *Royal Proclamation of 1763* must also be provided to the Métis.

Another case originating in the Federal Court of Canada also provided guidance about Métis constitutionalism. In January 2013, the Federal Court declared in *Daniels v. Canada* that Métis peoples could be understood in some circumstances as “Indians” for the purposes of interpreting the *Indian Act*.⁹⁶⁸ In this case, Daniels and his fellow plaintiffs showed how numerous Crown actions revealed that Canada did not distinguish between First Nations and Métis families. Due to this mislabeling, the Métis peoples were understood as Indians and treated as such. With that historic possibility, Daniels and his co-plaintiffs demanded Canada provide those mislabeled Métis and non-status First Nations with whatever amenities status First Nations had acquired during those years. By particular reference to recommendations contained in the *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal*

⁹⁶⁷ *Manitoba Métis Federation Inc. v. Canada* [2013] 1 S.C.R. 623.

⁹⁶⁸ *Daniels v. Canada* [2013] F.C.R. 6 (hereinafter cited as “*Daniels*”).

Peoples,⁹⁶⁹ the Federal Court judge stated that his declaration could be a judicial tool for resolving current disputes between Métis families and governments across Canada.⁹⁷⁰ Canada appealed and in April 2014, the Federal Court of Appeal ruled that the trial judgment should be narrowed to apply only to Métis and not “non-status” First Nations.⁹⁷¹ Despite the ruling that will come out of the Supreme Court hearing of this case some time in 2016, both *Daniels* and *Manitoba Métis Federation Inc* have stimulated much more interest about “reconciliation” with Métis peoples and the importance of historical research.⁹⁷²

Just as recently, *Ahousaht Indian Band v. Canada* provided significant commentary about Indigenous economic conditions and s.35.⁹⁷³ There, the Supreme Court of Canada refused to reopen a lower case where a British Columbia First Nation had its harvest and trade of fish recognized as a s.35 right. In effect, the Supreme Court’s refusal meant it did not take exception to an argument that constitutional protection can be provided for economic activities that go beyond immediate family subsistence.⁹⁷⁴

⁹⁶⁹ *Daniels* at paras. 57-59. The Justice does not refer to which part of the Report he uses.

⁹⁷⁰ *Daniels*, at paras. 57-59.

⁹⁷¹ *Daniels v. Canada* [2014] FCA 101.

⁹⁷² David Nahwegahbow, “The Promise of Reconciliation,” *National Magazine* 21, no. 2 (March 2012): 34-37.

⁹⁷³ *Ahousaht Indian Band v. Canada* [2013] B.C.C.A. 300.

⁹⁷⁴ See “Judgments in Leave Applications – News Release – January 30, 2014” Supreme Court of Canada, accessed July 220, 2015, <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/news/en/item/4506/index.do>.: “Dismissed with Costs: *Attorney General of Canada v. Ahousaht Indian Band and Ahousaht Nation, represented by Shawn Atleo on his own behalf and on behalf of the members of the Ahousaht Indian Band and the Ahousaht Nation et al. (B.C.)(Civil)(By leave)(34387)*, (The application for leave to appeal is dismissed with costs to the respondents/ The respondents’ request for costs on the first application for leave to appeal is dismissed.)”

In perhaps the most significant of any recent decisions, *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia*,⁹⁷⁵ the Supreme Court unanimously accepted Roger Williams's argument about the Tsilhqot'in Nation's territory. There, William and some other parties argued for title rather than compensation for an area, and some of that area was no longer part of where they had located themselves during more recent times. Due to the significant absence of consultation by British Columbia, and years of the province taking land and using the taken area for natural resource development, the Supreme Court found the Crown had violated the nation's constitutional right. As a result, it also ruled that those areas described by the Indigenous parties as previously occupied but not currently occupied must also be re-assigned to the nation. The Court also explained how, when re-acquiring all of these areas, the nation had a right to use the lands for natural resource development that benefited the nation exclusively, as that development could also be considered a s.35 right. The decision allowed the Tsilhqot'in Nation to demand negotiations start immediately and that those talks be designed to redesignate title to the nation and permit economic activities as the Tsilhqot'in Nation saw (and will see) fit.⁹⁷⁶

Of course, any future court cases are always evaluated on their own specific facts. So how the above precedent impacts Morin et al is debatable.⁹⁷⁷ Still, some points can be gleaned that will undoubtedly impact future trends in s.35 litigation.⁹⁷⁸ First,

⁹⁷⁵ *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia* [2014] 2 S.C.R. 256.

⁹⁷⁶ Sean Fine, "Historic Ruling Upholds Rights," *The Globe and Mail*, June 27, 2014, A1 & continued A4.

⁹⁷⁷ Tough, "Natural Resources," 141.

⁹⁷⁸ Guyora Binder, "The Case for Self-Determination," *Stanford Journal of International Law* 29, no. 2 (1993): 252-53.

given the Supreme Court's blunt analysis in *Delgamuukw* about the importance of oral evidence, the use of historical presentations as evidence will only grow. As a result, lawyers will invariably debate whether and how to allow a historical source as evidence during a trial – especially since *Delgamuukw* contains no specific guidelines for what oral evidence can or cannot be. Lawyers, regardless of their training in historical research, will invariably be delving deeper into historicism, historiography and archival studies. Some subjects, such as the history of Indigenous land title in British Columbia, have already faced much scrutiny. Other topics, such as stories about Métis peoples, have only started to appear within legal analysis. When (current) Chief Justice MacLachlin laments a “paucity of evidence” to help her understand the past,⁹⁷⁹ it is important to acknowledge that it will be lawyers who tell her more about history. Whether lawyers do so in a way that seems sufficient to historians is dubious. But, regardless of how unavoidable it is and will be for lawyers to involve themselves in historical research, they can still work to improve how they pursue it. It is in this effort of improvement where the conversations between lawyers and their ‘expert witnesses’ must go.

A second trend within these cases is the issue of how courts evaluate economic activities. The decisions have contained analyses of how various Indigenous communities have survived throughout the centuries and how cultural traits were and are reinforced. Sometimes, Indigenous parties have argued for recognition by referring to phrases within treaties. During other arguments, non-treated parties

⁹⁷⁹ *Mitchell* at para. 53.

have framed economic efforts as an example of Aboriginal rights. But however undertaken, the Supreme Court has revealed it is not reluctant to hear or rule on how economic positions are part of a s.35 presentation. It will likely come through in what courts have labeled “usufructory” rights.⁹⁸⁰ But whatever name these circumstances receive, the events detail making it through a winter, a year and surviving in ways that can be taught to future generations. Trade occurred in impressive and complicated ways, and those activities have now received direct and indirect recognition.

Third, and as an extension of the second point, discussion regularly included recognition of sustainability. Whether in how the courts noticed conservation in general, how the courts allowed Crown activities to interfere with s.35 circumstances, or how Indigenous parties explained their activities’ standards, the issue of using the land properly has made its way into litigation and judicial reasoning. When explaining the importance of sustainability, a community’s longevity is reflected upon, and future land conditions are introduced both explicitly and by inference. Certainly, financial success is interwoven into these decisions and, as a result, monetary profit could also be part of the topics discussed. Courts and parties bring up a land’s natural functions and often justify doing so with reference to the ‘sui generis’ nature of s.35 topics. It is difficult to imagine that any s.35 argument in the future would succeed if economic imperatives were presented

⁹⁸⁰ *St. Catherine’s Milling and Lumber Co. v R*, (1887) 13 S.C.R. 577.

without reference to sustainability. It remains to be seen how the courts recognize sustainability as a specific s.35 right.

Fourth, the recognition of title has become even more multi-faceted because Aboriginal title's interpretive landscape has undergone a new exploration by the Supreme Court in *Tsilhqot'in Nation*. Because the Supreme Court has determined that an exact area must be re-assigned to an Indigenous party instead of what the court system calls "damages" (that is, monetary compensation), the issue of demanding a specific region be assigned to an Indigenous party is now more acceptable to argue. As well, it appears possible for an Indigenous party to argue for a region that it currently does not use.

What do these trends mean for Île-à-la-Crosse? Regarding the topic of information about a region's historic form, the village's story does much to elongate the time frame for Métis' "pre-control" history in Canada's past. Both in how far back the history goes, and how the *Powley* "control" standard does not start until 1906, the narrative of the village's Métis appears very strong for arguing about land use. Simultaneous with its role in law, the village's history helps challenge a number of erroneous and overly generalized statements that earlier historians have made about Métis. Whether called "ethnogenesis" or simply the culture's first years of recognition, the beginning of Métis identity is neither a nineteenth century nor a

Red River phenomenon exclusively as some historians such as Gerhard Ens propose.⁹⁸¹

Regarding Canadian courts' evaluation of economic activities, the village's life is likely one of busiest trading locations with the most documents to illustrate that trade in the North West. Given the number of years and the details covered by company accounts and government records, the theme of trade is indisputable. Indigenous peoples participated in it, outsiders ventured to Île-à-la-Crosse in order to appreciate those Indigenous activities better and interact with those activities themselves, and those same outsiders also adjusted many of their original policies to take fuller advantage of the village's enviable results. During the twentieth century, some scholars and jurists have either alluded to or stated bluntly that Canada's constitution is not constructed to include economic rights.⁹⁸² With its documented history about trade, Île-à-la-Crosse's past appears a helpful study for how to mention trade (or "the economy") when introducing Indigenous histories.

But even when these more skeptical views about economic issues and constitutionalism are considered, other judicial commentary can be found that suggests the court will not automatically reject arguments about economic

⁹⁸¹ Compare to writings about the nineteenth century and Métis peoples in Gerhard Ens, "Metis Ethnicity, Personal Identity and the Development of Capitalism in the Western Interior: The Case of Johnny Grant," in Binnema, Ens, and Macleod, ed., *From Rupert's Land to Canada*, 162 and Gerhard Ens, "Metis Ethnicity, Personal Identity and the Development of Capitalism in the Western Interior: The Case of Johnny Grant," in Binnema, Ens, and Macleod, ed., *From Rupert's Land to Canada*, 180.

⁹⁸² Senator Noël A. Kinsella, "Can Canada Afford a Charter of Social and Economic Rights? Toward a Canadian Social Charter," *Saskatchewan Law Review* 71 (2008): 7-22.

conditions.⁹⁸³ In general terms, even if Crown bodies contend issues of commerce and taxation are best left to government bodies, the Supreme Court also has encouraged an evolving (or “living tree”) understanding of constitutional interpretation.⁹⁸⁴ More specifically, s.35 arguments have revealed a strong trend of mentioning economic conditions more boldly, and the courts have not rejected those details.⁹⁸⁵ Even more particular to Île-à-la-Crosse, given the fact that non-Indigenous parties participated in the economic activities, the community’s constitutional form likely has more translation possibilities for all arguments about “economic interdependence” regardless of parties’ cultural backgrounds.⁹⁸⁶ In that way, the village’s story is not so Indigenous-exclusive that its form can be quickly rejected by non-Indigenous parties.

⁹⁸³ *Gosselin v. Quebec* [2002] 4 S.C.R. 429, at para. 81-82 (hereinafter cited as *Gosselin*). Chief Justice McLachlin discussed the protection of economic rights in Canada in relation to the *Charter* and considered whether section 7 could apply despite the fact the administration of justice was not implicated. She cites then Chief Justice Dickson for the majority in *Irwin Toy Ltd. v. Quebec (Attorney General)* [1989] 1 S.C.R. 927, at page 1003 where he left the question open as to whether s. 7 could protect “economic rights fundamental to human . . . survival.”

⁹⁸⁴ Lord Chancellor Sankey determined: “[t]he *British North America Act* planted in Canada a tree capable of growth and expansion within its natural limits. The object of the Act was to grant a Constitution to Canada. ‘Like all written constitutions it has been subject to development through usage and convention;’ Canadian Constitutional Studies, Sir Robert Borden (1922), p. 55.” *Edwards v. Attorney General for Canada*, [1930] A.C. 124, at 136. This idea has been affirmed and reaffirmed over time and is mentioned by Chief Justice McLachlin: “One day s. 7 may be interpreted to include positive obligations. To evoke Lord Sankey’s celebrated phrase in *Edwards v. Attorney-General for Canada*, [1930] A.C. 124 (P.C.), at 136, the *Canadian Charter* must be viewed as a living tree capable of growth and expansion within its natural limits: see *Reference re Provincial Electoral Boundaries (Sask.)*, [1991] 2 S.C.R. 158, at 180, *per* McLachlin J. It would be a mistake to regard s. 7 as frozen, or its content as having been exhaustively defined in previous cases.” *Gosselin*, at para. 82.

⁹⁸⁵ W.I.C. Binnie, “The Sparrow Doctrine: Beginning of the End or End of the Beginning?” *Queen’s Law Journal* 15, no. 2 (Fall 1990): 217.

⁹⁸⁶ Jeremy Webber, “Relations of force and relations of justice: the emergence of normative community between colonists and aboriginal peoples,” *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 33 (Winter 1995): 635.

Still, when the village's history is imagined in a more Indigenous-exclusive form, the economic activities continue to still have a strong role. When those historic qualities are layered upon s.35 discourse, the economic activities suddenly become part of jurisprudence about the *Royal Proclamation, 1763*. In other words, if the activities are accepted as meeting the standards required to qualify as a s.35 right, the Crown automatically has the obligation to protect those activities. In that way, the governments must acknowledge and preserve the process of trade in Île-à-la-Crosse. As locals explained to government officials repeatedly, helping those practices thrive also made financial sense for the Crown, as permitting the trade ensured fewer individuals will require government assistance.⁹⁸⁷ So acknowledging the economic relationships ensures a consistent application of the rule of law,⁹⁸⁸ it acts as an example of how to be self-sufficient according to local circumstances,⁹⁸⁹ and it decreases government costs.

On the topic of sustainability, Île-à-la-Crosse's history helps provide important clarity. Often, arguments about the merits of sustainability are formulated around it being a new and necessary change for contemporary society to make. Moreover,

⁹⁸⁷ Niall Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 54-55. For a Saskatchewan specific analysis of this view see M. K. Haener et al., "Can Stated Preference Methods be Used to Value Attributes of Subsistence Hunting by Aboriginal Peoples? A Case Study in Northern Saskatchewan," *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 83, no. 5 (Dec 2001): 1334-40; and Amartya Sen, "Peasants and Dualism with or without Surplus Labor," *Journal of Political Economy* 74, no. 5 (October 1966).

⁹⁸⁸ Glenn Morris' view is perhaps the most blunt: "Even by their own legal principle, English colonization of the Western hemisphere was illegal." Glenn T. Morris, "In Support of the Right of Self-Determination for Indigenous Peoples under International Law," *German Yearbook of International Law* 29 (1986): 278.

⁹⁸⁹ Elinor Ostrom, "Beyond Markets and States: Polycentric Governance of Complex Economic Systems," *American Economic Review* 100, no. 3 (June 2010), 644.

many of these arguments, such as presented by Richard Florida about the role of cities, focus upon large urban settings as the locations for the ideas that will inspire the most change.⁹⁹⁰ Given that some futurists have announced dire circumstances if “sustainable development” does not unfold more successfully and soon,⁹⁹¹ those same arguments could benefit from learning of histories that illustrate how such a condition is neither radical nor difficult. Moreover, if imagined through the lens of Métis constitutional discourse, it could very well be possible to create a legal obligation to recognize the village’s long history of sustainability and then protect the activity of enforcing sustainable development there in the future. Not only does research suggest introducing nostalgia as a nudge for encouraging shifts in social practices,⁹⁹² the village’s historic life automatically provides more data about Indigenous times that then make Canada’s base knowledge about Indigenous peoples stronger. Using the history of Île-à-la-Crosse, we gain an example that could act as the catalyst for sustainable development being acknowledged as a historic, Indigenous, and, therefore, constitutional norm. Sustainability has a long, relatively uninterrupted past in the village based on how locals’ understanding of kinship reinforced family ties, prosperity and knowledge about the land simultaneously.

⁹⁹⁰ See generally Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (Cambridge, MA: Perseus, 2002).

⁹⁹¹ Manuel Maass and Miguel Equihua, “Earth Stewardship, Socioecosystems, the Need for a Transdisciplinary Approach and the Role of the International Long Term Ecological Research Network (ILTER),” in *Earth Stewardship: Linking Ecology and Ethics in Theory and Practice* vol. 2, ed. Ricardo Rozzi et. al., 217-233 (Switzerland: Springer International Publishing).

⁹⁹² K. Quinn and H. Rosenthal, “Categorizing others and the Self: How Social Memory structures guide social perception and behavior,” *Learning and Motivation* 43:4 (2012), 247-258. Rhiannon N. Turner, et al., “Dropping the Weight Stigma: Nostalgia Improves Attitudes Toward Persons Who Are overweight,” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. 48 no. 1 (2012): 131.

In the fourth matter, the evolving nature of Aboriginal title, Île-à-la-Crosse's times suggest that locals invariably would wish for the region to be understood as Métis.

Due to *Tsilhqot'in Nation*, villagers involved in the land claim could make that argument about Île-à-la-Crosse's area. As part of this understanding about the village's space, it would be predictable that community members would also want Indigenous concepts to be reinforced when demonstrating sustainability.

Considering how many outsiders choose to enforce those concepts themselves, and given the relatively recent post-“control” date according to *Powley* standards, such an argument appears reasonable to present.⁹⁹³ The argument for title to a village's space invokes Indigenous ways but is perfectly within the realm of Canadian law. In that way, an argument for title to the village's space is about challenging the Crown on its failure to apply its own standards. As John Borrows reminds those concerned with enforcing s.35 today: “it's not a matter of being nice; it's a matter of being consistent with legal principles.”⁹⁹⁴ Imagining the village's greater area as worthy of Métis title simply reinforces that consistency.

But when considering the area detailed in the land claim's “Homeland” map, whether an argument about title will succeed is not so predictable. Moreover, the tenuous nature of the claim also lies in how a word that details Île-à-la-Crosse so well actually has little legal recognition in Canadian constitutionalism. Recall that

⁹⁹³ As we critique the notion of individual rights, we must be aware how one of its limitations is how it “doesn't acknowledge the rights of all of our relations- animals, birds, the land, or the spiritual realm.” Maria Campbell, “We Need to Return to the Principles of Wahkotowin,” *Saskatoon Eagle Feather News*, November 2007, 5.

⁹⁹⁴ See John Borrows, “Questioning Canada's Title to Land: The Rule of Law, Aboriginal Peoples and Colonialism,” in *Speaking Truth to Power: A Treaty Forum*, ed. Law Commission of Canada (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2001): 37.

analysis demonstrates how the village's region formed with a high number of overlapping conditions that, by their overlaps, triggered the creation of additional qualities subsequently unique to Île-à-la-Crosse. When the concept of "overlap" interplays with Canadian legal discourse, however, its components or effects are not received so positively.

When "overlap" appears in s.35 litigation, it is used to describe a circumstance when at least two Indigenous parties attempt to achieve constitutional recognition, with that recognition for any or all parties actually negatively impacting each group's respective form. Within his evaluation in *Delgamuukw*, (then) Chief Justice Lamer mused how a time will come when a court will need to prioritize some Indigenous efforts over others and, as a result, put Indigenous parties in a worse place than before the litigation commenced.⁹⁹⁵ Additionally, British Columbia's courts,⁹⁹⁶ the British Columbia Treaty Commission,⁹⁹⁷ the Indian Claims Commission,⁹⁹⁸ and the Federal Court⁹⁹⁹ have all listened to arguments about overlaps. Sometimes,

⁹⁹⁵ *Delgamuukw* at para. 185.

⁹⁹⁶ See Neil Sterritt, "The Nisga'a Treaty: Competing Claims Ignored!" Supplemental Nisga'a Treaty Issue *BC Studies* 120, (Winter 1998/1999): 73-97. For a reference in fiction to this concept in a real life scenario, see Eden Robinson, *Monkey Beach* (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000), 4: "During land claims talks, some of this territory is claimed by both the Haisla and the Tsimshian nations – this is called an overlap and is a sticky topic of discussion." Cases involving this debate include *Gitanyow First Nation v. Canada* [1998] 4 C.N.L.R. 47, *Gitanyow First Nation v. Canada* [1999] 1 C.N.L.R. 66 and *Gitanyow First Nation v. Canada* [1999] 3 C.N.L.R. 89.

⁹⁹⁷ BC Treaty Commission, "Treaty Commission Annual Report," 2009, 13-14.

⁹⁹⁸ Indian Claims Commission, *Athabasca Denesuline Special Report on the Harvesting Rights of the Fond du Lac, Black Lake and Hatchet Lake First Nations* (Ottawa: Indian Claims Commission, November 30, 1995).

⁹⁹⁹ A Dene-Inuit overlap claim also exists involving families located in Saskatchewan and Nunavut. Indian Claims Commission, *Athabasca Denesuline Special Report*, 180. See Donald Purich, *The Inuit and their Land: The Story of Nunavut* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1992), 15-16; see also Daum Shanks, "Who's the Best Aboriginal?"

unfortunately, a supposedly progressive moment for recognition of Indigenous roles means other Indigenous peoples' conditions worsen.

Morin et al's Homeland is an area also mentioned in historic treaties. So in order for the Métis claim to succeed, treaty lands would need to be readjusted and, as well, Crown understandings about their own acquisition of title would also require new legislation and agreements with municipal institutions. The Homeland area pertains to lands in both *Treaty 8* and *Treaty 10*, so any changes would be complicated further due to how at least two sets of treaty promises would need to be considered. In this presentation, I contend Île-à-la-Crosse's history is arguably the strongest example of Métis land use and control in Canada. But if Morin et al cannot provide documentation about Métis control and Crown recognition of that control for the parts in other regions of *Treaty 8* and *Treaty 10*, it seems difficult to imagine the courts recognizing all the Homeland area as Métis-exclusive.

The multilayered complexity of the claim increases further with a historic event that impacts Saskatchewan with particular significance. Not only does the Claim trigger concerns with more macro overlapping Indigenous titles, overlapping understandings happen at an individual level in the Homeland as well. Given the historic form of Métis genealogy, the potential for intermarriage amongst peoples means families exist with heritage from Métis and First Nations lineage. In having both types of ethnicities, some people had the choice of claiming one or both Indigenous histories. But due to some gender-based sections of the *Indian Act*, some

of those same people were disallowed from self-identifying as First Nations. If a person's mother was First Nations, that classification could be erased from someone's past, depending upon whom the mother married. The same effect, however, did not happen to men recognized as First Nations. After Canada began to implement the Charter of Rights and Freedoms contained in the *Constitution Act, 1982*, the federal government faced the stark legal reality that if it did not modify the *Indian Act* so as to eliminate these gender-based phrases in that legislation, an Indigenous person could easily argue the Act violated her/his Charter rights.¹⁰⁰⁰ As a quick response to this matter, Canada passed what became known as "Bill C-31" in 1985.¹⁰⁰¹

Bill C-31 represents the Crown's attempt to correct the gender-based sections within the *Indian Act*. But it, in effect, also immediately impacted many Indigenous peoples' socio-economic status. With the Bill's implementation, numerous individuals in Canada obtained the option to apply for First Nations "status."¹⁰⁰²

But note that individuals – and not families- made decisions about whether to apply for status and then become considered First Nations by Canada and *Indian Act* legislation. With such a choice left to some people with both First Nations and Métis

¹⁰⁰⁰ Bonita Lawrence, *Fractured Homeland: Federal Recognition and Algonquin Identity in Ontario*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012), 150.

¹⁰⁰¹ Bill C-31, *An Act To Amend the Indian Act*, 1 sess., 33 Parliament, 1985, (assented to 28 June 1985), SC 1985, vol. 1, c. 33.

¹⁰⁰² Even with this concern, Canada did not ensure its regulations and future interpretations eliminated the sex-based implications of the Act. In 1999, the Supreme Court found the federal Crown responsible for sexist interpretations of the Act in *Corbiere v. Canada (Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs)* [1999] 2 S.C.R. 203.

heritage, various individuals known as Métis to Canada (and Saskatchewan) until 1985 applied for status and then became adherents to whichever treaty their ancestors had signed. As researchers found later, the decision to change cultural classification was sometimes, unfortunately, impacted by harsh economic conditions.¹⁰⁰³ For example, housing options, educational training and even social programs away from Indigenous communities had different forms in different parts of Canada, so even persons with the choice of being understood by the Crown as either Métis or First Nations had their own set of circumstances to consider.¹⁰⁰⁴

So with its multi-cultural and inter-Indigenous history, Île-à-la-Crosse had the possibility of some villagers who lived in the community having both First Nations and Métis ancestry. Both before and after 1985, the community had experienced a history of some First Nations having treaty rights, some classified as “non-status,” some people with a strong lineage of Métis heritage, and some residents with a combination of these heritages.¹⁰⁰⁵ As of 1985, when an individual (and not a family) could apply for First Nations status, the cultural makeup of the village had not just neighbours or distant relatives having differences, but actually *siblings* with the exact same genealogy having different Indigenous labels for the purposes of

¹⁰⁰³ See chapters 10 and 11 of Bonita Lawrence’s *“Real” Indians and Others: Mixed-blood Urban Native Peoples and Indigenous Nationhood* (Lincoln, U of Nebraska Press, 2004).

¹⁰⁰⁴ University of British Columbia, First Nations Studies Program, “Bill C-31” Indigenous Foundations January 1, 2009, accessed July 20, 2015, <http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/the-indian-act/bill-c-31.html>.

¹⁰⁰⁵ In 1992, (then) Île-à-la-Crosse Mayor Buckley Belanger presented views about self-government and the issue of Bill C-31 upon his village to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. The commission decided to hold public hearing in Île-à-la-Crosse as it determined the community acted as a convenient location for most people about the point of immediate families experiencing the implications of the Bill. See Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, “Public Hearings and Round Table Discussions, 1992-1993,” (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works, 2008): 33-59.

constitutional rights. It is when this possibility is imagined that a particularly troubling part of Canadian law shows itself. With the way people overlapped in the past, and the way constitutionalism has evolved, some brothers and sisters in Île-à-la-Crosse have now learned they oppose each other in the litigation *Morin et al* began. The Métis claim overlaps with First Nations treaty rights and one side will ultimately stifle the other's s.35 argument, thereby making that party worse off than it currently stands.

Tragically, the historic nature of "overlap" has its best and worst form with Île-à-la-Crosse litigants possibly having to interact with the current legal understanding of this word. Treaty rights apply to the village's area. But evidence for village Aboriginal title is strong. Moreover, documentation explaining Aboriginal rights for Métis activities also has merit in the claimed Homeland (even if an argument for Aboriginal title to the Homeland fails). Undoubtedly, some components of the Métis claim suit current s.35 precedence. But fulfilling those components means impairing various First Nations understandings.

Of course, just because previous Supreme Court decisions have provided analysis about other Indigenous communities does not mean their reasoning will automatically be applied when a First Nation-Métis overlap is examined. Still, numerous tenets have received repeated approval, and are difficult to imagine absent from any judicial analysis of *Morin et al's* Claim.

The most difficult pillar of s.35 discourse to reconcile with a Métis claim is the judicial belief that constitutional protection must take the form of a right demonstrating exclusivity or joint agreement amongst Indigenous parties. With constitutional understandings about property rights, the history of sharing space has not received particularly positive recognition from Canadian courts. The village's specific area likely can be understood with reference to current common law about Aboriginal title. But whether getting the benefits of such an argument truly fits the historic forms the village's space has had is another matter. Île-à-la-Crosse has a strong history of "inter-relationships that continue"¹⁰⁰⁶ with "efforts of the Métis to establish a more meaningful social order which, at the same time, is consistent with major traditions."¹⁰⁰⁷ When learning about the "exclusive" component within s. 35 discourse, and the problems such an understanding represents, the exclusivity requirement shows its most awkward form when recalling the village's past and the litigation Morin et al have started.

To this day, trial procedures for the Claim have yet to commence. A number of factors could be influencing this elongated delay. Financial circumstances,¹⁰⁰⁸ confidential Crown-Métis negotiations on other subjects, or more interest in further litigation from the Supreme Court could all be imagined as influencing the Crowns'

¹⁰⁰⁶ Joubert and Davidson, "Mediating Constructivism," 2.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Spaulding, "The Métis of Île-à-la-Crosse," 15.

¹⁰⁰⁸ CBC News Saskatoon, "Metis Nation of Saskatchewan shuts its doors in Saskatoon: Internal disputes, money troubles force closure of headquarters," March 31, 2015, accessed April 30, 2015. www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/metis-nation-of-saskatchewan-shuts-its-doors-in-saskatoon-1.3016804.

and Indigenous litigants' interest in postponing matters.¹⁰⁰⁹ But whatever the influences upon the stall in litigation, the issue of modern law and historic data trigger a number of issues that can be mentioned here in the meantime. To this day, the issue of determining constitutionalism in the village and its greater region is alive and energetic.¹⁰¹⁰ This interest has, furthermore, gained support from national Métis leaders and is considered a way to help bring attention to Métis concerns from across Canada. In sum, the place considered irrelevant in history is yet again significantly influential for those located far from Île-à-la-Crosse.

One of the ways this study can pivot anyone's understanding about how to resolve problems is, as James Scott has encouraged the political science field to consider, in how our searches about good governance should shift. In regularly focusing on urban landscapes, we will miss examples of people inventing ways for their most traditional land use, language, and capacity to enforce cultural traits. In fact, we should search for the most challenged families and communities, to learn about how they have managed to survive at all. In other words, and as Scott professes, an isolated community's potential to continue while enveloped by larger trends has more to teach us about core organizing/administrative techniques than larger institutions or populations. Today, Scott encourages us to make reference to the most disenfranchised and the most forgotten when we claim to have a concern

¹⁰⁰⁹ *Daniels v. Canada (Indian and Northern Development)* [2014], 4 FCR 97, leave to appeal to SCC granted for October 8, 2015.

¹⁰¹⁰ Metis National Council, "Northern Community Leaders Assert Métis Rights in Ile a la Crosse, Saskatchewan," July 26, 2015, *News*, accessed August 26, 2015, <http://www.metisnation.ca/index.php/news/northern-community-leaders-assert-metis-rights-in-ile-a-la-crosse-saskatchewan>.

about the planet's more significant difficulties.¹⁰¹¹ Scott reverses the analytical lens used by some strongly held (and vocal) researchers such as Florida. Scott argues we should search harder for those most missing from records and realize that such an absence might have actually encouraged the development of superior tactics for sustainability. In other words, too much research suffers from an inherent urban-centric starting point, and such a bias could mean we lose time in trying to tackle some difficult issues that need immediate improvement.¹⁰¹²

Notably, despite his regular mention of multiculturalism, Scott ultimately relies upon an understanding of "Metis" for his entire presentation.¹⁰¹³ He imagines that the success of the future depends upon finding Métis understandings about cooperation, tolerance, and sustainability. He also challenges 'liberal' perspectives on what they seem unable to address, such as permanent damage to the land, or increasing socio-economic gaps that eventually cost administrations more money to repair than the price of an early intervention.¹⁰¹⁴ More based on current circumstances than thorough historical research, Scott's perspective reminds us that a study can also trigger thoughts about what themes can be identified and

¹⁰¹¹ See generally James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*.

¹⁰¹² Alex Bozickovic, "Brash New Ideas for Brave Urban Souls," *The Globe and Mail*, February 14, 2015, F3.

¹⁰¹³ James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State, How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998). 309-341. He does not mention the village. As well, he does not spell the word with an accent above the "e".

¹⁰¹⁴ See generally Tom Flanagan, Christopher Alcantara and Andre Le Dressay, *Beyond the Indian Act: Restoring Aboriginal Property Rights* (Montréal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2011), P. G. McHugh, *Aboriginal Title: The Modern Jurisprudence of Tribal Land* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011) and Gerhard Ens, "Metis Ethnicity, Personal Identity, and the Development of Capitalism in the Western Interior: The Case of Johnny Grant," in *From Rupert's Land to Canada*. Notably, both McHugh and Ens have worked as "expert witnesses" for the Crown in various cases.

considered worthy to protect – even before the multiple and complicated consequences of Morin et al's claim are considered.

At its simplest, the village's space was shared and the village's life illustrated the components that sharing requires. Today, many sources and people claim that these same tenets are vital for a community, jurisdiction or even nation-state to demonstrate. Why is it so hard to imagine these conditions, when recognized in full instead of merely an aspiration, getting protection in the law? Perhaps this study can introduce the point that, just as we have forgotten to see those qualities' existence, we have also failed to notice those qualities' relevance in legal discourse.¹⁰¹⁵ Already, Marc Gold reminds us how courts regularly “want their decisions to be deemed acceptable to the society” and, as a result, social interaction that occurs in a shared region is as relevant as an individual party's circumstances.¹⁰¹⁶ Lorne Sossin also contends that the entire subfield of administrative law is founded on the importance of peaceful interaction amongst individuals and groups. As Sossin concludes, when a decision-maker in administrative law hearings issues a declaration, sanction, or injunction, s/he considers a community's conditions when formulating any findings. Moreover, Canada's higher courts take the community's role into account during any appeal of

¹⁰¹⁵ See Charles B. Goodrich, *The Science of Government as Exhibited in the Institutions of the United States of America* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and company, 1853), 239; William J. Novak, *The People's Welfare: Law and Regulation in Nineteenth Century America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 19-50.

¹⁰¹⁶ Marc Gold, “The Rhetoric of Constitutional Argumentation,” *University of Toronto Law Journal* 35, no. 2 (1985): 170, 182.

administrative law decisions.¹⁰¹⁷ It is not a matter of arguing whether constitutional and administrative law principles should take “interdependence” and co-existing conditions into account. They already do – and that should be especially recalled when marginalized groups are evaluated in the court system.¹⁰¹⁸ Acknowledging shared spaces is within Canada’s judicial realm.¹⁰¹⁹ It is not the anomaly or an incorrect understanding of law that some vocal writers have boldly contended.¹⁰²⁰

Using concepts from economic analysis, the village had a high amount of “quasi-rents” (temporary returns indirectly linked to land use) that ensured Île-à-la-Crosse’s community survived through times that challenged (or even overtook) other places. Those months and years of community survival simultaneously hosted peaceful social relations, greater financial stability for individuals, and the reinforcement of cultural attributes as those relationships went on.¹⁰²¹ The small demonstrations of flexibility ensured that a stable socio-economic framework maintained its shape.¹⁰²² If this flexibility is understood as fundamental to the

¹⁰¹⁷ Lorne Sossin, “The Rule of Policy: *Baker* and the Impact of Judicial Review on Administrative Discretion,” in *The Unity of Public Law*, ed. David Dyzenhaus (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2004), 91.

¹⁰¹⁸ David Jutras, “The Legal Dimension of Everyday Life,” *Canadian Journal of Law and Society* 16, no. 1 (2001): 57. As an example, “Co-management boards have existed in Canada since the 1980s.” Martha Johnson, *Lore: Capturing Traditional Environmental Knowledge* (Hay River, NT: Dene Cultural Institute and the International Development Research Centre, 1994), 16-17.

¹⁰¹⁹ For a case that calls for more examples of historical data and community interconnectedness, see *R. v. Marshall*; *R. v. Bernard* [2005] 2 S.C.R. 220, at para. 65; and at paras. 55 and 56 where the court cites *Delgamuukw* at paras. 143 and 149. Sadly, these points have not reappeared in decisions after 2005.

¹⁰²⁰ Felix Hoehn’s book is helpful on this point, particularly his discussion about “Proof of Sovereignty,” in *Reconciling Sovereignties: Aboriginal Nations and Canada* (Saskatoon: Native Law Centre, University of Saskatchewan, 2012), 112-114; and see Roderick Macdonald, *Lessons of Everyday Law* (Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002), 22, 55.

¹⁰²¹ Albert Breton and Michael Trebilcock, eds., “Introduction,” in *Bijuralism: An Economic Approach* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006), 1-11.

¹⁰²² It took until 1966 for a study to detail how cultural components might actually strengthen when a monopolistic framework is imposed. See Amartya Sen, “Peasants and Dualism.”

people of Île-à-la-Crosse, and those people happen to be Indigenous, it seems that the story acts as an historic example of sustainability, and the current form of s.35 would protect that quality.¹⁰²³ The process sustained the community's social and cultural lifespan, and the process was based on using the land sustainably.

In the end sustainability/sustainable development, and the Crown's s.35 obligation to protect, become a necessary quality to have in the village regardless of what exclusive land use principles will be recognized there or elsewhere.¹⁰²⁴ As the village's Métis usufructory rights (in the form of sustainability) are accepted in much of Saskatchewan and their argument about title (in the form of scrip recognition before treaty signings) around the village is recognized and also given legal protection, other arguments about title or treaty can still occur elsewhere and at the same time. Sustainability is the way the Métis demonstrated and demonstrate their sovereignty, and the land claim's argument for the village's space can help address the damage that the absence of recognizing that sovereignty has done. Stating these points does not detract from what other Indigenous communities might choose to propose in a Canadian court themselves.

¹⁰²³ Kent McNeil, "Aboriginal Title and the Supreme Court: What's Happening?" *Saskatchewan Law Review* 69 (2006): 298, where he refers to *Delgamuukw* at para.157; *Delgamuukw* at para. 143.

¹⁰²⁴ Jarvenpa and Brumbach, "Socio-Spatial Organization and Decision-Making Processes: Observations from the Chipewyan," 612. Steven G. Gey, "The Myth of State Sovereignty," *Ohio State Law Journal* 63, no. 6 (2002): 1604. Compare these views to the conclusions contained in Kenneth Coates and Dwight Newman, "The End is Not Nigh: Reason over Alarmism in Analysing the Tsilhqot'in Decision," *Macdonald-Laurier Institute Paper Series* (September 11 2014), accessed July 23, 2015, <http://www.macdonaldlaurier.ca/files/pdf/MLITheEndIsNotNigh.pdf>.



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Through the varied topics it embraces, the Claim details law-making and how outsiders who focused on strong natural resource exploitation decided to follow those (Indigenous) laws.¹⁰²⁷ Sakitawak's area had a sovereignty that was reinforced

¹⁰²⁵ Image 32 - Today, the hospital, library and school co-exist under one roof as yet another example of shared space. Photo courtesy of Brenda Macdougall. For more about this space, see Quiring, "Battling Parish Priests, Bootleggers, And Fur Sharks," 211.

¹⁰²⁶ Image 33 - These two signs appear together closer to the village than the lone "Sakitawak" sign featured earlier in this thesis. Notice that the issue of Métis history and conservation are to be recalled simultaneously. Image courtesy of Leanne Laprise.

¹⁰²⁷ John Fraser Hart, Neil E. Salisbury and Everett G. Smith, Jr. think this failure to examine rural centres properly is due to researchers failing to examine diversification as a quality. See "The

in history by a “template for integrated community sustainability planning,”¹⁰²⁸ and the village’s autonomy grew over time because locals showed “no sharp break between generations in terms of cultural continuity,”¹⁰²⁹ and they worked to ensure Île-à-la-Crosse remained the “economic magnet” for both its original inhabitants and non-Indigenous peoples across the North West.¹⁰³⁰ Due to how the people of Île-à-la-Crosse showed (and show) “fluid reshuffling of personnel through bilateral linkages” and “flexibility,”¹⁰³¹ Indigenous ways became all peoples’ ways, and the goal of a “good life” developed without much difficulty.¹⁰³² The sustainability, in its application, automatically recognizes Indigenous legal doctrine.

In 2001, when Île-à-la-Crosse had its two hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary, locals organized a “fair.” Villagers searched for a midway company to arrive and set up its wares and rides. The Conklin company agreed, and in June of that year locals and their visiting friends and family had three days to eat food the Northern or the

Dying Village and Some Notions about Urban Growth,” *Economic Geography* 44, no. 4 (October 1968): 343-9. Frank Tough, “Prof v. Prof in the Trial of the Benoit Treaty Eight Surcharge Case: Some Thoughts on Academics as Expert Witnesses,” *Native Studies Review* 15, no. 1 (2004): 65. Tough focused on *Benoit v. the Queen* (7 July 2000) Docket T-2288-92 (F.C.T.D.).

¹⁰²⁸ I have borrowed this phrase from the title of the article, Christopher Ling, Kevin Hanna and Ann Dale, “A Template for Integrated Community Sustainability Planning,” *Environmental Management* 44, no. 2 (2009): 228-42. Very notably, the authors give no overt mention to the possibility that what they aspire to create might already exist. In comparison, I found the following case study approach to this subject very helpful: Liette Gilbert, L. Anders Sandberg and Gerda R. Wekerle, “Building Bioregional Citizenship: The Case of Oak Ridges Moraine, Ontario, Canada,” Special Issue *Local Environment* 14, no. 5 (May 2009): 387-401.

¹⁰²⁹ Spaulding, “The Métis of Île-à-la-Crosse,” 111.

¹⁰³⁰ Jarvenpa, *Trappers of Patuanak*, 40.

¹⁰³¹ Jarvenpa and Brumbach, “Socio-Spatial Organization and Decision-Making Processes: Observations from the Chipewyan,” 612.

¹⁰³² For details about how the pursuit of hospitality is a never ending process of negotiation and leads to better individual success, see Kuokkanen, “Toward a New Relation,” 267; and see John Friesen, *When Cultures Clash: Case Studies in Multiculturalism*, 2nd ed. (Calgary, AB: Brush Education Inc., 1993), 27-28 where he details how the assumption of a ‘good life’ serves as a goal for cultures, and generosity and good will are signs of a good culture.

“Restaurant” made, twirl on the “Zipper,” get swung around on the “Octopus,” or even reach so high on the Ferris Wheel that they could see the neon lights, water, bush, and sky as well as any crow or eagle. From another view, folks from Île-à-la-Crosse could see how their space – their place – revealed peaceful interaction that inspired some villagers to get together, organize a celebration and get the rides all the way up Highway 908. Fairs allow anyone to venture into that space, meet others from different circles, participate based on personal comfort and financial means, and imagine the event as a time to take pride in the village.





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Those who research the function of a fair observe how such an event illustrates many components within a community, and the smaller a place that hosts a fair, the more stable that location is.¹⁰³⁴ Indeed, a fair in a large city does not represent as solid a form of self-reliance and acceptance within that community as a non-urban and isolated locale having an exhibition. Year after year, Île-à-la-Crosse illustrated “adaptive management” that allowed the 2001 celebration to occur.¹⁰³⁵ For years, Dene and Cree people managed to cooperate well when they traded. Then, members

¹⁰³³ Images 34 & 35 - Opposing views of village from top of ferris wheel during village’s 225th anniversary celebration “fair” in 2001. Images courtesy of Brenda Macdougall.

¹⁰³⁴ Researchers focusing on community activities consider the role of a fair to include the transformation of a cultural history into a national identity, and the availability of knowledge to everyone rather than just to any existing elite. See Richard Handler, *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 141; Frank E. Manning, “Cup Match and Carnival: Secular Rites of Revitalization in Decolonizing Tourist-Oriented Societies,” in *Secular Ritual*, ed. Sally Falk Moore and Barbara G. Myerhoff (Assen, NL: Van Gorcum, 1977), 268; Brandon Dimmel, “Bats Along the Border: Sport, Festivals, and Culture in an International Community during the First World War,” *American Review of Canadian Studies* 40, no.3 (2010): 334.

¹⁰³⁵ See generally Martin Olszynski, “Adaptive Management in Canadian Environmental Assessment Law: Exploring Uses and Limitations,” *Journal of Environmental Law and Practice* 21 (2010): 1-30.

of these nations continued this trend when they met Frobisher and Henry, when those involved in fur harvesting realized a credit system actually improved financial results for all those involved, and when villagers strategized how to ensure that their attachment to the region was recognized in law before treaty documents became finalized. The place of Île-à-la-Crosse, as Stéphane Dion demonstrated recently, has deserved recognition for years and should be better known today. In that same exchange introduced at the beginning of this study, (then) Prime Minister had to hear Dion tell him that, unlike what the prime minister believed, “there *were* survivors” from the village’ school.¹⁰³⁶ Even the issue of residential school abuse has not stopped the community from standing up to such ignorance coming from the most powerful elected official in Canada – perhaps the most ultimate moment of Métis “wakotowin”.

Searching for, and then finding, Sakitawak means challenging previous methods used to reveal places and peoples. It means introducing notions about what consistency – or even the absence of profound change – represents. It also means confronting those who claim an interest in certain reforms such as better land use, but who fail to appreciate fully the history of such an activity and hence miss an opportunity for introducing sustainability into the legal system so that such use is constitutionally required. Even more bluntly, it means telling those who claim a

¹⁰³⁶ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 12 June 2008, 1416.

concern with the rule of law that they arguably do not apply that simple principle to everyone within Canada.¹⁰³⁷

As much as finding Sakitawak has been about finding dates, personalities, and events, the search also means learning about process – what was *done* during the past and how we *undertake* historical presentations today. It also means facing the point that Canadian law does not protect enough the idea of “commons” or multifaceted relationships. In Île-à-la-Crosse/Sakitawak, far above and below the ground, amongst all the creatures, and in the results of complicated and significant relationships, the land created what was good and the people paid attention to those creations. So in the end, finding Sakitawak means learning how to make better the ecological, social, and legal systems of this country. Or, put another way, Kayas acimowin kay piwihciki.¹⁰³⁸

But, without question, Ekosi pitama.¹⁰³⁹

¹⁰³⁷ Melissa S. Williams, “Criminal Justice, Democratic Fairness, and Cultural Pluralism: The Case of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada,” Special Issue *Buffalo Criminal Law Review* 5, no. 2 (2002): 492.

¹⁰³⁸ Michif phrase for “Don’t disrespect the stories from long ago.”

¹⁰³⁹ Michif for “That’s all – for now...”

APPENDIX 1

TIME LINE

10, 000 B.C.E.	region begins to have its current land form.
700 C.E.	date given to archaeological findings depicting Nihiyaw-Dene trade.
1670	Hudson's Bay Company established.
1763	<i>Royal Proclamation Act</i> announced by British Parliament.
1774	Samuel Hearne reaches area he names "Cumberland House"
24 June 1776	Henry Frobisher and Alexander Henry arrive at Île-à-la-Crosse.
Autumn 1778	Peter Pond crosses Methye Portage.
1783	a group of traders becomes publicly known as the North West Company.
1784	Patrick Small arrives.
1 September 1785	Charlotte Small born to Patrick and his unidentified First Nations wife.
1785	David Thompson reaches York Factory on assignment with the HBC.
1787	Thompson begins seven year apprenticeship with the HBC at Cumberland House.
1786	William McGillvray arrives to act as assistant head of NWC post. McGillvray's arrival means village becomes community to have an assistant Factor.
1790	HBC decides it should send representatives to Île-à-la-Crosse, and those men include Peter Fidler and Philip Turnor.
1791	Patrick Small leaves Île-à-la-Crosse.
1792	Peter Fidler visits but does not participate in any trading activities.
1794	Thompson promoted to "Surveyor" and given assignments to travel up Churchill to eventually reach Île-à-la-Crosse.
23 May 1797	Thompson breaks his contract with the HBC and joins the NWC.
Autumn 1797	Thompson arrives at Île-à-la-Crosse for first time.
1798	Thompson visits Île-à-la-Crosse a second time and sends another set of maps to NWC headquarters in Montréal.
1798	XY Company founded and led by Alexander Mackenzie and Simon McTavish.
1799	Thompson visits Île-à-la-Crosse for the third time and creates a third set of maps describing the village and its greater region.
Spring 1799	XY Company claims it has established post in village.
10 June 1799	Thompson and Charlotte Small wed.
Summer 1799	Peter Fidler fails to establish an HBC post for the second time.

1799	HBC announces it has set up a permanent trading post in village but no permanent HBC buildings exist in community.
1802	XY trader kills NWC man and killing is not investigated by any company or Crown representatives.
1803	<i>Canada Jurisdiction Act</i> passed.
1804	XY Company merges with North West Company.
1804	Fidler attempts to construct an HBC post in village for the third time.
Summer 1805	Fidler arrives for fourth time, and again fails to establish post.
1806	Fidler fails to establish post for a fifth time.
1810	John Clarke resigns his position with the NWC.
Autumn 1814	John Howse arrives at village to establish HBC and brings largest allocated budget for one post in company history.
Autumn 1814	John Clarke secretly visits village to determine community's relevance in fur trade competition.
1815	HBC decides it must build a post in village. Post only survives for four months.
25 June 1815	Treaty made between HBC and Métis hunters from Selkirk.
Autumn 1815	John Clarke publicly announces his role with the HBC after arriving in village.
1816	Battle of Seven Oaks between various Métis men and HBC Servants near Selkirk (Fort Douglas). HBC Governor Robert Semple perishes.
February 1820	Sir John Franklin and George Back visit Île-à-la-Crosse on the HBC's behalf.
Autumn 1820	HBC Governor Sir George Simpson visits village.
June 1821	HBC –NWC merger.
26 June 1821	Simpson visits Île-à-la-Crosse for second time.
1836	Roderick Mackenzie submits report that explains the superiority of local ways over HBC policies.
1839	Île-à-la-Crosse chosen as one of four locations the HBC will record climatic conditions.
Summer 1842	Saint Boniface missionary Jean-Baptiste Thibault ventures to Île-à-la-Crosse for an "exploratory visit".
8 July 1846	Brothers Taché and Laflèche arrive at Île-à-la-Crosse to establish a permanent Catholic mission.
January 1847	Missionaries construct a health care centre in village.
1850	Missionaries announce "hospital" is open to anyone in Rupert's Land.
1851	HBC village Factor Nicol Finlayson establishes "deficit budget".
1855	Visiting priest Patrick Bowes constructs separate church.
1858	Bowes builds two-storey residence for mission workers.
1860	Nuns arrive in village.
1863	Missionary Henri Faraud appointed as Bishop. Village becomes defacto capital of suddenly invented "Athabasca Diocese" with Faraud as head.

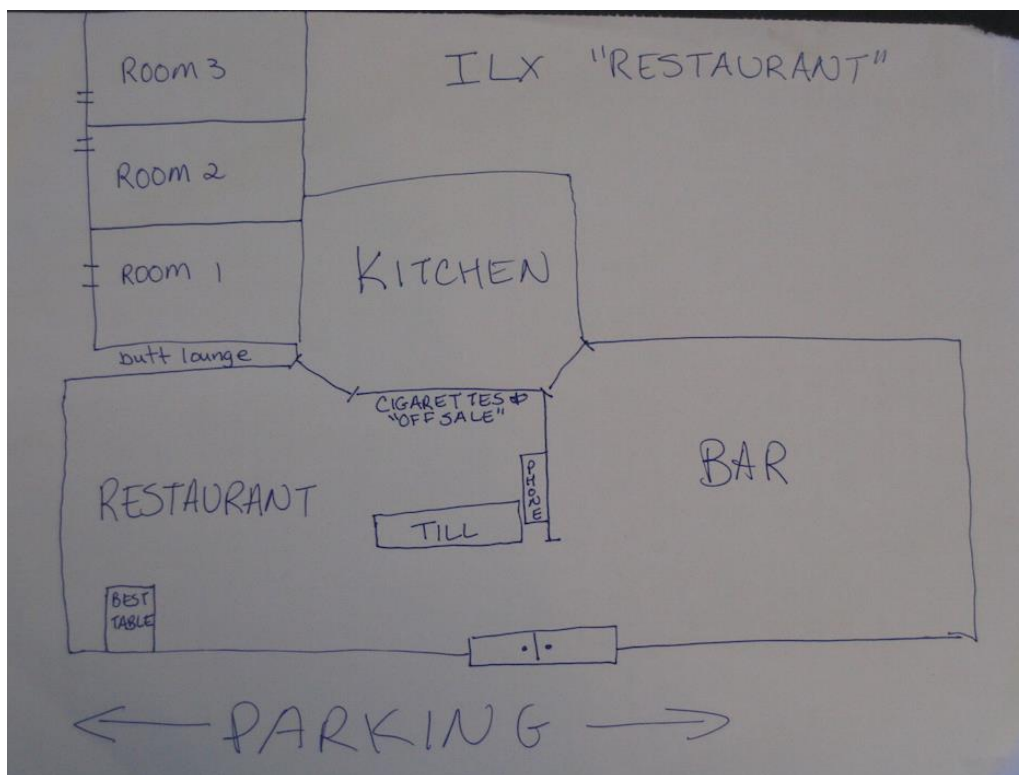
1 July 1867	Canada begins its life as a country.
1868	<i>The Rupert's Land Act</i> passed and acts as the reference for explaining how Rupert's Land is transferred out of Great Britain's control.
1870	<i>Rupert's Land and North-Western Territory – Order of Her Majesty in Council admitting Rupert's Land and the North-Western Territory into the union</i> announced, which is used to claim region is part of Canada.
1870	Manitoba becomes a province.
1871	Treaty 1 begins implementation.
1872	Treaty 2 begins implementation.
1873	Treaty 3 begins implementation.
1873	North West Mounted Police introduced.
1874	Treaty 4 begins implementation.
1875	Treaty 5 begins implementation.
Spring 1876	Village used as location to host treaty talks.
Summer 1876	Treaty 6 begins implementation.
1876	First version of <i>Indian Act</i> implemented.
1876	After losing school grant, Bishop Grandin approves the arrival of more nuns to the mission. Louis Riel Jr's sister, Sara, is amongst the women who join the mission.
1878	Church Missionary Society submits petition to federal government calling for scrip at village.
1880	Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald describes Île-à-la-Crosse school as a role model for other Indian residential schools.
Spring 1885	Village Chief Factor sends Île-à-la-Crosse Servants closer to Batoche to help with trade while refusing to facilitate the trade of munitions.
1888	After protesting the use of a surcharge, HBC Factor Joseph Fortescue receives approval to eliminate surcharge at his discretion.
1889-1891	Fortescue again refuses to implement surcharge policy.
1889	Treaty 6 adhesion implemented.
1890	Fortescue given permission to run credit relationships as he sees fit.
1890	Fortescue tells HBC that villagers should receive scrip.
1890	HBC Inspector Henry Moberly arrives.
1891	In written report, Moberly concludes the HBC should implement the programs used in the village throughout the entire North West.
1892	Villagers help missionaries reconstruct all church buildings.
1894	<i>North West Game Act</i> implemented.
1895	Moberly introduces surcharge on goods transported to other posts.
1885	Confrontation between NWMP and Métis at Batoche.
1897-98	Treaty negotiation agents meet with First Nations in village.

1899	Treaty 8 implemented.
1902	villagers petition Prime Minister for scrip.
1902	Half-Breed Commission recommends scrip be given to villagers immediately.
1 September 1905	Saskatchewan becomes a province.
Autumn 1905	James McKenna is told to arrive in unceded territory to negotiate with First Nations and Métis.
6 June 1906	Métis families in Île-à-la-Crosse receive scrip.
28 August 1906	Families in and around Île-à-la-Crosse who wish to receive treaty sign agreement with McKenna.
September 1906	Treated families move to reserve space.
1907	Saskatchewan implements <i>The Game Act</i> .
1930	Harold Innis' <i>The Fur Trade in Canada</i> is published.
1940	Provincial crews arrive and build their version of a road leaving Île-à-la-Crosse. Eventually named "Highway 908".
1948	<i>Northern Administration Act</i> implemented.
1954	Saskatchewan officially hires V. F. Valentine to investigate community.
1955	Valentine submits report entitled "The Métis of Northern Saskatchewan" to Premier Douglas.
1973	villagers vote to refuse to acknowledge the implementation of village school's inclusion in an existing school board district. Villagers also demand any hired teacher be able to speak Cree. First time in provincial history a schoolteacher required to be speak a second language of any kind.
1973	Supreme Court of Canada releases <i>Calder v. the Queen</i> .
1976	villagers commemorate the community's bicentennial.
1982	<i>Constitution Act, 1982</i> implemented, which includes section pertaining to "Aboriginal and treaty rights".
1984	Supreme Court of Canada releases <i>R v. Guerin</i> .
1985	Bill C-31 passes in Canadian Parliament.
1990	Supreme Court of Canada releases <i>R. v. Sparrow</i> .
1 March 1994	Various Métis families and Métis organizations file Statement of Claim that becomes known as "Morin et al".
1996	Supreme Court of Canada releases <i>R. v. Van der Peet</i> .
1997	Supreme Court of Canada releases <i>Delgamuukw v. Attorney General (British Columbia)</i> .
1999	Supreme Court of Canada releases " <i>Marshall I</i> " and " <i>Marshall II</i> ".
2001	Supreme Court of Canada releases <i>Mitchell v. M.N.R.</i>
2003	Supreme Court of Canada releases <i>R. v. Powley</i> .
2004	Supreme Court of Canada releases <i>Haida v. British Columbia</i> .
25 April 2006	Canada announces a "Final Settlement Agreement" regarding residential schools is reached between the federal government, Christian churches and various Indigenous peoples' organizations.

- 11 June 2008 Canada issues apology for residential schools in House of Commons.
- 12 June 2008 Stéphane Dion asks Prime Minister about the place of Île-à-la-Crosse in Canada's plan for restitution from residential school experiences.
- 20 July 2008 Author makes map in "Restaurant" (see Appendix 2).
- 2012 American Historical Association President William Cronon writes "Professional Boredom".
- 2013 Supreme Court of Canada releases *Manitoba Métis Federation v. Canada*.
- 2013 British Columbia Court of Appeal releases *Ahousaht Indian Band v. Canada*.
- 2014 Federal Court of Canada (Appeal) releases *Daniels et al v. Canada*.
- 2014 Supreme Court of Canada releases *Tsilhqot'in Nation v. British Columbia*.

APPENDIX 2

Diagram of Research Station Regularly Used by Author, created 2009



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CURRICULUM VITAE

1. Credentials

University of Toronto. LLM. Convocated Spring 2003.

York University, Osgoode Hall Law School. LL.B. Convocated Spring 1999.

University of Western Ontario, Department of History. M.A. Convocated Fall 1994.

University of Saskatchewan. International Studies and History. B.A. (Hons.) Spring 1992.

2. Other credentials

Translation requirement (French), University of Western Ontario Department of History. Autumn 1993.

Université du Québec à Chicoutimi. Intensive Summer Program in French. 1991.

3. Appointments

Assistant Professor, Osgoode Hall Law School, July 2014 to present

Assistant Professor, College of Law. December 2009 to July 2014.

Contract Term Faculty, University of Alberta, School of Native Studies, 2001-2002.

Various sessional and instructor work at First Nations University of Canada, University of Saskatchewan Department of Native Studies, University of Toronto, Program of Legal Studies for Native People (Native Law Centre, University of Saskatchewan), 1998 to present.

Member, Faculty of Graduate Studies, York University

Former Member, College of Graduate Studies, University of Saskatchewan.

4. Honours (Medals, Fellowships, Prizes)

2010

Law and Society Association (U.S.). Emerging Scholars' Prize.

2009

Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History. Graduate Student Travel Award.

2008

Social Science and Humanities Research Canada. Doctoral Fellowship.

Network in Canadian History of the Environment. Conference Paper Travel Grant.

University of Western Ontario, Faculty of Graduate Studies: Western Graduate Research Award.

Western Canadian Studies Association. Conference Paper Travel Grant.

2007

Social Science and Humanities Research Canada. Doctoral Fellowship.

Law and Society Association (U.S.) Travel Grant Award.

University of Western Ontario

Faculty of Graduate Studies: Western Graduate Research Award

Society of Graduate Students: Conference Travel Award

Dean's Office (Social Science): Thesis Travel Grant

Graduate Teaching Assistants' Union Needs Bursary

2006

American Political Science Association. Best "international scholar" (non-U.S.) graduate prize, which also became classified as best prize for all graduate students at 2006 annual meeting.

University of Western Ontario

Faculty of Grad.Studies:Western Graduate Research Award.

Department of History:Tuition Award and teaching assistantship.

Society of Graduate Students: Conference Travel Award.

Faculty of Social Science: Graduate Research Travel Fellowship

Graduate Teaching Assistants' Union Needs Bursary

2005

American Ethnohistory Association. Graduate Student Award for Annual Meeting Conference Presentation.

University of Western Ontario

Faculty of Grad.StudiesWestern Graduate Research Award

Department of History: Tuition Award and teaching assistantship

Society of Graduate Students:Out of Province Student Bursary Award

Graduate Teaching Assistants' Union Needs Bursary

2004

Law Commission of Canada, Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences- Winner, "Audacity of Imagination Award"

Member of team obtaining SSHRC Award for "Indigenous Governance", led by Prof. Andr  e Lajoie.

2003

University of Toronto Faculty of Law:

Callwood Fellowship in Aboriginal Law.

Massey College:Bursary Grant.

First Nations House: Gladys Watson Award.

2002

University of Toronto

Faculty of Law:Callwood Scholarship; Travel Grant (2);

Massey College:Accomm.Bursary; Catherall Travel Grant

First Nations House: Gladys Watson Award.

U of T Native Students Assoc.: Outstanding Leadership in Teaching.

2001

University of Toronto

Faculty of Law:Callwood Scholarship.

Massey College:Accomm. Bursary; Catherall Travel Grant.

First Nations House:Gladys Watson Award.

1999

Osgoode Hall Law School.

Most Outstanding Graduate.

1998

Department of Justice (Canada)

1997

Full scholarship, Tuition and Living Expenses during third year law

Department of Justice (Canada)

Full scholarship, Tuition and Living Expenses during second year
law