

Wabowden: Mile 137 on the Hudson Bay Railway



Rail Town Ties
montage by Louise Marleau

Researched and Written by
Raymond Shirritt-Beaumont

Photographs/illustrations collected and created by:
**Louise Marleau, Catherine McLeod,
Peter Dueck, and Lori Nordland**



Frontier School Division
January 2004

Cover Photo Montage

(Background) *Wabowden Station 2001* (courtesy Raymond Shmitt-Beaumont), (top, left) *Luke Clemons and Premier Bracken during inspection trip of HBR and Port Nelson 1924* (courtesy Ed Carter), (center) *detail of Wabowden Station 1944* (courtesy Canada Science and Technology Museum, CN001144), (right) *Mary and Fred Beebe c. 1930s* (courtesy Minnie Fortney), (bottom left) *detail of Construction workers near Churchill on the Hudson Bay Railway, c. 1929 - 1930* (courtesy Provincial Archives of Manitoba, N13175)

Wabowden: Mile 137 on the Hudson Bay Railway

The earliest known European settlement in the vicinity of Wabowden was Wegg's House, an outpost of the Hudson's Bay Company built on Setting Lake in the fall of 1795. However, except for the remnants of a chimney, little remains of this tiny fur trade establishment, which closed in 1796 after being in operation for only one winter. In subsequent years, traders no doubt stopped many times to camp or rest at the spot before resuming travel along the Upper Track, the fur trade route between Cumberland House and York Factory via the Grass and Nelson Rivers. The Cree probably used this particular site as well, and like their ancestors had done before them, they continued to live at other points along the lakes and rivers of this region for much of the nineteenth century. They were still living on Setting Lake at the beginning of the twentieth century, most of them in a small settlement near where the Grass River enters the lake. Eventually, they too pulled up stakes and left, many of them moving permanently to a village that grew up along the Hudson Bay Railway a few kilometres to the east. Located one hundred and thirty-seven miles north of The Pas, this fledgling community was commonly known as Mile 137 before it took on its official name of Wabowden. In its heyday, it was an important railway divisional centre and the hub of a vast regional transportation network that included places as far away as Oxford House and Island Lake. This history is about those years, as well as the years before and since, a brief illumination of the human activity in and around Wabowden for the past two hundred years.

Researched and written by
Raymond Shirritt-Beaumont

Assisted by
**Louise Marleau, Catherine McLeod,
Peter Dueck, and Lori Nordland**



© Frontier School Division
January 2004

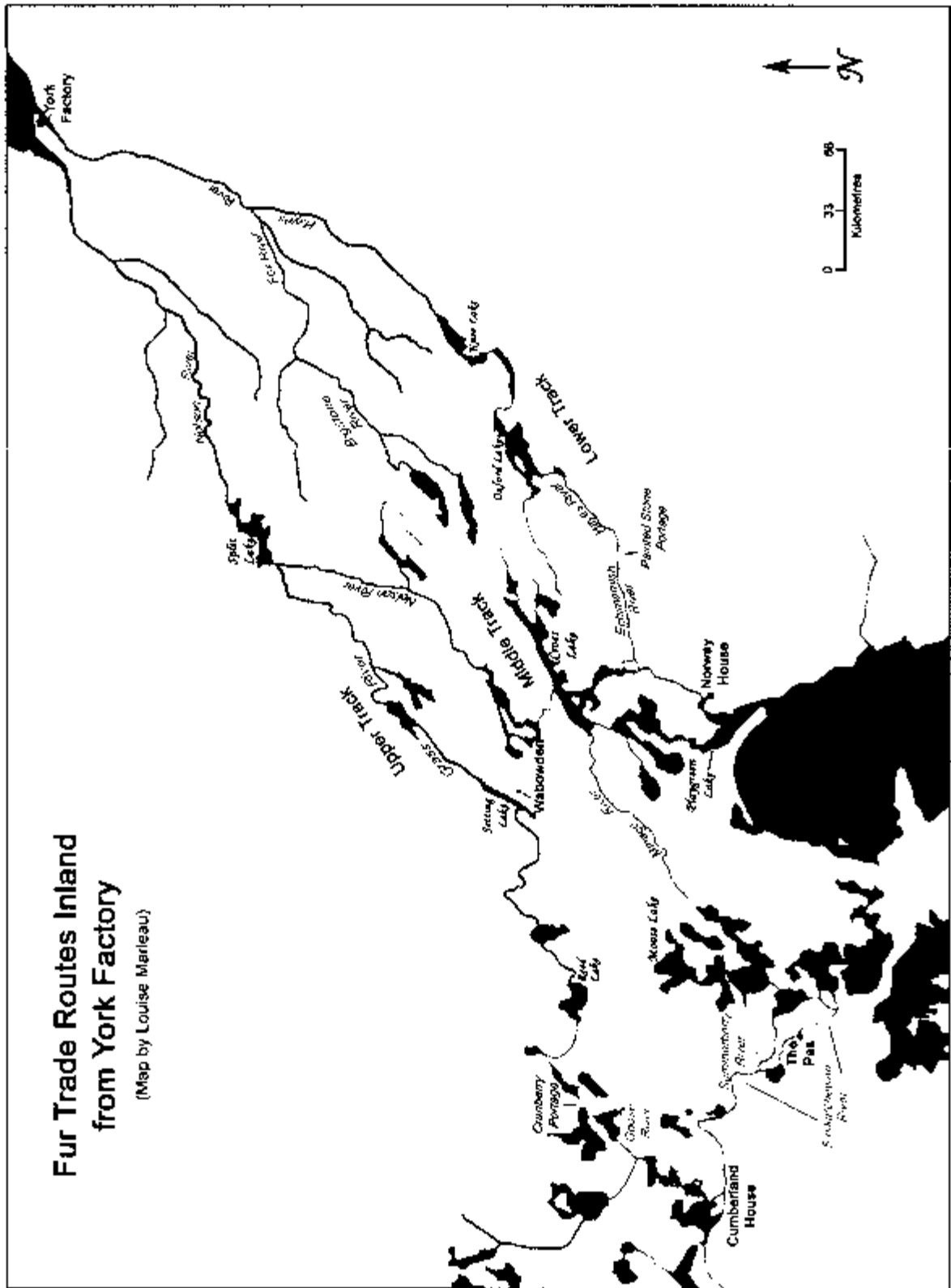
Acknowledgements

This booklet represents a continuation of Frontier School Division's commitment to the creation of learning resources reflective of Northern Manitoba's unique economic and cultural perspectives. It is somewhat different from earlier studies, which focused on aboriginal communities of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with strong ties to the fur trade and the Hudson's Bay Company. That component is still evident in this history, but *Wabowden: Mile 137 on the Hudson Bay Railway* is also about a railroad town of mixed Aboriginal-European origin that developed in the early twentieth century, mainly in response to the building of the Hudson Bay Railway. The following is an acknowledgement of the many people who have been involved directly or indirectly in the completion of this history.

A big thank-you to the school board for its unwavering support of curriculum development in Frontier School Division, and to Gordon Shead, Chief Superintendent, for ensuring that we maintain our course. Thanks to community members who have provided pictures, as well as historical information and editorial comment; these contributions have been greatly appreciated. Thanks to Catherine McLeod, our researcher at Wabowden, who has been tireless in her efforts to track down pictures and gather needed information through the interviewing process; to Adele Lafreniere, researcher-writer, for editorial comment and proofreading; and historian Renee Fossett, who indexed the text to make information more readily accessible to the reader. To our research assistants, Lori Nordland for her work on identifying Wegg's House, Peter Dueck for a variety of research and editing tasks, and to Louise Marleau, whose Fine Arts background is reflected in the final layout of photographs, maps, and text. Indeed, her trained eye and visual expertise is evident on every page of the book. Lastly, to R. Shirritt-Beaumont, researcher-writer, who wrote the text and supervised the completion of the project.

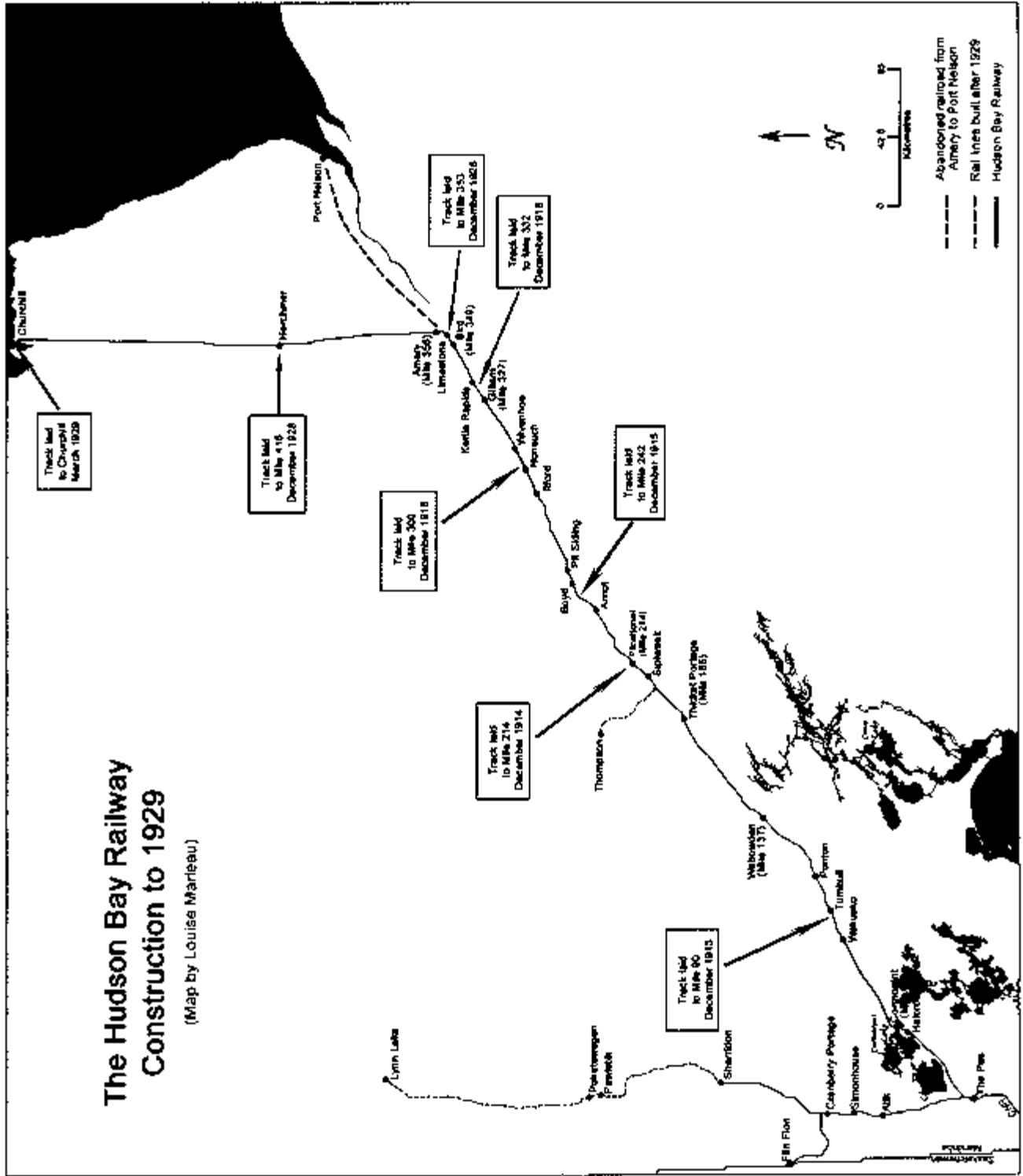
It is our hope that this brief history of a northern railway town will prompt additional research on the contribution of rail transportation to the economic development in Northern Manitoba.

Arnold Dysart
December 2003



The Hudson Bay Railway Construction to 1929

(Map by Louise Marleau)



Contents

Acknowledgements	ii
Photographs/Illustrations	vi
Foreword	ix
Chapter One	
Wegg's House, 1795-1796: An Early Settlement	1
The Chimney and Wegg's House: One and the Same?	4
Archaeological and Historical Evidence: Comparisons	7
HBC Journals: Reading between the Lines	8
Finding Clues in the Maps	9
Wegg's Post Identified at Last	14
Chapter Two	
Cree Associations with Setting Lake 1795-1914	15
HBC Trade with the Local Cree	15
The Cree of "John Scot's Lake"	15
Setting Lake	17
Chapter Three	
The Hudson Bay Railway: Early Stages 1908-1919	21
Work on the Railroad Begins	21
The Railroad as an Agent of Change	22
Working Conditions during Railroad Construction	27
After Hours on the Line	28
Rail Travel A Comfortable Option for Some	30
The Railway and Economic Expansion	31
Daily Life in Railway Communities	33
Work Slowdown during World War I	35
The Influenza Epidemic, 1918-1919	37
On to The Bay: Keeping the Dream Alive	42
Chapter Four	
Wabowden Takes Shape, 1914 -1925	44
Mile 137: Early Development	44
The HBC at Mile 137	46
Lamont and Davidson	47
The Role of the Local Newspaper	48
Fur Traders at Mile 137 and Elsewhere	50
Uncertain Years, 1920-1922	51
Commercial Development at Mile 137 in the Early 1920s	53
Social Life at Mile 137	56
Agricultural Possibilities Investigated	57

Chapter Five	
The Hudson Bay Railway's Completion, 1925-1929	61
1925: A Turning Point in the Fortunes of the Railway	61
Mile 137 in Mid-Decade: A Busy Place	63
The Race to Oxford Lake	65
Mile 137: First Divisional Centre North of The Pas	67
Railway Construction Falters, then Resumes	68
Fort Churchill replaces Port Nelson as the Northern Terminus	72
Wabowden Prospers with the Turn in the Railway's Fortunes	74
Mining Speculation Benefits Wabowden	75
The Pas to Churchill: Promises of a Bright Future	76
Chapter Six	
Wabowden after 1929	84
Appendix 1	
The Other Family of William Sinclair (c. 1766-1818)	99
Appendix 2	
Who are the Garricks?	107
Bibliography	131
Index	135

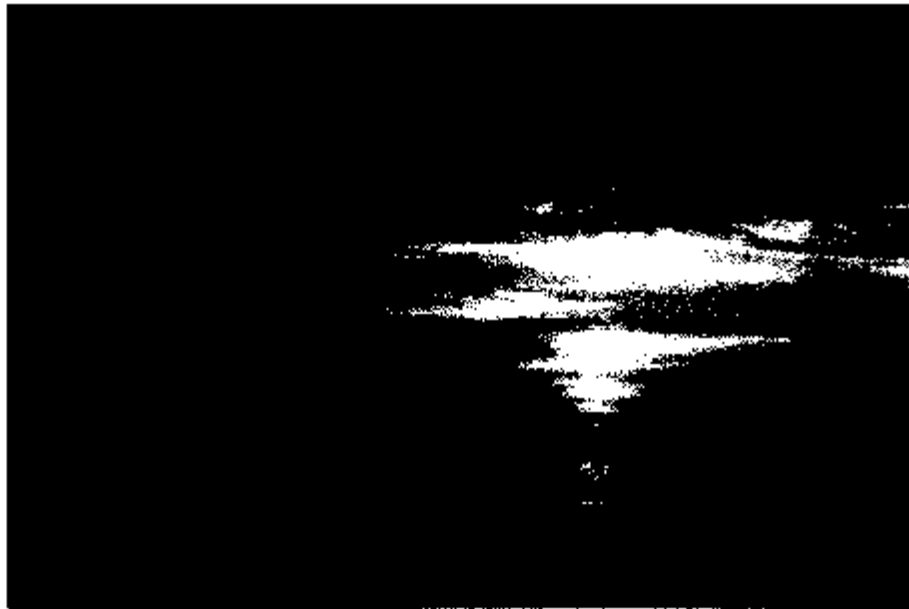
Photographs/Illustrations

Fur Trade Routes Inland from York Factory (map)	iii
The Hudson Bay Railway Construction to 1929 (map)	iv
Bowden Lake at Dusk, 2001	ix
Wabowden Historical Museum, October 2001	x
York Factory (1770s?)	3
Chimney on Setting Lake c.1960s	4
Beaver Button	5
Pisew Falls, 2001	5
Ground Plan of the Wegg's House Archaeological Site	6
The exact location of Wegg's House (map)	10
The Journey of Malchom Ross and his Men (map)	11
The Second Intriguing Map in Wegg's House Journal (map)	12
Artist's Version of Wegg's House	14
Setting Lake near Wayside Park from the South East	17
Map of Setting Lake illustrating Setting Lake Settlement	18
Mile 136.00 on the line of Hudson Bay Railway	20

The Hudson Bay Railway Bridge spanning the Saskatchewan River	21
Survey Crew's Cabin, Survey Party #4, 1908-1909	23
Sandy Ridge Camp, survey Party #4, 26 June 1909	24
Surveyor's Camp, Hudson Bay Railway Survey Party #4, 1908-1909	24
St. Anthony's Hospital, The Pas, c.1920	25
Steel Bridge at Manitou Rapids, c.1920	25
Track-laying Gang at Mile 100	26
Interior of a Stationman's Shack	27
Track-laying on the Hudson's Bay Railway, c.1920	28
Labourer-teachers of Frontier College	28
The "Muskeg" snowed in at Mile 205	30
Herb Lake	32
Hudson Bay Construction Office	33
Pikwitonei Mile 214, Hudson Bay Railway	34
Mile 214 before 1928	35
Landing Supplies, Port Nelson	36
Aerial View of Kettle Rapids on the Nelson River	37
People and Supplies on the HBR	38
Dog Teams resting at Mile 137 on way to Cross Lake	40
Public Notice issued by the Alberta Board of Health	41
Mr. Paul and Delivery Wagon	43
Aerial view of Mile 136	44
Dog Train	45
Dick Davidson sorting Wolf Pelts	47
Luke Clemons (1878 - 19??)	51
Hudson's Bay Company's 250 th Anniversary	52
Mr. Cowan with Group of Trappers at Thicket Portage, n.d.	53
Davidson & Lamont's Trading Post at Mile 137, 1922	55
Mile 137 H.B. Ry. Hudson's Bay Co. Post, 1922	56
Sophia Ryan, "Diamond Queen"	58
Hon. William Richard Motherwell, n.d.	59
Potatoes at Mile 137, 29 August 1924	60
Lumbering Operations associated with the Construction of the HBR	61
Arthur Meighen, n.d.	62
Sgt. & Mrs. Percy Rose with sons Kenneth & Gerald	64
Tom Andrews, a Trapper at Mile 214 before 1928	64
Kenny Rose, son of Sgt. Percy Rose on a Gas Car	66
Forest Fire, n.d.	66
Cutting Ties for Hudson Bay Railway at Thicket Portage	67
Hudson Bay Railway Tugs "Geo. W. Yates" and "Kathleen"	69
Man-made Island at Port Nelson Mile 424	69
Hospital Cars on Hudson Bay Railway	71
Ballast Pit	72
Hudson Bay Railway snowed in near Churchill, May 1929	73
John W. Low, Prospector, c.1935	75
Marble Quarry, Mile 39 1/2	77
Gold Mine at Herb Lake	77

The Diamond Queen's Cafe and Store	78
Aerial View of Wabowden, 1946	79
View of Wabowden, before 1946	80
HBC Store on Bowden Lake, 1926	80
Wabowden's Roundhouse, Water Tank, and Sandchute, n.d.	80
Coal Dock, n.d.	80
View of Wabowden, before 1946	80
View of Wabowden, before 1946	80
Mile 214 prior to 1928	81
Mary Buck and Company at Mile 214	81
Railway Loading Bays at the Port of Churchill	82
Transfer of First Load of Grain through the Port of Churchill	82
Brass Plaque erected at Port Churchill in 1931	83
Wabowden Station, 1944	87
Doughty's Restaurant/Pool Hall and the Silver Leaf Hotel, 1944	85
Weather Station, late 1940s to early 1950s	85
Roman Catholic Church, early 1990s	86
Wabowden Anglican Church, August 1936	86
Wabowden Community Club, 17 May 1954	87
Experimental Farm, Wabowden, n.d.	89
Eric Taylor (2 May 1918 - 17 November 1952)	90
Memorial to Eric Taylor, Wabowden, 2001	91
Wabowden Ice Cream Parlour, May 2003	91
Wabowden, Manitoba, 1954	92
Wabowden Community Council Office, 2001	92
Wabowden, after 1967	93
Wabowden	94
Fish Processing Plant, 2001	95
Nursing Station, 2001	96
Ke-Na-Now Community Centre, 2003	97
Mel Johnson School	97
Sasagiu Rapids, 2001	98
Charles McLeod at Chimney Site, 1954	99
Grave of William Sinclair (c.1766-1818)	99
Donald Ross	100
Ben Sinclair (Moose O Coot)	101
The McLeod - Sinclair Connection (chart)	105
Charles McLeod at Chimney Site, 1998	106
Mrs. Cochrane and the Garrioch Sisters, c.1940s?	107
Lieutenant-Governor Morris, Representative of the Crown	108
Rev. John West's Church and Mission School at Red River	114
From Split Lake to Red River, Fall 1824 (map)	115
Family Ties of the Garriochs of Cross Lake (chart)	116
Rev. James Settee, 1870s	118
HBC Fleet (Prince Rupert, Sea Horse and King George)	122
Cree Buffalo Pound near Fort Carlton, Saskatchewan, 1820	123

Foreword



Bowden Lake, 2001
(courtesy Catherine McLeod)

The still waters of Bowden Lake reflect the fire-like rays of evening sunlight and suffuse the surrounding landscape in translucent light. It is nearly dusk, and I am the visitor, struck by the beauty of the moment, which stands out in sharp contrast to the hustle and bustle of city life that I left behind in Winnipeg. It is the fall of 2001, and I am in Wabowden with my colleague Adele Lafreniere. We are here to meet with our researcher Catherine McLeod, as well as to conduct interviews with local elders and tour the community in anticipation of the history we are publishing about it. It is but a short visit, but this unforgettable view of Bowden Lake alone has made it worthwhile and will remain a vivid reminder of our stay here.

Nestled along the shores of the lake, Wabowden is remarkable for its contrasts. In some places, houses seem randomly placed, while elsewhere they appear organised like suburban developments in southern towns. Transportation routes vary as well. The main road winds its way along the contours of the lakeshore, but straight streets in grid formation criss-cross the housing complex at the Point. The railroad travels in a straight line through the town, too, and what passes as a central business district runs parallel to its tracks. Evidently placed there for easy access to transportation, this section of the town looks somewhat the worse for wear, an impression reinforced by the obviously derelict

railway station nearby.¹ It is also suggestive of earlier, better times, when the railway was still king. On the other hand, the box cars sitting at the station, and extending as far down the line as one can see, tell us that the railroad is still a force to be reckoned with. There is life elsewhere, too. Landscaped homes with manicured lawns, well maintained public buildings, and a large modern school tell us that this place is far from dead. The recreational facilities at Setting Lake are another positive sign of community will. But perhaps nothing speaks better of the human resources in this community than the museum, an institution often given low priority in the face of other pressing economic needs. That it was built and has thrived speaks volumes concerning the community's pride, organisational skills, and determination.

These qualities need to be consistently encouraged among the citizenry at large, especially the young, if a community is to maintain itself and grow. This history of Wabowden has a place in that process, but not if it is viewed simply as a chronicle of past events. It needs rather to be a springboard for discussion that will help students and others apply the lessons of history to questions in the here and now. For example, how can we promote Wabowden's development based on its history? What form should that development take? Such questions and the linkages implied in them can demonstrate to students the importance of historical knowledge. It can also involve them directly in its application to real-life situations, so that creative answers can be found.

Raymond Shirritt-Beaumont

January 2004



Wabowden Historical Museum, October 2001

(courtesy Raymond Shirritt-Beaumont)

Catherine McLeod (left) and Adele Lafreniere

¹The old railway station has since been demolished.

Chapter One

Wegg's House, 1795-1796: An Early Settlement

Wabowden, which today boasts a population of about six hundred people, is one of Northern Manitoba's oldest towns. Located a hundred and six kilometres south of Thompson and three kilometres east of Highway 6, it owes its origin to the Hudson Bay Railway, which was built in the first decades of the twentieth century. However, it was not the first settlement in the region. The Cree had lived off and on for many generations at selected spots along the nearby rivers and lakes. These places were occupied for weeks or months at a time, depending on the demands of the seasonal round; then the Cree would move on to another location.¹ Skilled as hunters, they attracted the attention of French and English fur traders, who arrived among them during the eighteenth century in search of furs. These were available in abundance, and the Cree were prepared to obtain and exchange them for European manufactured goods

like guns and copper kettles.² Generally, the traders only passed through the region in those early years, but occasionally they built a temporary post, so that the local hunters could bring their furs to them. One such settlement was Wegg's House, a Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) outpost built on Setting Lake in the fall of 1795.³

The history of this short-lived post is most intriguing. It all began at York Factory on 18 July 1795, when

Messrs Ross and Thompson with fourteen Englishmen and six Indians in four large and two Small Canoes with a Choice assortment of Trading Goods Set off for the long talked of Athapescaw Country as also Mr Sinclair with fourteen Englishmen and two Indians in four large and one Small Canoe loaded with Trading Goods for Nelson River Settlement.⁴

Malchom Ross and David Thompson were on an expedition to the fur-rich Athabasca Country, which at the time was under the

¹ The traditional "seasonal round" involved the migration of Cree people from place to place at specific times during the year either to take advantage of local resources or make contact with other people.

² Not only did the Cree obtain fur from animals they hunted themselves, but in the 1700s they also regularly traded their own used trade items for fur from hunters beyond the European sphere of influence, then exchanged these furs for new goods from the traders.

³ An outpost was a small, outlying trade centre attached to a main post, in this case, York Factory. Wegg's House was named after Samuel Wegg, who was Governor of the Company at the time. For an account of this man, see "Governor Samuel Wegg: The Winds of Change," *The Beaver* (Autumn 1977): 10-20.

⁴ Provincial Archives of Manitoba (PAM), Hudson's Bay Company Archives (HBCA), B.239/a/97, fo. 29, York Factory Post Journal, 1794-1795, mf. 4M161.

exclusive control of the Canadian traders.⁷ William Sinclair, on the other hand, was headed up the Nelson River with a different destination in mind.⁸ As subsequent events would prove, he wintered at Setting Lake on the Grass River where his orders were to "Keep a watchful Eye over the Canadian Traders and wherever they remove to build[,] follow them and erect a House near."⁹

It was a long and tedious journey up the Nelson River. The trip from York Factory around the Point of Marsh separating the Hayes and Nelson Rivers was difficult because of the wind, and it was not until the following day that the canoe brigade entered the mouth of the Nelson.

Ross recorded that they camped that night at a point "seven miles" from Flamborough Head just above the mouth of the Nelson, or as the crow flies, probably about twenty-

eight kilometres from York Factory.¹⁰ The following day they headed upriver against a strong current made worse by bad weather and rain. Indeed, they often had to track in order to make any progress at all.¹¹ This, coupled with the need to portage around rapids along the way, made for exhausting travel. As a result, it took Ross and Thompson and their men almost two weeks to reach *Ta task we ah Sakahagan* (Split Lake), a distance of two hundred and fifty kilometres, or roughly nineteen kilometres a day. They remained at this lake for several days waiting for Sinclair and his men, who had fallen behind at "the lower most Fall in port Nelson River."¹² Although Ross never explained, the delay may have been caused by illness. Two days after his arrival at *Ta task we ah Sakahagan*, Sinclair was sick, and on August 11, he returned to York Factory, arriving there on August 17 with "four

⁷ The "Canadian" traders, most of them connected with the North West Company, were based in Montreal in Upper Canada (now Quebec). Malchom Ross, born in the Orkneys in about 1754, was a fur trader who started as a labourer with the HBC in 1774 and rose to be an officer of the company. He drowned on an expedition to the Athabasca in the fall of 1799. David Thompson, the famous explorer and geographer, was born in London in 1770 and joined the HBC in 1784. He rose to become an officer of the Company, then deserted in 1797 to the North West Company with which he had a distinguished career until his retirement in 1815. For more detailed information on these men, see *The Dictionary of Canadian Biography*.

⁸ William Sinclair was born on the Island of Pomona, Orkney Islands in 1766, joined the HBC as a young man, and served at York Factory and a number of inland posts, including Oxford House. He died at York Factory in 1818.

⁹ PAM, HBCA, B.239/b/56, fo. 28, York Factory Correspondence, 1794-1795, mf. 1M256.

¹⁰ Flamborough Head, probably named after a place in Yorkshire, England, was a point on the north bank of the Nelson River near its mouth. The distance of 28 k from York Factory is based on the assumption that Ross and his men stopped at a point *above* Flamborough Head. Assuming, too, that they had camped the previous night right at the northern tip of the Point of Marsh, they would have travelled about 36 k that day. However, if they stopped *below* Flamborough Head, on account of rough water or wind, they would have travelled about 16 k in about seven hours, or about 12 k. overland from York Factory.

¹¹ "To track" means to draw or lead a canoe through rapids, shallows, or other difficult stretches of water by means of "tracking lines" running from the craft to people on the bank or shore. Walter S. Avis, et al., ed., *Gage Canadian Dictionary* (Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing Co., 1983), 1190.

¹² PAM, HBCA, B.66/a/1, fo. 3, Fairford House Post Journal, 1795-1796, mf. 1M52.



A South West View of Prince of Wales's Fort Hudsons Bay.

Engraved by Robert Goulet, March 1797.

York Factory (1770s?)

Engraving, coloured. 1 March 1797 after a sketch by Samuel Hearne. HBCA P-228 (N8317)
(courtesy Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba)"

Englishmen and four Indians in one Large and two Small Canoes."¹²

In the meantime, Ross pressed on. About ten miles from where he separated from Sinclair, Ross parted company with Thompson, who headed up the Burntwood River "in Charge of the four Canoes that is going to deers River Way."¹³ Since Ross

had to go to Reed Lake, where he had traded the previous winter, he continued up the Nelson with "the Charge of the 4 Canoes that is going way Towards Grass River."¹⁴ At the junction of the Grass and Nelson Rivers, Ross sent one large canoe and three men up the Nelson with trading goods for James Tate at Cross Lake; then

¹² Although the engraving is inscribed "A South West View of Prince of Wales's Fort Hudsons Bay," it is most certainly of York Factory. See R. Glover, "La Perouse on Hudson Bay," *The Beaver* (March 1951):46.

¹³ PAM, HBCA, B.66/a:1, fo. 3

¹⁴ *Ibid.* Fairford House was built at the entrance of the Deer's River (Reindeer River) on the Churchill River System.

¹⁵ Having separated from Sinclair and Thompson, Ross now had only three large canoes and one small one for his journey up the Grass River

he and the remainder of the men headed up the Grass River.

By now Ross and his men had been travelling for more than three weeks. In the evening they camped at a "carrying place that 3 of the men is to return with a canoe on account of the mens times being out."¹⁵ On August 12, the following day, Ross set off again with "2 canoes of Englishmen" accompanied by "two Indian canoes" that were carrying part of the trade goods for him.¹⁶ Travelling faster now, they reached "the Cat Carrying Place [Pisew Falls]" on August 16.¹⁷ Off again at 4:00 a.m. the following morning, Ross and six men travelled for nine hours and arrived at 1:00 p.m. on August 17 at the "place appointed by the Indians for a settlement," known later as Wegg's House.

The Chimney and Wegg's House: One and the Same?

The location of Wegg's House has long been a mystery. However, a stone chimney on Setting Lake, well known to local residents for many years, probably marks the exact site of this late-eighteenth century HBC outpost. Described by Charles Clay in 1928, it had a hearth on either side.



Chimney on Setting Lake c.1960s
(courtesy Wabowden Historical Museum)

Each of these fireplaces has a smoke outlet. The fireboxes are lined with stones and have a stone rim around the hearth opening. They measure some three feet [.9 m] in depth, nearly three feet [.9 m] in height, and about two feet [.6 m] across. Both are approximately the same size. The ceilings of these fireboxes are lined with stones and slope gradually to the lower hole of the smoke-stack. This measures some twenty four [60 cm] by eighteen inches [45 cm]. The inside of each smoke-stack slopes upward some eight feet [2.4 m] to form an aperture about

¹⁵ PAM, HBCA, B.66/a/1, fo. 3d. The record is unclear, but it seems that three men, who had fulfilled their contracts, went back to York Factory by canoe from this point, then sailed on the Company ship for Britain.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, fo. 4. By this time one canoe, probably a large one, had gone to Cross Lake where HBC trader James Tate was located; another, probably the smallest, had returned to York Factory, leaving Ross with two large canoes. The two additional canoes probably belonged to Nelson River Cree who had joined them along the way.

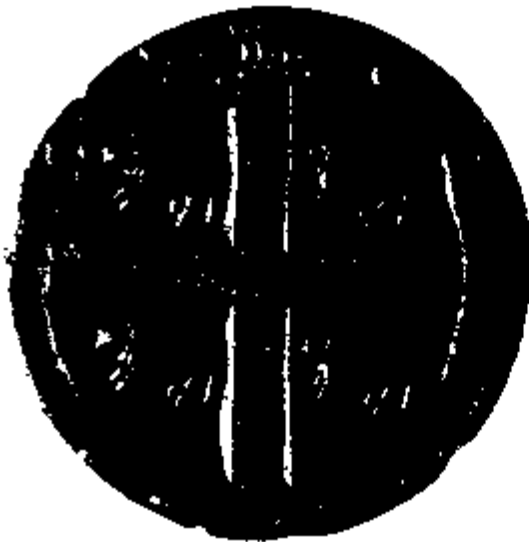
¹⁷ Pisew Falls is about one hundred and eighty kilometres from the mouth of the Grass River, which would mean they travelled an average of 36 kilometres a day on that leg of the trip.

eighteen [45 cm] by fifteen [37.5 cm] inches at the top; which is the smoke outlet. The wall which forms the back of each fireplace and separates them is about a foot [30 cm] through. The frame-work of these fireplaces is of spruce saplings (as evidenced by the pieces projecting at the top), now much dried by age. The outside of the Chimneys, and the inside of the smoke-stakes and fireboxes, is plastered with a yellow clay-mud, which is now very hard and brittle. The top of the Chimneys, about ten feet [3 m] from the ground, has weathered and the mud has crumbled a little, exposing the ends of the upright wooden supports and some of the cross-braces. There are no nails in evidence where the cross-pieces are fixed to the uprights and one would surmise that the joining was effected with leather thongs eight [2.4 m] by four [1.2 m] feet and the top about four [1.2 m] by three feet [.9 m], thus sloping the outside walls approximately eighty degrees.¹⁴



Pisew Falls, 2001
(courtesy Adele Lafreniere)

This chimney is typical of those built during the 1790s in fur trade country, but that fact alone does not prove it marks the location of Wegg's House. There is, however, strong circumstantial evidence pointing in that direction. If Ross and his companions travelled from Pisew Falls to this spot, they would have come approximately twenty kilometres, a reasonable distance in nine hours, considering that they had to portage at Sasagiu Rapids, as well as stop for something to eat.¹⁵ There are other clues, too. Archaeological research in the 1980s indicated that a fur trade post had been built here toward the end of the eighteenth century. Not only were artifacts uncovered dating to that period, but the presence of beaver buttons suggested a specifically HBC site.¹⁶

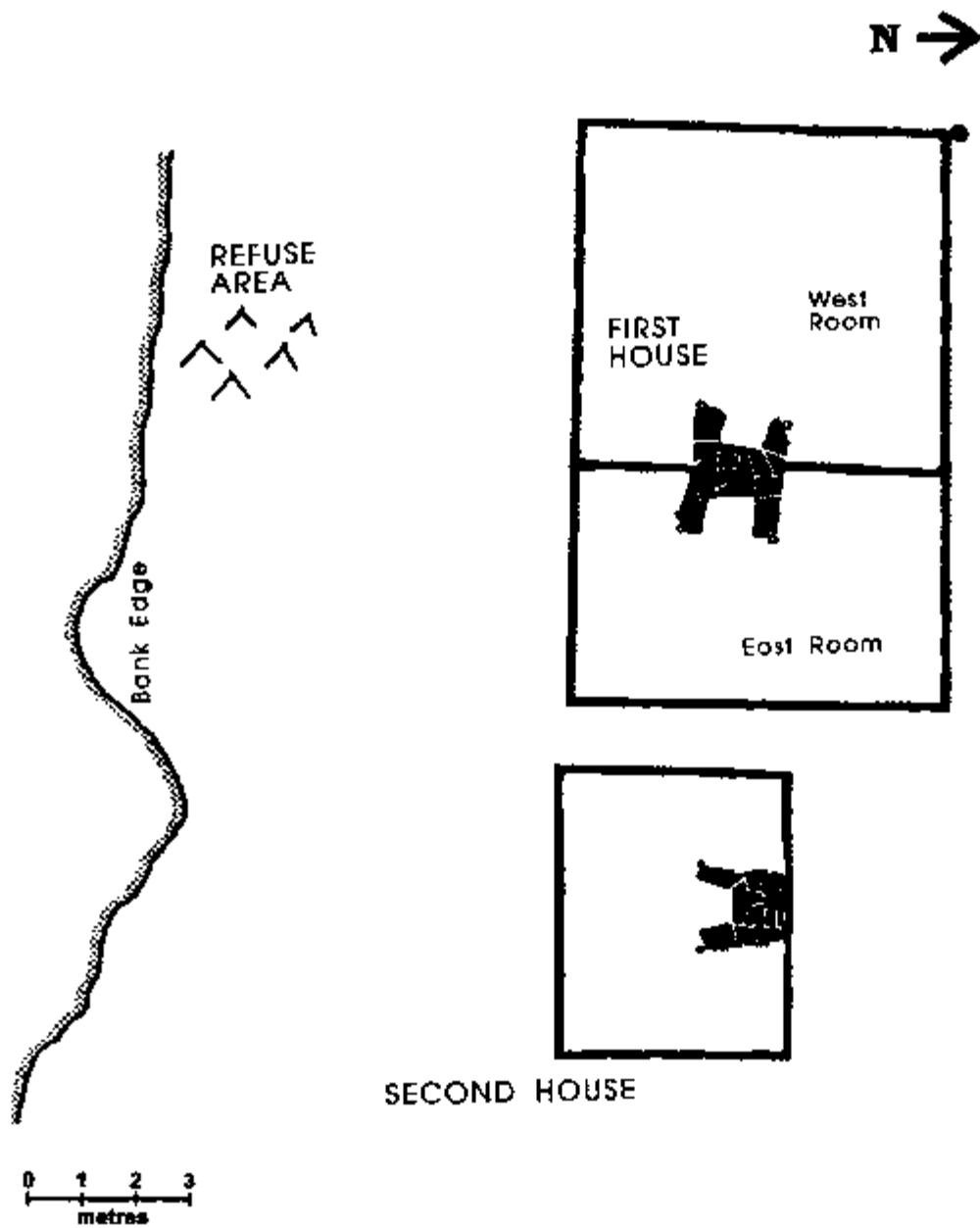


Beaver Button
(courtesy Manitoba Museum of Man and Nature)

¹⁴ The citation reads "Clay, Charles. 1928. "The Chimneys" unpublished paper in Sam Forrest's file, July 25 Nelson House, Manitoba." See David Hems. 14. The chimney deteriorated in the years after 1928, so that it was only about four feet [1.2 m] in height when archaeologists conducted on-site investigations in 1986, 1988, and 1990.

¹⁵ Weather conditions were not recorded in Ross's journal, but wind and rough waters could also have slowed the brigade's progress.

¹⁶ Brian J. Smith and Kathleen Neary. *Archaeological Investigations. The Setting Lake Chimney Site. GgLP-1* (Edmonton, Alberta: 1991). 238. Some of the artifacts collected are on display at the Wabowden Historical Museum.



Ground Plan of the Wegg's House Archaeological Site

Composite drawing by Louise Marleau, based on Brian J. Smith and Kathleen Neary, 50, 51, and 86.

Archaeological and Historical Evidence: Comparisons

The archaeologists were able to identify three main features at this location: "a large house divided into two rooms and heated by a single large double fireplace structure with two hearth areas; a second, smaller house with a single hearth fireplace; and, a refuse area where trash and faunal remains were discarded."³³ A careful reading of the HBC journal for Wegg's House reveals strong support for these findings.³⁴ Three days after Ross's arrival at this place, men were already "clearing a place to lay the foundation of the house on."³⁵ Two buildings were erected, "a small house, to keep the trading goods in" and "a house to live in."³⁶ Construction on the storage house for trade goods began on 21 August 1795, and by September 3, three men were roofing it. On that same day in September, men also began cutting timber to build the second and larger house, which apparently served as a store and living quarters. This second building was ready

for occupancy on October 17.³⁷ The journal also contains references to a chimney. On September 17, "two men gathering stones for to build a chimney with," the following day "two men building the fire places," and on September 22, they "finished building the fire places."³⁸

The journal clearly indicates that both buildings were under construction at the same time. At the beginning of October, the men were "sawing boards for flooring" and by October 7, they had "finished the floors of both houses."³⁹ Not only did the archaeologists find sawed floorboards at the site, they also found large quantities of chinking, which confirmed the October 1 entry in the journal, "four men employed plastering the outside of the house."⁴⁰ On the other hand, the journal only mentions "a chimney," not two chimneys, and the reference to "fire places" is consistent with the presence of a single chimney having two hearths on either side. Although this appears to conflict with the discovery by the archaeologists of a second single-

³³ *Ibid.*, 240.

³⁴ See especially PAM, HBCA, B.66/a/1 and PAM, HBCA, B.228/a/1, Wegg's House Post Journal, mf. 1M151. The governing council of the Hudson's Bay Company in London required that a daily journal be kept at each of its posts in Hudson Bay. The weather, work assignments, and other matters pertinent to the local management of the fur trade were recorded there.

³⁵ PAM, HBCA, B.66/a/1 fo. 4d; PAM, HBCA, B.228/a/1, fo. 4.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, fo. 4, 5

³⁷ *Ibid.*, fo. 5, 7d

³⁸ *Ibid.*, fo. 5d

³⁹ *Ibid.*, fo. 6d-7.

⁴⁰ David Hems, 37, PAM, HBCA, B.228/a/1, fo. 6d.

hearth chimney associated with the smaller building, there may be an explanation for the discrepancy.

HBC Journals: Reading between the Lines

Since it was customary for the journalist to give only a brief synopsis of the day's events, important information may have been missed. This is all the more likely because the first journal entry was dated 17 August 1795, long before Sinclair made his appearance at Wegg's House on September 30.²⁹ Indeed, there is no hint of this late arrival in the journal, which was written as if Sinclair had been there the whole time.³⁰ In all likelihood, he reconstructed events after the fact through inquiries of his men or from notes kept by one of them.³¹ Details may have been overlooked in this process, or left out to enhance Sinclair's professional

career; however, they may also have been excluded to avoid prying inquiries into his personal relationships.³² This latter possibility requires some explanation. Initially, the small building was designed to store trade goods, presumably on a temporary basis, until they were removed to the trading shop located in the main house. However, after the goods had been removed, the building is unlikely to have remained empty. Equipped with a fireplace, it may have been used as a repair shop, for storage, or to house visitors as the archaeological report suggested.³³ On the other hand, since Sinclair already had a small family, it is more likely that it became his residence for the winter.³⁴ Because the London Committee took a dim view of its men having wives and children, as they added to the expense of running a post, it is little wonder that Sinclair avoided mention of details that might betray the presence of additional mouths to feed.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, fo. 6d. The reference on September 30 is to "four Indians arrived from York Fort with Letter &c." Since Sinclair left York Factory on September 8, it is likely that he was with these "Indians." If so, the journey took twenty-two days as compared to thirty days for Ross and company. See PAM, HBCA, B.239/a/97, fo. 35.

³⁰ Sinclair may have avoided reference to his return to York Factory in order to downplay the fact of his ill health, a problem which could have been perceived in London as reason to withhold promotion or even to cancel his contract on the grounds that he was unfit for the arduous demands of the service.

³¹ Sinclair's informant could not have been Ross, who set off upriver for Reed Lake on August 19. He is more likely to have been Hugh Leask, whom Ross described in a letter written on the 18th as "a worthy and trusty Servant and pays the greatest attention in discharging what he is entrusted with." See B/239/b/56, fo. 27. Or William Corrigan, who probably assumed command upon his arrival on September 5 from Three Points Lake, where he had been in charge all summer.

³² The journals were sent home annually to London and read meticulously, so that the HBC could plan future trade strategies. Post factors wrote these journals with care to avoid rebuke for perceived inadequacies in their professional or personal conduct.

³³ Smith and Neary, 240.

³⁴ William's wife, Nahoway, was a woman of mixed Cree and British origins. In 1795, they had a son William, who was about a year old, and at least two daughters, Phoebe and Catherine.

The records of the Hudson's Bay Company are voluminous, but they do not give away their secrets easily. Often, it is only through careful study of different journals that the historian is able to piece together the puzzles each contains. Identifying the actual site of Wegg's House is a case in point. Although the archaeologists consulted the HBC journal for this post, they did not look at Ross's journal for Fairford House. This latter source contained details on the trip up from York Factory that help to pinpoint the Setting Lake Chimney Site as a plausible location for Wegg's House. Ross's journal provides the reference that Sinclair turned back because of illness, a fact confirmed in the York Factory journal. And, a comparison of all three journals makes it possible to determine just when Sinclair finally arrived at Wegg's House.

Finding Clues in the Maps

Sinclair's late arrival was discovered by researcher Lori Nordland, while she was investigating another mystery about Wegg's House. Her assignment was to find out more about a map an archaeologist had attributed to William Sinclair and identified as the northern portion of Setting Lake. In fact, he was so sure of his bearings that he claimed a spot on the map as the exact

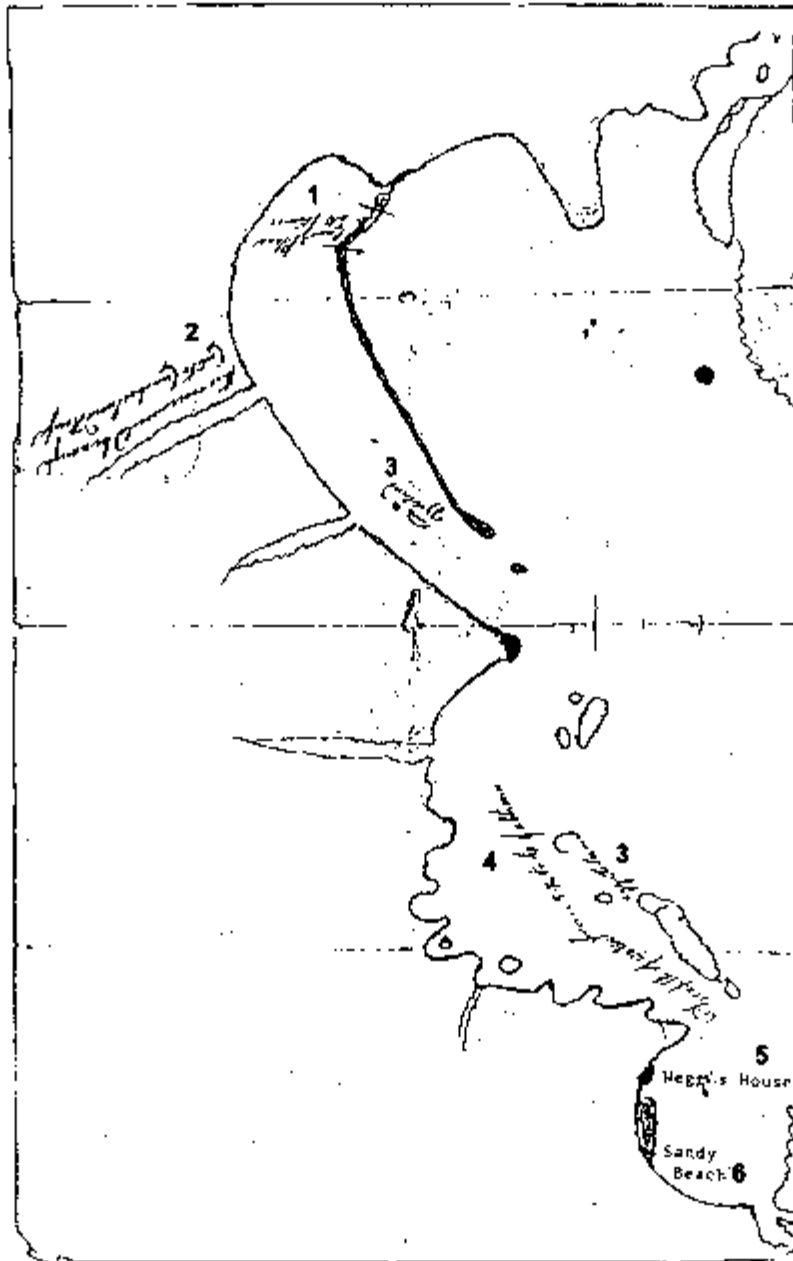
location of Wegg's House, then submitted his hypothesis as part of an unpublished archaeological report." At this stage, nothing was actually altered on the map itself. This step was taken by a second archaeologist, who included the same map in his published report with "Wegg's House" clearly marked on the spot identified by the first archaeologist."

The identification was problematic, because the map did not look at all like Setting Lake. Two features appeared out of place. One was a long sandbar on which there were two lines marked "Carr[yin]g Place at times," evidently portages used to gain access to the second puzzling feature, namely the entrance to a river marked "this river would be a nigh Cut to Cumberland House." No such river exists on the north-west side of Setting Lake, so this map had to represent something else. But what?

The archaeologists assumed that Sinclair made the map because it was in his journal for Wegg's House. However, since her discovery that Malchom Ross had led the expedition to Setting Lake in August 1795, Lori began to wonder if it had been Ross, rather than Sinclair, who had drawn the map. Her hypothesis began to take shape

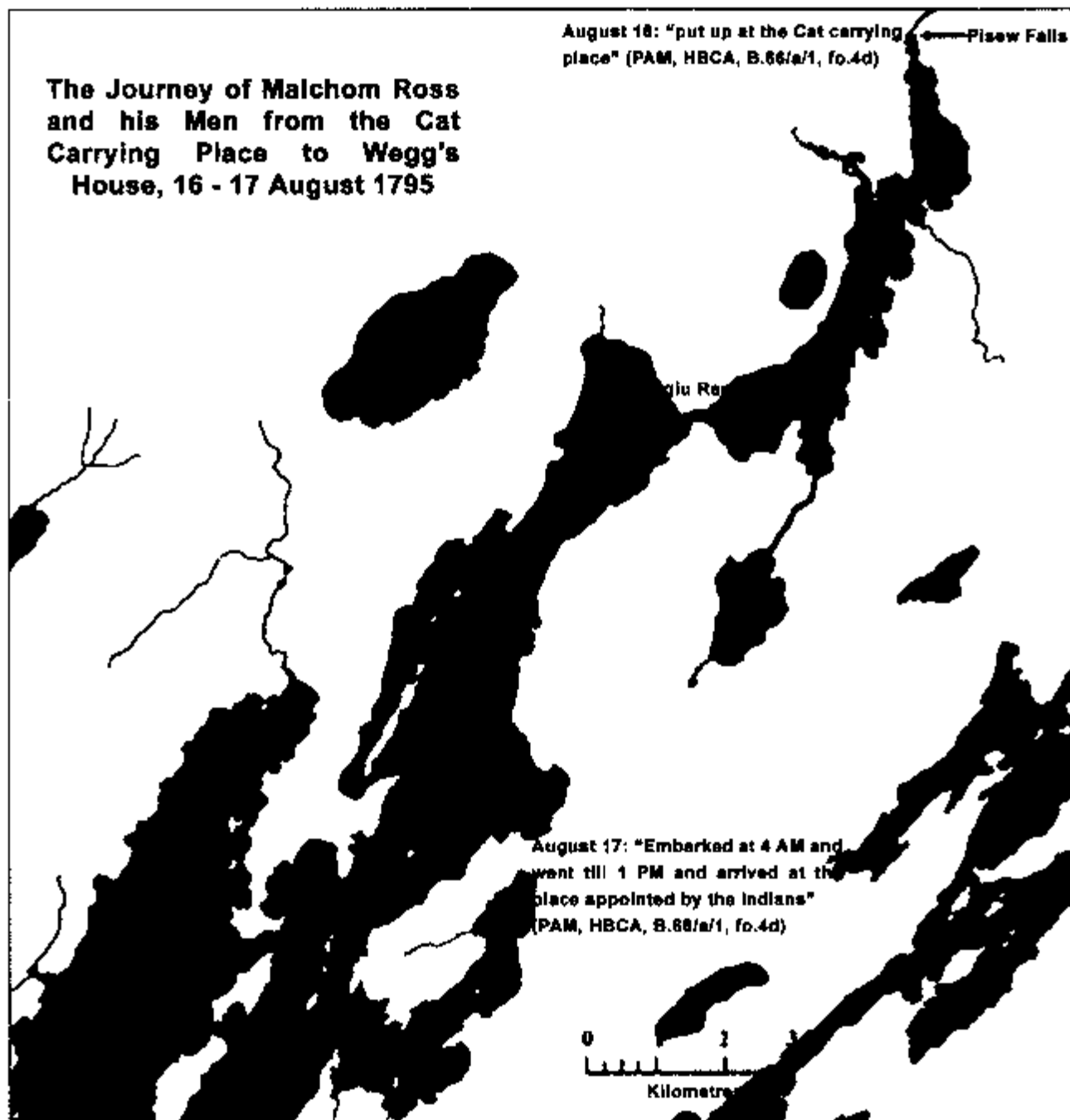
* For his interpretation, see David Hems, 35. Hems included two maps on pages 11 and 38. Figure 3, page 11, is a modern map on which the Setting Lake Chimney Site was marked, and Figure 13, page 38, is the map taken from the Wegg's Lake Post Journal on which he has identified the location of Wegg's House according to his hypothesis.

~ Brian J. Smith, 26a



The exact location of Wegg's House as identified by archaeologist Brian J. Smith. See Brian J. Smith, *Archaeological Interpretations: The Setting Lake Chimney Site*, Gg Lp-1, 1988. Setting lake, Manitoba (Edmonton 1988), 26a. Smith's conclusion was based on a hypothesis put forward by David Hems, who assumed that the sketch map in Wegg's House Journal was of Setting Lake. See David Hems, "Test Excavations at the Setting Lake Chimney Site - GpLp-1" (Report prepared for Resources Branch, Culture, Heritage and Recreation, 1990), 38. In fact, the above map appears to be of an as yet unidentified lake. See below for translation of its associated text.

1. Carrying place [portage] at times.
2. This river would be a high cut [short cut] to Cumberland House.
3. Egg Island (nesting sites of birds where local people collected eggs).
4. Depth of water from 5½ to 6 fathoms. [A fathom is 6 feet or 5.4 metres]
5. Wegg's House, as identified by archaeologist Brian J. Smith.
6. Sandy Beach, also noted by Smith.



Map drawn by Peter Dueck and Louise Marleau based on entries from Fairford House Journal.

when she discovered that Ross had used the word "nigh" for "near" in his Fairford House journal, a possible clue to the identity of the mapmaker because "nigh" was also used on the map." Significantly, "nigh" was used nowhere in Sinclair's journal for Wegg's House.

There was another clue as well. Two maps had been included in the journal for Wegg's House. The second was as puzzling as the first, because it was a map of a portion of the Churchill River System. At that time, the HBC officers at Churchill were complaining that York Factory was infringing on their trade territory, a situation that could have made any map of the Churchill River hinterland of interest to Sinclair, who had been at Three Points Lake the previous year.³⁷ On the other hand, it may have been of greater interest to Ross and Thompson, who were about to enter new territory that could be considered part of Churchill's sphere of influence.

By now Lori was thoroughly intrigued. Clearly, internal evidence suggested that the first map was of some place other than Setting Lake, and that it could have been drawn by Ross. Moreover, the second map appeared to be of greater significance to Ross than it was to Sinclair. Since the

evidence increasingly suggested that the maps originated with or were relevant to Malchom Ross, and should therefore have been in the Fairford House journal, why were they in the Wegg's House journal? Up to this point, Lori had been working with microfilm copies of the relevant journals. Now it was time to look at the original journal for Wegg's House to determine whether the maps were integral to it or had been added later.

When Lori finally had that journal in her hands, she noticed at once that in fact both maps had been glued into the front of the book. Now she was ready to formulate a hypothesis that better explained the discrepancies she had observed in those maps. Perhaps Joseph Colen, Chief at York Factory, gave Malchom Ross a map of the Churchill River System claimed by the HBC post at Churchill, so that he and Thompson could avoid that part of the country. In his haste to leave Setting Lake in August 1795, Ross somehow left the map behind. He may also have left the second map, which is clearly not of Setting Lake. Since Ross had spent the previous year further up the Grass River system, or the "Upper Track" as it was known to the HBC traders, the map may identify a

³⁷ For examples see PAM, HBCA, B.66/a/1, fo. 2d and 4d.

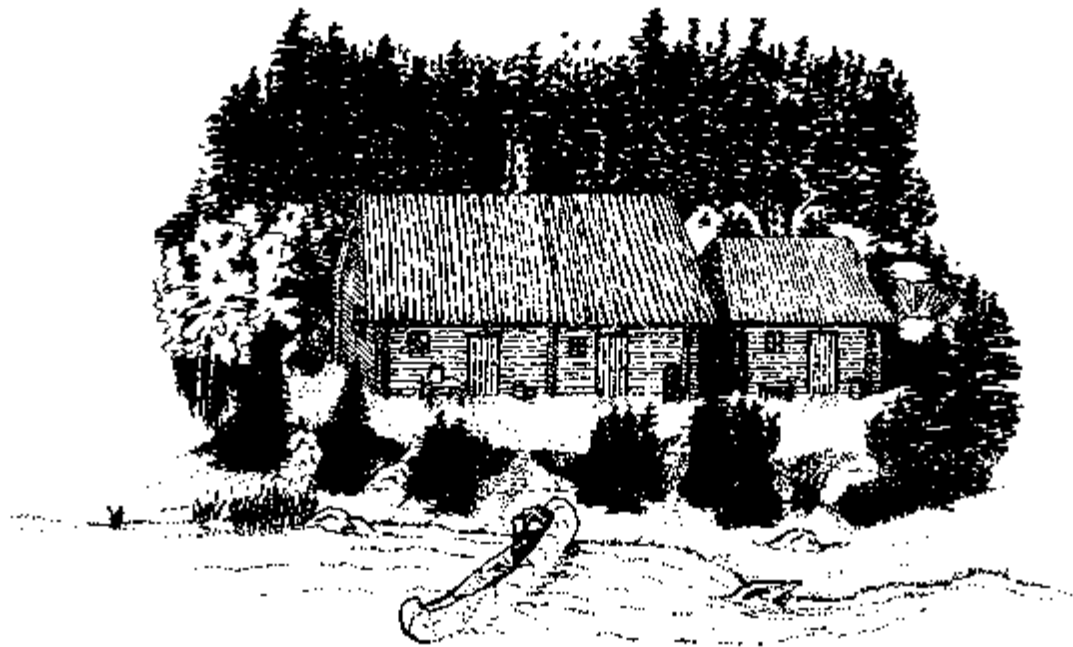
³⁸ Three Points Lake, known as Threepoint Lake today, is on the Burnwood River System, which the HBC officers at Churchill considered part of their trade territory.

shoreline of some lake on that system.³⁹ In any case, it remained at Wegg's House along with the other map. The following spring, Sinclair either glued both of them into his own journal, or took them separately to York Factory, where a clerk glued them by mistake into the Wegg's House Journal, which was then sent by ship to the Governors of the Company in London.

Wegg's Post Identified at Last

This hypothesis actually strengthens the identification of the Setting Lake Chimney

Site as the location of Wegg's House. We can now discard the problematic idea that one of the maps in the journal is the northern portion of Setting Lake and focus on the other evidence put forward to prove that the chimney marks the location of Sinclair's post. The parallels between the building activities reported in the journal and the evidence at the archaeological site are convincing. Moreover, the evidence in Ross's journal of the trip up to Wegg's House accords well with this site. On the basis of all existing evidence, it is almost certain that the proper identification of the post has been made.



Artist's Version of Wegg's House⁴⁰
(courtesy Wabowden Historical Museum)

³⁹ Reed Lake seemed a possibility, because Ross had lived there the previous winter, but according to Hal Peterson, who lives on that lake, there is nothing on the map to "match with anything on Reed or the surrounding lakes." Personal communication, 28 April 2002. As a matter of interest, "The lower Track" followed the Hayes River route to Norway House and thence to the Lower Saskatchewan via Lake Winnipeg and Grand Rapids.

⁴⁰ The Cree name locally for Wegg's House is *Kotawánápisik Ká-cimaték* meaning "stove standing or set up." Information provided by Catherine McLeod and Diana Delaronde-Cotombe, 5 and 7 November 2003. Standardized spelling provided by Cree consultant, Ken Paupaneke, 10 November 2003.

Chapter Two

Cree Associations with Setting Lake 1795-1914

HBC Trade with the Local Cree

According to the journal, Sinclair and his men lived in tents prior to moving into "the New house" on 17 October 1795.¹ During the months that followed, they were kept busy with a variety of duties around the post; in addition, they carried on a small, but active, trade with the local Cree. Indeed, John and William Corrigan actually went out and lived with hunting parties to ensure that they did not trade with the French at Cross Lake. By the end of the season, through the combined efforts of all, the post had accumulated sixteen hundred and fifty Made Beaver in furs, which Sinclair took downriver to York Factory on June 1 in two large canoes.² Accompanying him were "two Canoes of Indians" who were later identified as "Messeegomawethow, Cometicat, Witicoguaw the Mud's Son & a Musqua Rat River Indian besides a few Boys."³ Although all of these men traded at Wegg's House the previous winter, no

accurate count of others trading there can be calculated on the basis of Sinclair's journal. However, there must have been at least a dozen families or more in the region around Setting Lake at that time.

The Cree of "John Scot's Lake"

We do not know if any of these people were ancestors to the Cree who lived there later, but that is a possibility. During the nineteenth century, Setting Lake was known locally as John Scot's Lake, and in July 1875 Reverend John H. Ruttan, the Methodist missionary from Norway House, baptised a number of people who lived there. The first of these was a seventy-year-old man named Tepastanum, a local spiritual leader, who had "long resisted the teachings of christianity."⁴ Baptised at Norway House on 11 July 1875 as "Donald William Sinclair Ross," evidently after two HBC officers he admired, Tepastanum's about-face was considered significant enough to be noted by the

¹ PAM, HBCA, B.228/a/1, fo. 7d. There were eight men under Sinclair, including John and William Corrigan, Hugh Leask, Thomas Stanger, Robert Garroch [sic], and James Irvin. See Wegg's House Journal for references to these men. John Sabbeston may have been there, too. See PAM, HBCA, B.239/b/56, fo. 28.

² PAM, HBCA, B.228/a/1, fo. 21. A Made Beaver was a monetary unit used by the HBC as a medium of exchange in the fur trade. It was based on the value of a prime, whole beaver, which was set on an annual basis by the governors of the Company in London.

³ PAM, HBCA, B.239/b/57, fo. 20. York Factory Correspondence, 1795-1796, mf. 1M256.

⁴ PAM, R.145, GR 1212, Item 10, No. 1582. Norway House Wesleyan Methodist Mission, Baptisms, 1840-1889.

journalist at the HBC fort there.⁵ A few days later, more followed his example. Among them were three young men, John Scott Kesiastāokanum and Thomas Kesiastāokanum, who were probably brothers, and Magnus Chomohapācoos, the son of another spiritual leader who had also “long resisted the Christian religion.”⁶ The baptism of this man was delayed over the issue of his “several wives,” a problem resolved when he “put them all away but one.”⁷ Known previously as John Chomohapācoos, at his baptism on August 22, he “chose to be named after Rev. James Evans as he thought with pleasure on the earnest conversation [he] had with him many years ago.”⁸

It is not clear whether these people had been living at John Scot's Lake for any length of time. Indeed, there is a suggestion in his baptismal record that Chomohapācoos came from Split Lake.⁹ It is also uncertain as to how John Scot's Lake got its name, but it was probably inspired by a “Scott” somewhat older

than young John Scott Kesiastāokanum. One possibility is old John Scott, who was baptised along with his wife Mary by Reverend Ruttan at Cross Lake in 1877. A man of seventy years, Scott was also described by the clergyman as “a noted conjuror who had for years resisted all attempts to persuade him to renounce his evil ways and become a Christian.”¹⁰ Although identified as a resident of Cross Lake, Scott may actually have lived at Setting Lake, which was part of the Cross Lake trade area. There were Scotts living there at the time because James and Margaret Scott were at “John Scott Lake” when their son John, possibly a grandson of the old John Scott mentioned above, was baptised in 1876.¹¹

According to a story passed on by Isaac Martin to his grandson Roddy Garrick of Wabowden, John Scott built the trading post at the Setting Lake Chimney Site, but this seems unlikely, unless a man by that name was at Wegg's Post in the winter of 1795-1796.¹² Nevertheless, Martin's story

⁵ PAM, HBCA, B.154/a/71, fo. 18, Norway House Post Journal, 1874-1877, mf. 1014.

⁶ PAM, R145, GR 1212, Item 10, No. 1586, 1587, and 1589, Norway House Wesleyan Methodist Mission, Baptisms, 1840-1889.

⁷ This seems a cruel requirement considering that plural marriage was an accepted practice in traditional Cree culture to help ensure group survival in a difficult physical environment.

⁸ Ibid, No. 1613. The Reverend James Evans, famous for his invention of Cree syllabics, was the Methodist missionary at Norway House between 1840-1846.

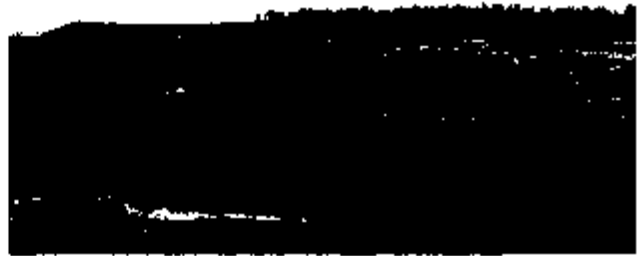
⁹ Ibid. “John Scots” has been crossed out in the original record and “Split” written over it.

¹⁰ For the baptisms of old John Scott and his wife, see PAM, R145, GR 1212, Item 10, No. 1729-1730, Norway House Wesleyan Methodist Mission, Baptisms, 1840-1889. John Scott Kesiastāokanum may have been related to this older John Scott in some way, or he may have taken “John Scott” as his Christian name simply because he lived on John Scot's Lake.

¹¹ Ibid., No. 1654.

¹² This story is mentioned in Brian J. Smith, *Archaeological Interpretations*, 7.

may be partially correct. There was an HBC fur trader named John Scott mentioned in the journals at Split Lake between 1810 and 1816.¹² Although these dates were too late for him to have participated in the construction of Wegg's House, Scott appears to have built at least one outpost in the late fall of 1815. Evidently a trustworthy man, he had been left in charge of Split Lake that summer, while John Pocock Holmes, the post manager, was away at York Factory. After Holmes' return, Scott was sent inland on October 21 to "White Owle Lake," where he spent the rest of the winter.¹³ He probably built a shelter there that served as a temporary outpost; however, there is evidence that he also travelled to other lakes in the area.¹⁴ If Setting Lake was among them, it is just possible he occupied the buildings that had been constructed by Sinclair's men twenty years earlier. If he had to repair the buildings, a tradition could have developed that he had built them from scratch. This could have been passed down by the local Cree, among them the Scotts, who may themselves have been John Scott's descendants.



Setting Lake near Wayside Park from the South East
(courtesy Adele Lafreniere)

Setting Lake

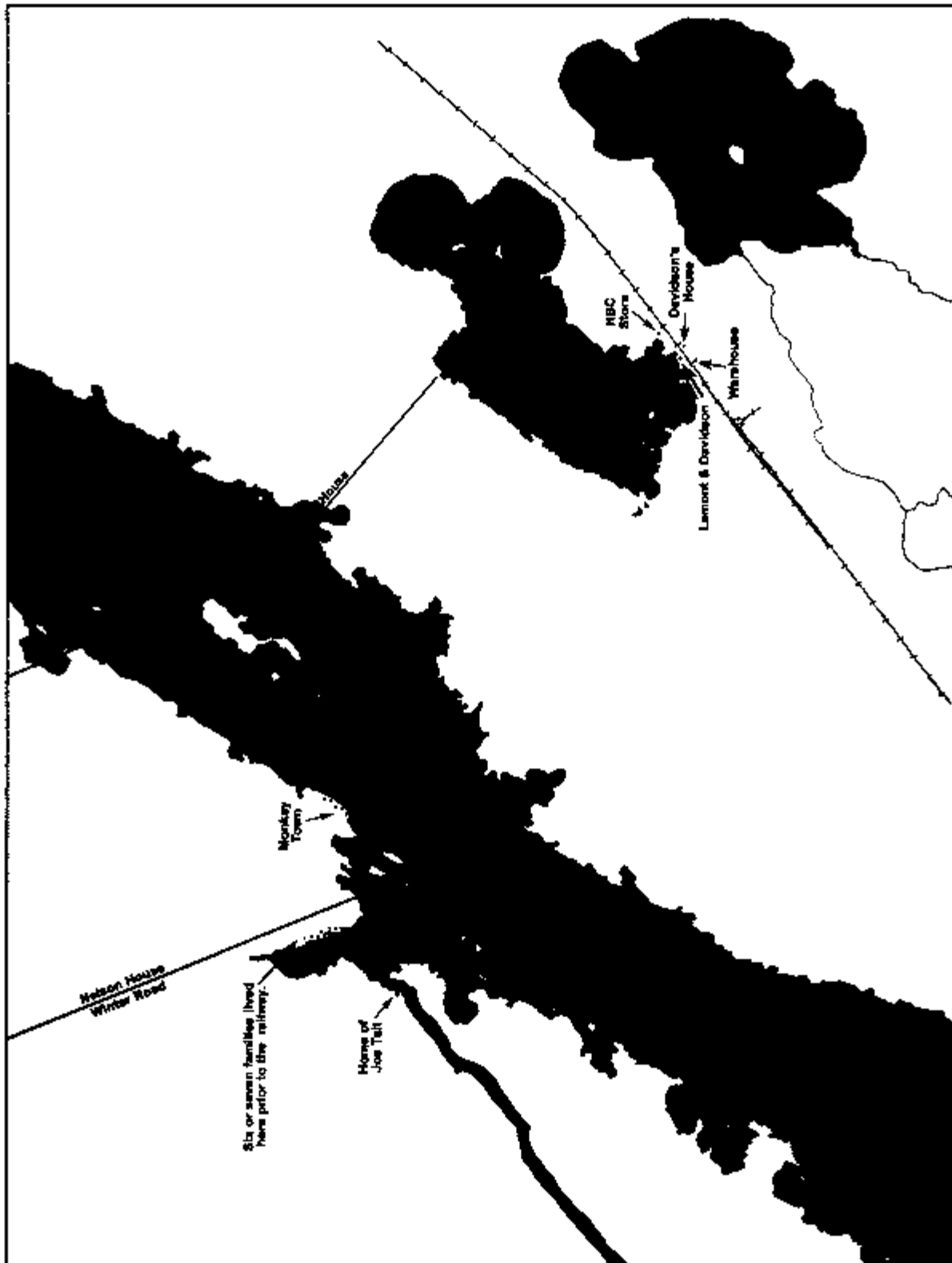
Although little has been recorded about human settlement on Setting Lake in earlier ages, it is probably safe to say that people resided intermittently along its shores for hundreds, perhaps thousands of years. Within the past hundred years or so, we can actually learn their names and the specific locations where they lived. By the early 1900s, for example, there were a few families from Cross Lake and Nelson House living near where the Grass River empties into Setting Lake. Among them were Baptiste and Mary Garrioch, who probably moved there from Cross Lake in the 1890s because their daughter Sarah, born in 1887, was just a little girl when they arrived.¹⁵ Sarah recalled that playmates at

¹² See PAM, HBCA, B.207/d/1, fo.9, North River Account Book 1810/1811; B.207/d/2, fo.12d, Split Lake House Account Book 1811/1812, B.207/d/3, fo. 11d, 1812/1813, mf. 1M611, and B.207/d/4, fo.7d, 1813-1814, mf. 1M612.

¹³ See PAM, HBCA, B.207/a/1, fo. 2, 2d, 3d, 4d, Split Lake Post Journal, 1815-1816, mf. 1M144.

¹⁴ Ibid., fo. 3

¹⁵ This information is included in Laure Christianson, "History of Wabowden," 1984. This is an unpublished community history based on information collected by a young university student named Laure Christianson, who grew up in Wabowden. This history appears to be one source for Cheryl Ann Buhler, "Wabowden," manuscript, 1988.



Map of Setting Lake Illustrating Setting Lake Settlement

¹¹ The Cree word for 'lake' is also spelled *saku'nikun*. See Faries and Watkins, *A Dictionary of the Cree Language*, 1938: 107. *Chanscatch* appears to be a Cree rendition of 'John Scatch' [see page 19]. According to Donald McLeod, a man by this name from Cross Lake trapped at Setting Lake. His daughter married Frederick North, a Cross Lake man. Mariha Jonasson also remembers that her uncle, Wellington Beebe, was nicknamed 'Chanscatch' because he was born at Setting Lake. Information gathered by Calhene McLeod, 5 November 2003. One wonders if 'John Scatch' was derived from 'John Scott'?

¹² According to Faries and Watkins, the Cree word for clearwater lake is *wasakumaw*. On the other hand, the word *kuna'che* is listed as an adjective meaning Holy, clean, pure, sacred. Faries and Watkins, 299.

Setting Lake included her older sisters, Emma and Mary, and friend, Matilda Monias, all of whom have descendants among Wabowden's current residents.¹⁹

According to Joe Colombe, this early settlement was called *Chanscatch Sagihagan*, apparently after an old man from Cross Lake named Scatch.²⁰ The site had probably been used for many generations because the trapping and fishing resources on which the people depended were close by. In times past, it had been a resting point for the fur traders passing through the area and undoubtedly some camped there before resuming their journey.²¹ In fact, Setting Lake is said to have received its name from the freight canoes that often had to stop and "set" on the shores of the lake to wait out stormy weather. Transportation patterns had altered by the twentieth century, but dog teams, horses, then tractor trains continued to haul goods over the nearby winter road to Nelson House. The river also continued to be used by prospectors and trappers passing through to their

various destinations.

Originally, people in that first community lived on the north shore of the bay opposite the river channel, some of them only seasonally. According to daughter Bella Monias, Sarah Garrioch and Henry Henderson lived at Cross Lake during the summer and trapped at Setting Lake in the winter.²² Her father also hauled material for the people building the railway.²³ Joseph Tait lived for a long time at the mouth of the river. Three of his children were buried on the point of land across the river from his house. This little graveyard was also the resting place for Roderick Garrick's wife, Betsy Spence, and John Linklater's first wife, Mary.²⁴

After the arrival of the railroad in 1914, some people moved to Mile 137 permanently, while others remained at Setting Lake seasonally to fish or trap. There was also a population shift north about two kilometres to a point jutting out into the lake. This settlement, sometimes called "Monkey Town," became home

¹⁹ Christianson, "History of Wabowden." Emma Garrioch Colombe was born in 1880 and her sister Mary Garrioch Beebe in 1883. See Appendix Two: "Who are the Garricks?" for more information on the origins and history of this leading Wabowden family.

²⁰ Joseph Colombe in an interview with Catherine McLeod, January 2002.

²¹ Before the railroad, transport followed the river systems. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Grass River was an important fur trade route between York Factory and its inland posts on the Saskatchewan River System. Samuel Heame, Philip Turnor, and David Thompson were well-known explorers who used this route.

²² Sarah Garrioch married (1) Henry Henderson (2) John Linklater.

²³ Bella Monias in an interview conducted by Catherine McLeod, Fall 2001.

²⁴ Joe Colombe and Henry Garrick in an interview conducted by Catherine McLeod in January 2002. Sandy Craig's son Douglas was buried there for a summer, but he was disinterred by his father the following winter and reburied at Cross Lake. At the mouth of Fish Creek, there were two more graves, possibly parents to John Charles McDonald's wife.

to a number of families.²⁵ Joe Colombe remembered people who lived there at various times: Roderick Flett and his wife; their son William Flett and his wife; John Linklater, first with his wife Mary, then with his second wife Sarah; Sandy Crait and his wife Catherine. There was also Nathan Moose and his wife and an old man named Jimmy Spence, all from Nelson House. And of course, there was

Joe's widowed mother, Emma Colombe, and her family. Eventually, these people also left Setting Lake, which could not compete with the amenities available at Mile 137, or Wabowden as it came to be known.²⁶ This community developed along the tracks between the two larger Goose lakes east of Setting Lake, and from the start its fortunes were tied to those of the railroad.²⁷



Mile 136.00 on the line of Hudson Bay Railway
(courtesy National Archives of Canada, PA-210854)

²⁵ "Monkey Town" was a name applied to the Setting Lake community by people at Wabowden. Although various theories exist locally concerning its origin, none has proved conclusive.

²⁶ Wabowden also had a Cree name, still in use to this day. According to one source, *Meskanakanihk* meaning "a trail that has been made" or "the pathway" was used before the railway was built. (Email from Laara Fitznor to R. Shirnitt-Beaumont, 14 November 2003); Another source based on a number of informants suggests the following: *pee-wa-pisko* (or *piska*) *mescanaganeek* or "steel road" "referring to railroad," *pewapiskomaskanow* meaning "railroad," and *powapisk maskanow* meaning "railroad" (email from Diana Delaronde-Colombe, 7 November 2003). Cree consultant Ken Paupanekis provided a standardized spelling, *piwāpisko mēskanāhkānihk* and the literal translation, "at the place of the make believe or metal (steel) road." While he was teaching at Oxford House, the Cree-speaking people there used the same name for Ilford, the place where they met the train (email from K. Paupanekis, 10 November 2003).

²⁷ The name "Mile 137" simply indicated the distance from The Pas. Mile 137 was later named Bowden after W. A. Bowden, the Chief Engineer at the Department of Railways. Since Bowden, Alberta, already existed, the name was altered by adding the initials "W. A." See Manitoba Conservation, *Geographical Place Names of Manitoba*, 2000: 283.

Chapter Three

The Hudson Bay Railway: Early Stages 1908-1919



The Hudson Bay Railway Bridge spanning the Saskatchewan River at The Pas
(courtesy Sam Waller Museum, PP 2.43)

*This picture was taken at a point near Devon Island Park looking East,
probably during spring breakup, hence the ice seen in this picture.*

Work on the Railroad Begins

The construction of the Hudson Bay Railway had a long and complicated history. With the help of government subsidies, the Canadian Northern Railway Company completed a rail line north-west from Winnipeg to Hudson Bay Junction, Saskatchewan, by the early 1900s and from there to The Pas by February 1908.¹

It was not, however, given the contract to complete the remaining line from The Pas to Hudson Bay. Instead, the federal Department of Railways and Canals took over the project and conducted surveys in 1908 and 1909 to determine a suitable route.² In the fall of 1910, the Hudson Bay Railway got under way at The Pas as construction began on a 255-metre bridge

¹ Howard A. Fleming, *Canada's Arctic Outlet. A History of the Hudson Bay Railway* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1957), 51-59. A more direct route would have been from Mafeking to The Pas, but since the Canadian Northern Railway had been paid a subsidy for each mile of railway as far as Hudson Bay Junction, it chose that place as the southern terminus of the Hudson Bay Railway.

² *Ibid.*, 64-65.

across the Saskatchewan River. In 1911, Winnipeg contractor John D. McArthur began to build the rail line.³ Although there were delays due to political wrangling in Ottawa, by 1912 a right of way had been cleared to Mile 120, and a roadbed built to Mile 50.⁴ As soon as the bridge opened in 1913, construction on the line proceeded rapidly. By the end of the year, one hundred and ten miles [176 km] of steel had been laid, and by the end of 1914 the rails had reached Mile 214 (Pikwitonei).⁵ Work had also started on the first bridge across the Nelson River at Manitou Rapids, and the grade was almost complete to Kettle Rapids, where the second bridge was to be built.⁶

From the outset, construction was beset with obstacles. Opponents, especially in Eastern Canada, attempted to stop the project by political action. Labourers on the line complained about working conditions and ill treatment, especially in the early years. After the outbreak of World War I, so many of them left to join the armed forces that the contractors were

left short. Nevertheless, some progress was achieved. When all new construction effectively came to an end in December 1917, the track had reached Kettle Rapids north of Gillam at Mile 332, and land had been cleared as far north as the terminus at Port Nelson.⁷ Optimism was in the air. Supporters of the railway believed that the tracks would reach Hudson Bay the following year, but in fact they were to be disappointed. For nine long years after 1917, little was done beyond repairs of the existing line. It was not until 1926 that the government finally committed itself to completing the railroad to Hudson Bay.

The Railroad as an Agent of Change

In the meantime, the existing railroad continued to effect change throughout the north. Indeed, it had profoundly affected the people living within its range of influence from the earliest days of construction. For the people in the neighbourhood of Setting Lake, its arrival at Mile 137 in 1914 was the second of two recent changes in their

³ Ibid, 68 and 71.

⁴ Ian Bickle, *Turmoil and Triumph: The Controversial Railway to Hudson Bay* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd, 1995), 29. There was opposition in Eastern Canada to the proposed railroad because of the projected cost of the venture, the short period of open water on Hudson Bay, and the perceived threat to shipping interests in Montreal.

⁵ Fleming, 73. It is possible that the rails had been laid for 110 miles [176 km] by the end of 1913. But according to a police report on a patrol that left The Pas on 27 Dec 1913, the railway was operative only to the end of steel, 86 miles [138 km] from The Pas. See Bickle, 195. One of the engineers, J. W. Porter, reported in the fall of 1914 that there were "several stretches of very good track between The Pas and Mile 150" and that the "End of Steel" was at Mile 161. However, he did not indicate how far trains were travelling by that time. Ibid, 53.

⁶ Fleming, 73

⁷ Bickle, 13. In fact, by the time the project was shut down in December 1917, "the line was completed to a point called Amery (Mile 356)." See Bickle, 43.

lives. Prior to 1912, they had lived in the North West Territories, but on April 1 of that year, after Manitoba's boundaries had been extended to Hudson Bay, they officially became citizens of that province.¹ Now they were connected to Southern Manitoba by rail. In all likelihood, the first intimation of this momentous event was the survey party that passed through the region in 1908 or 1909. Men started to clear the road north from The Pas in 1911, and the work of grading and ballasting the roadbed went on throughout 1912.² By March 1913, the engineers for the rail line had established their headquarters at

Setting Lake, a distance of one hundred and twenty miles [192 km] from The Pas.³ By January of 1914, the end of steel was at Mile 87, and the grade was completed for a further hundred miles [160 km].⁴ Track laying followed at a rapid pace and reached Mile 137, along with the first construction trains, sometime during the summer of 1914.⁵

The main purpose of the construction trains was to carry men and materials for the railway, but a regular passenger service was also inaugurated in September 1913. H. S. McCuaig of The Pas was the first to



Survey Crew's Cabin, Survey Party #4, 1908-1909
(courtesy National Archives of Canada, PA-147460)

¹ In The Pas newspaper, this extension to the province was called "New Manitoba."

² Ballasting describes the practice of adding gravel or broken stone to a railroad bed to give it greater stability.

³ "One Hundred Teams Hauling Supplies: Four Hundred Men Busy on HB Road," PAM, Legislative Library, *Le Pas Herald*, 6 March 1913. As a matter of interest, *Le Pas Herald* was a local newspaper published at The Pas under different names and management until 1929. Up to eight pages in length, it focused on local and national news relevant to the people at The Pas and along the Hudson Bay Railway. It has been a primary source of information for this history.

⁴ *Ibid.*, *The Hudson's Bay Herald*, 15 January 1914, p. 1.

⁵ By about 15 November 1913, the grade had been completed to Mile 150 (*Le Pas Herald*, 25 September 1913, p. 5). By the end of 1913, according to one report, steel had been laid to Mile 90 (*The Hudson's Bay Herald*, 8 January 1914, p. 4), and to Mile 175 by October 1914 (*The Pas Herald*, 23 October 1914, p. 1). Assuming construction was steady, the rail must have reached Wabowden sometime in May or June.



Sandy Ridge Camp, Survey Party #4, 26 June 1909
 (courtesy National Archives of Canada, PA-147459)
Two of the surveyors are wearing fly nets.

buy a ticket, paying \$2.75, or 5 cents a mile, for a trip to Scott, 55 miles [88 km] north of The Pas.¹³ After that first run, people regularly travelled back and forth along the line, but not without risk. In October 1913, a party of travellers boarded the Pullman "Marlborough" for a trip north to the camp where the McMillan brothers resided.¹⁴ The plan was to attend a dance in honour of Mrs. Alex McMillan, who was about to depart, after spending all summer with her husband. However, just beyond the Narrows at Cormorant Lake, the travellers were stopped by a wreck and had to return home disappointed. One of the engines had jumped the track, and the engineer had received injuries serious enough to send him to hospital in The Pas.¹⁵



Surveyors Camp,
Hudson Bay Railway Survey Party #4, 1908-1909
 (courtesy National Archives of Canada, PA-147465)

¹³ *Le Pas Herald*, 18 September 1913, p. 1.

¹⁴ McMillan Brothers Ltd. was a contracting firm that worked on the line.

¹⁵ *Le Pas Herald*, 23 October 1913, p. 1.



St. Anthony's Hospital, The Pas, c.1920
(courtesy Provincial Archives of Manitoba, N20486)

People at Setting Lake had opportunities to travel on the train as early as 1913 and certainly by the summer of 1914. Track laying was on its way to Thicket Portage by this time, and grading rapidly approaching Pikwitonei. Water tanks had been erected to Mile 175, telephone lines were in place, and construction was about to commence on a steel bridge at Manitou Rapids on the Nelson River.¹⁷ Plans were also in the works for about twenty station buildings and for division yards, the first of which was to be located at Goose Lake near

Mile 136.¹⁸ According to *The Pas Herald*, "There is in this vicinity considerable good land, and in due time a thriving little town will doubtless spring up."¹⁹ The paper was correct. A division yard was established there, and in time a community did develop, known variously as Goose Lake, Setting Lake, Mile 137, or Bowden, before it was officially named Wabowden.

It was an exciting time for the region, and people waxed eloquent concerning its future. In one newspaper article, "An Optimist" wrote a glowing report on the virtues of Setting Lake.

Setting Lake with its adjacent lakes and streams abound in fish of every kind, and when the Hudson Bay railway is completed there is every probability that a large and profitable fishing industry will be operated here.



Steel Bridge at Manitou Rapids, c.1920
(courtesy Provincial Archives of Manitoba,
John A. Campbell Collection, #189)

¹⁷ The bridge was about one hundred and thirteen metres in length.

¹⁸ Goose Lake was more properly "Goose Lakes," which included what are now known as Bowden and Rock Island Lakes, as well as a small, unnamed body of water to the south-east. Information obtained from Gerald Holm, Provincial Toponymist, Province of Manitoba, 6 June 2001

¹⁹ *The Pas Herald*, 23 October 1914, p. 1.

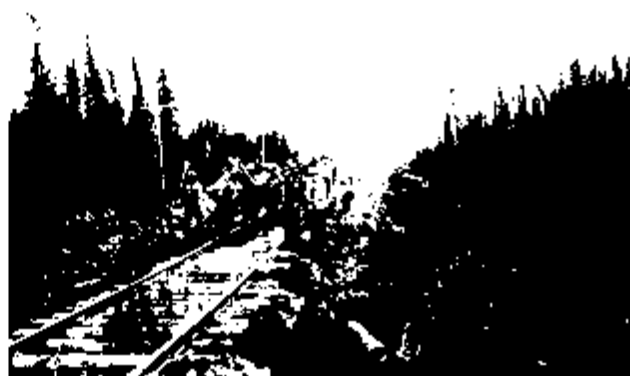
The mining industry is also shaping itself creditably in this district; we have at the present time a number of well known prospectors scattered through the district, who all speak very highly of the prospects here, and we are optimistically sanguine of the result.

With the development of these two industries in the immediate and tributary vicinity of Setting Lake, this will undoubtedly be a very important point in the near future.

The location, which overlooks the beautiful Setting Lake, with its thousand scenic surprises, upon a sloping heavily wooded plateau, is altogether a choice selection, with many natural advantages.

Setting Lake is the gateway of the north with its outlet to the Nelson, its water route to all the principal Hudson Bay posts of the north, and its present population have every confidence that it will be a permanent active and modern centre.¹⁹

Another newspaper article in the fall of 1913 gave a positive review of a proposal to blast the Demi-Charge Rapids between Cross Lake and Cedar Lake on the Lower Saskatchewan. This would lower the waters of Cedar Lake about 6 m and open up 1,600,000 hectares of land along its perimeter for agricultural development.²⁰



Track-laying Gang at Mile 100
(courtesy Sam Waller Museum, PP 94.2.690)

That idea never went anywhere, but others did. In the same newspaper, there was a detailed report on the new wireless station recently completed at The Pas, making it possible to communicate by telegraph via Port Arthur to places like Toronto, Montreal, and Glace Bay on the east coast.²¹ Needless to say, there was excitement in the air. Hundreds of people were moving into The Pas and along the route of the Hudson Bay Railway. Engineers, storekeepers, prospectors, and speculators were among them, but the largest group by far consisted of labourers anxious to get a job on railway construction.

¹⁹ Ibid., 24 July 1913. Setting Lake must have been a bustling place at the time. At the organisational meeting of the Conservative Party in The Pas, 21 February 1914, an executive was elected and men appointed to represent points outside The Pas, including Cedar Lake, Moose Lake, Barrows, Cormorant Lake, and Setting Lake, which was represented by a "Mr. Scott." Ibid., *The Pas Herald*, 28 February 1914, p. 1.

²⁰ Ibid., 9 October 1913, p. 1.

²¹ Ibid. The wireless went into action on 23 November 1913. Messages were heard from the "Sayville, N.Y., Arlington (near Washington), and Cape Cod, Mass. Stations of the system." The Pas now had rapid communication with the rest of the world, a fact not lost on the editor of the newspaper, who noted that arrangements were being made for a regular service "whereby the latest news of importance from the outside will be published by this paper." Ibid., 27 November 1913, p. 1. By February 1914, messages were also being received from the wireless station at Port Nelson, the terminus of the Hudson Bay Railway. Ibid., *The Pas Herald*, 26 February 1914, p. 1.

Working Conditions during Railroad Construction

It is unknown how many local men worked on the railroad, but there would have been some among the hundreds of men who were hired.²² The conditions for working men were far from ideal during the early stages of construction. Some men who had no money walked to The Pas, then walked along the construction route in the hope that they would find employment. Others hired in Winnipeg came up on the train, then walked from the end of steel to the work site. There they might find some kind of accommodation already built for them, or they might have to construct something themselves. Initially, the contractor was responsible for setting up food caches every sixteen kilometres along the route. These, and the system of transportation that provisioned them, were described in December 1914 by J. L. Charles, who was responsible for selecting and provisioning campsites for the resident engineers of Division 5 in the vicinity of Kettle Rapids.

The contractor brought in farmers and their teams and immediately conditions became safe for winter freighting, the trail was broken ahead. Log caches were built adjacent to the right-of-way at distances of some ten miles apart. At every other cache, twenty miles apart, barns were built to stable teams overnight. Each team

*travelled ten miles, loaded, to the intermediate cache, where a transfer was made to an empty sleigh, to return to its home cache, light loaded. Resident engineers' camps were also about ten miles apart, often not far from the contractor's cache. It was essential that all were fully stocked with equipment and supplies prior to the spring break-up when overland freighting would be halted and teams would be returned to farming.*²³

The caches contained basic staples like flour, bacon, beans, sugar, tea, and coffee, other food items and personal supplies, as well as equipment and dynamite.²⁴ However, they were sometimes so poorly stocked that scurvy broke out among the workmen.²⁵ Others suffered from the cold during winter, and everyone had to endure the swarms of biting insects in the summer months. Workmen worked long hours at backbreaking



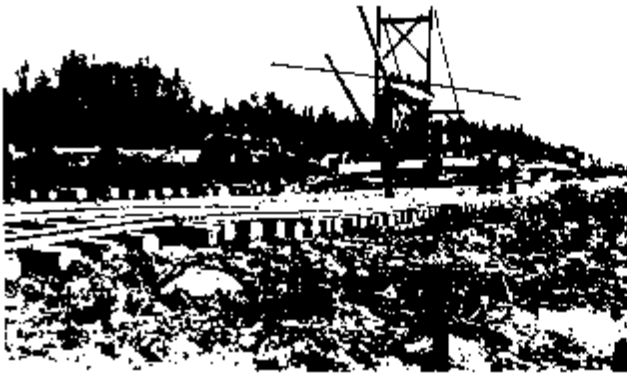
**Interior of a Stationman's Shack occupied by four
Russian [Ukrainian] Labourers**
(courtesy National Archives of Canada, C-056822)

²² There were "over 2,000 men at work on the line" in late 1914. *The Pas Herald*, 6 November 1914.

²³ Bickle, 78.

²⁴ Bickle, 44.

²⁵ Scurvy is a disease caused by a lack of ascorbic acid or Vitamin C. Symptoms may include deterioration of the gums and teeth as well as bleeding into the skin and mucous membranes.



Track-laying on the Hudson's Bay Railway, c.1920
(courtesy Provincial Archives of Manitoba, N13128)

labour for six and sometimes seven days a week. In the early years, nearly everything was done by hand, from wheelbarrowing the gravel and stones to build the grade to laying the track and sledge hammering it into place.²⁶ It was a tough job, often for low pay relative to the living costs on the line, and the working conditions were certainly unacceptable by today's standards. Nevertheless, there was some compensation.²⁷

After Hours on the Line

One of the most interesting features of life on the line was the presence of an educational programme sponsored by the Reading Camp Association, which is now known as Frontier College.²⁸ From its base in Toronto, the association recruited volunteers who acted as other

labourers during working hours, then in the off hours taught those same workers subjects that interested them. One such volunteer was Fred Bell, who worked for a time as a labourer-teacher at a camp near Wabowden. Some idea of his clientele and their interests can be gleaned from the order Bell submitted to the association in May 1916, requesting a new gramophone and records, along with copies of newspapers in English, Ukrainian, and Italian, and magazines like *Popular Mechanics*.²⁹

Self-improvement was given every encouragement, but activities of a



Labourer-teachers of Frontier College employed with a Construction Crew on the Hudson Bay Railway, c.1909-1929

(courtesy National Archives of Canada, C-056928)

²⁶ There is an implication in Bickle that a track-laying machine was not available until the 1920s. See Bickle, 41. However, according to an article in the *Hudson Bay Herald*, 22 May 1913, a "rail-laying machine" was already at The Pas by May of 1913.

²⁷ For more details on working conditions, see Bickle, 41-53.

²⁸ Founded in 1899 by the Reverend Alfred Fitzpatrick and a group of university students, the Reading Camp Association was renamed Frontier College in 1919. It is a Canada-wide organisation of volunteers, who teach people to read and write, regardless of their circumstances. Information about it can be found on the Internet. See www.frontiercollege.ca.

²⁹ Bickle, 59-60.

distinctly more "libationary" character were strictly forbidden.³ This was the heyday of prohibition, the combined result of government restraint during the war years and widespread public concern over drunkenness and its associated evils that went back many years.⁴ One after another, municipalities, then provinces, outlawed the sale and drinking of intoxicating beverages. No one was immune from the consequences, not even a labourer bound for a remote work camp on the Hudson Bay Railway. On 13 April 1915, for instance, the construction train, known locally as "The Muskeg," was on its way north to the work camps when it was stopped by the R.C.M.P. just beyond the bridge at The Pas. According to the local newspaper, it was boarded "in true Western hold-up style" and the passengers, which included "two coaches full of railroaders," were relieved "of contraband whiskey." The article went on to explain that Sergeant Thomas and Constables Graham and De Wilde searched the "packs and cars" for nearly an hour and found "a number of bottles" which they threw "into the ditch."⁵ Constable De Wilde was still travelling

back and forth on the train in June to prevent "whiskey being smuggled into the construction camps."⁶ His assignment had its humorous moments, as people attempted ingenious methods to evade the law. The following newspaper report in December 1915 illustrates the point.

The activities of the mounted police in suppressing liquor traffic over the Hudson's [sic] Bay railway is causing woe to more than one prospector and trapper. A mounted red coat travels continually on the Muskeg, and his alertness is responsible for the confiscation of many cases of liquors and bottles. Packs are searched and private luggage is not immune from examination. Bottles marked hair restorer, paint, syrup, vinegar, salts, spring water, and one went so far as to declare profoundly that his bottle contained talcum powder, are taken and destroyed. Many artifices are used in trying to get by with bottles of Scotch, and Bob Hassett, when confronted with a possible loss of goods, utilized his stomach to secret a quart. Jack McCormack was caught with the Johnny Walker goods recently, and his defence on the value of hair restorer nearly convinced the police. They caught John later drinking the hair restorer with his hat off, exhibiting a mane, that no self respecting lion would be ashamed of."

R.C.M.P. vigilance discouraged "wholesale blind-piggers," the popular name for

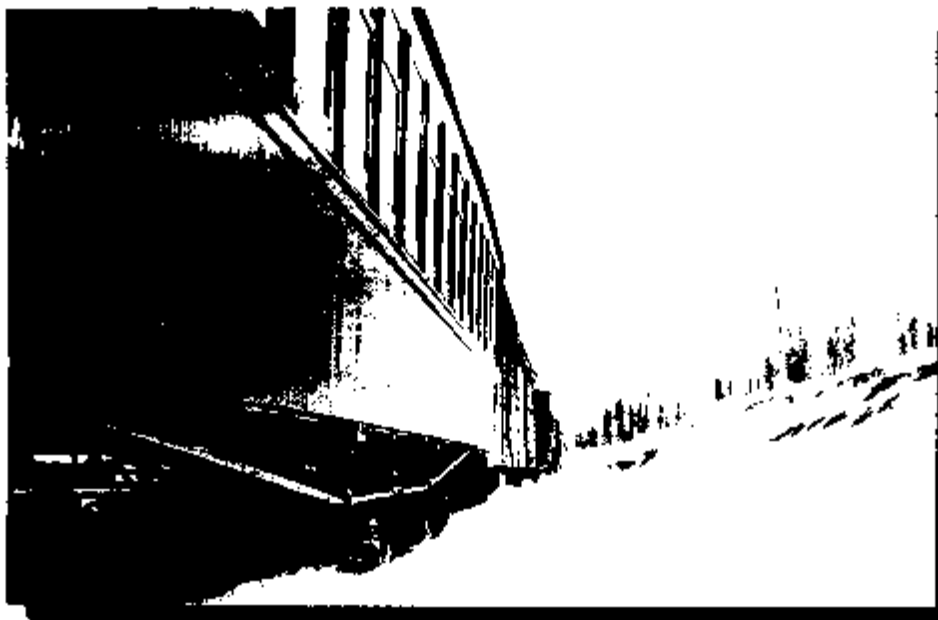
³ The word "libationary" refers to the act of drinking, often ceremonially, as wine in a religious service. Along the Hudson Bay Railway, there may have been some ceremony attached to the consumption of alcoholic beverages, but it certainly wasn't religious!

⁴ Prohibition made the selling and drinking of intoxicating beverages illegal. It was enacted in Prince Edward Island in 1901 and the rest of Canada during World War I. It ended federally in 1919 and provincially during the 1920s, when most provinces (Manitoba in 1923) set up a system of government sale and control of the substance

⁵ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, Friday, 16 April 1915, p. 1

⁶ *Ibid.*, 4 June 1915, p. 4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 24 December 1915, p. 1.



The "Muskeg" snowed in at Mile 205
(courtesy Sam Waller Museum., PP 94.2.332a)

Rail Travel a Comfortable Option for Some

bootleggers at the time.²⁵ Consequently, liquor in quantity did not move north with the trains, nor did it accompany the dog teams, which were generally too loaded down with necessities to have much space available for contraband. Up until this time, liquor was available from licensed outlets, but by December 1915, Saskatchewan prohibited the possession of liquors altogether.²⁶ By the end of May 1916, Manitoba followed suit, and the Opasquai Hotel in The Pas closed its doors.²⁷

If the men going north on the railway lacked "liquid refreshments," at least they had the promise of good meals and a place to sleep. Business on the railway had been so brisk in 1915 that a café-sleeper car was added to the Muskeg in 1916.²⁸ It made its first trip on May 10. As reported in *The Pas Herald and Mining News*,

Engineer Cameron had the engine shined up in honor of the new comer, and the train crew, too, were brighter and more important looking. The car is named "Manitou," probably out of respect to the rushing waters of Manitou Rapids, and it will

²⁵ "Blind pig" was a slang term for a place where alcohol could be purchased illegally. A "blind pigger" was one who provided that service. A "bootlegger" is one who makes, sells, or transports liquor illegally.

²⁶ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 24 December 1915, p. 1.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 5 May 1916, p. 3.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 28 January 1916, p. 1.

follow the fortunes of the doughty Muskeg between The Pas and the end of steel until the government takes the road over. The car is in charge of a colored porter, who will look after the meals and sleeping berths. At one end of the car a place has been fitted up for a kitchen. where buffet meals may be prepared."

Seats to Mile 41 cost 25 cents; to Mile 86, 50 cents; and to Mile 137, the future site of Wabowden, 75 cents. If a person wanted to have a berth, the cost was \$3.00 to Mile 239, or Manitou Rapids, which was the end of steel at that time.³⁵ However, not everyone was allowed to travel. According to the paper, on 10 May 1916,

Nearly eighty Russians were put off the Muskeg Wednesday morning. They were bound for Port Nelson, but, as none could show they had been hired, the railway officials refused to allow them to travel. Last year the company's caches suffered from the depredations of the bohunks, and it is proposed to put a stop to this kind of thievery."

The term "bohunk" was derogatory slang applied generally to immigrants from Central Europe, and its use in The Pas newspaper reflected prevailing attitudes toward these "foreigners" at that time.³⁶

The "eighty Russians" had been lumped together with a group of Central Europeans, who in 1915 had been refused work after travelling north to the construction sites.³⁷ Without money or resources, this earlier group had walked back to The Pas, a distance that may have been more than three hundred and twenty kilometres. Little wonder then that they broke into the food caches along the way.

The Railway and Economic Expansion

Port Nelson, the hoped for destination of the eighty Russians, was a hive of activity with a population at times of over one thousand people. Work there centred on the building of a huge grain terminal and docks for the ships that were expected to carry prairie wheat to European markets. Construction on the railway had also moved rapidly. By 5 March 1915, the railway was "fully completed" to Mile 56, the roadbed partially ballasted to Mile 176, and steel laid to Mile 214.³⁸ There was great optimism in the air about the railway's role in the future resource development of

³⁵ Ibid., 12 May 1916, p. 1. The "colored porter" would have been of African descent. For many years, porters were generally black men, whose employment opportunities were limited in other fields because of racial discrimination.

³⁶ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 12 May 1916, p. 4

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ "Bohunk," which originated from the words "Bohemian" and "Hungarian," took on even more sinister meaning for some British Canadians during World War One. The reason was simple. Many of these so-called "bohunks" had emigrated from Austria-Hungary, with which Canada, as a member of the British Empire, was at war from 1914 to 1918.

³⁹ In all likelihood, the "Russians" were ethnic Ukrainians, but since much of Ukraine was part of Russia at that time, their nationality would have been Russian.

⁴⁰ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 5 March 1915, p. 1. Once track was laid and ballasting completed, construction of the railway was finished.

"New Manitoba," a sentiment reflected in nearly every issue of *The Pas Herald and Mining News*.⁴⁵ Prospectors had discovered gold at Herb Lake, for instance, and this prompted secondary development along the railroad. In March 1915, for instance, Albert Campbell was converting the "fishing shacks" at Mile 86 (Herb Lake Siding) into a "stopping place for people bound in and out of the gold fields." It wouldn't be the Ritz, because everyone had to bring his own blankets, but meals were available "at a reasonable price."⁴⁶ By July 1915, Tom Forrest had set up a stopping place and general store at the same place, and planned to buy fur for the following winter. Assisted by Jimmy Williamson, Forrest carried a "complete

line of provisions of the canned variety, also prospectors necessities. Tobacco, magazines, papers and small store notions" were also available.⁴⁷

Similar development, all of it connected to railway construction, was occurring elsewhere along the line. This was certainly the case at Goose Lake, later Wabowden, where Jack Hayes established a stopping place in response to its designation as a divisional centre for rail construction.⁴⁸ Six divisions had been established in April 1915 at The Pas, at Mile 137 (Goose Lake), Mile 214 (Piquitenay), Mile 280 (Landing River), Mile 332 (Kettle Rapids), and Mile 393 (Kisimagistakum). The Division Engineer at Mile 137 was W. J. D. Reed-Lewis, who



Herb Lake

(courtesy Sam Waller Museum, PP 93.18.578)

⁴⁵ "New Manitoba" was the popular name for the region north of the 53rd Parallel, which had been annexed to Manitoba in 1912. The Pas was the gateway into its vast, still undeveloped northern frontiers.

⁴⁶ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 12 March 1915, p. 1 "Ritz" is a generic term for a luxury hotel.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 9 July 1915, p. 1.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 2 June 1916, p. 3.



Hudson Bay Construction Office
(courtesy Sam Waller Museum, PP 94.2.23a)

was assisted by three resident engineers, A. M. Hanson, A. McNaughton, and W.W. Christopherson.⁴⁶

During the summer of 1916, construction headquarters were moved from The Pas to Piquitona, in part “to be nearer the construction of the last half of the road,” but also because “The Indians [had] forced the removal of the shops by raising the rental from \$200 to \$600.”⁴⁷ Evidently, the divisional shops were located on reserve land at The Pas, and pending relocation to larger facilities, the railway company authorities decided that “a temporary workshop at Piquitona” would meet requirements.⁴⁸ By August, the office building at The Pas was nearing

completion, and it was expected that the chief engineers would return from their summer quarters by the end of the month. The Winnipeg staff of eighteen men was also transferring to The Pas office. Later in the fall, the construction shops at Piquitona were to be removed to The Pas as well.⁴⁹

Daily Life in Railway Communities

Because newspaper reports generally reported only news highlights, it is hard to find reports on ordinary life in places along the railway. However, in September 1916, *The Pas Herald and Mining News* did carry a series of detailed articles on Piquitona that help to fill that gap.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 23 April 1915, p. 1. All these men actually lived at Mile 137. Read-Lewis's wife was also with him, because the newspaper reported a visit there by her sister, the wife of Dr. Orok, who was one of the medical doctors connected with the railway. Ibid., 30 April 1915, p. 4.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 4 February 1916, p. 4. “Piquitona” at Mile 214 was also written “Piquitonay” and “Pikwitonoi.” “Pikwitonoi” is the preferred spelling today.

⁴⁸ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 4 February 1916, p. 4.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 18 August 1916, p. 1.



Pikwitonei Mile 214, Hudson Bay Railway
 (Courtesy Sam Waller Museum, PP 93.18.597)

Piquitona Pickings. (From Our Own Correspondent) One of the busiest places on the Hudson Bay railway is Piquitona, Mile 214. The roundhouse, engine sheds, carpenters' shop of the construction company are situated close to the main line, and are well adapted to carry on the work of repairing, etc. The offices and warehouses are located alongside the track. On a hill across the creek are situated the houses of the men employed by the Construction company. The carrying out of the work of construction is under the personal supervision of R. A. Hazelwood, chief engineer, and is directed by him. When the train from the north or south arrives, the visitor is struck with the amount of business going on. The office and works are a hive of industry. Here all mail is sorted and dispatched to the different points along the line.

Bob Long, the well known Chinaman, attends to the inner man. His pool room is well patronized by the travelling public. He provides a hard, but comfortable bed.

To the north-west of the Piquitona river, one of the old-timers, Mr. Peters, carries on a trading post. In the summer he lets out canoes for hire and in the winter his dogs are well known to the travellers in this north land.

Some time ago a very valuable discovery of gold and silver was made a short distance

from this place. Prospectors are still on the spot. They have great faith in the samples they have got. Silver up to \$6.00 in value have been found.

A very nice sight at the present moment is to see the rafts of ties being taken out by McArthur & Winterton on the river opposite the silver mining claims.

Canoeing and fishing is carried on in the river, which in the winter time is the direct route taken by the Indians to Split Lake.

On the south side of the river is situated the engineers' residence of the government, in charge of Mr. F. P. McNaughton, who is one of the first engineers on the line. Opposite to his place is the residence of Mr. Hazelwood. Next week I hope to deal with the social life of the district. Yours RUPERT'S LAND.⁵³

True to his word, the correspondent followed up with a companion article the following week.

Piquitona Pickings. (From Our Own Correspondent) When rambling through this new place, I came across a friend of mine, one of the old timers, who informed me as to how the place came to be known as Piquitona. It is derived from the Cree word "Scabby." It appears that at one time an Indian lived here that had a very rough, blotched face and when any of the earlier travellers that were going through to the Hudson Bay, wanted to be taken over the river, they were directed to "Old Scabby," and he rowed them across. Traces of the old camp are still to be found down close to the river.

In this far away north country we have a number of good sociable people. Amongst them are Mr. and Mrs. Drennan, who on last Friday night gave what they call in Scotland a "Lightening Up Party." At 9 o'clock a goodly number of guests had assembled, to take part in the games

⁵³ Ibid., 1 September 1916, p. 1. Indicative of the growth of the town, a public school, 5.4 m by 7.2 m, opened at Piquitona in January 1917 with twelve students under the direction of Miss S. Wood of Winnipeg. Ibid., 19 January 1917, p. 1.



Mile 214 before 1928
(courtesy Ed Carter)

The white building is the Great West Store and the large building on the right is Bob Long's restaurant and stopping place.

provided. During the evening Mr. C. Adams delighted the audience with a display of the latest step dancing. The selections on the gramophone [sic] included some of Harry Lauder's latest songs. Before the party separated a splendid supper was supplied, all the company returning home well pleased with the evening's enjoyment. During the week I was greatly struck with the musical ability of the residents here, which include the sweet tone of the violin, the mellow sounds of the banjo and mandolin, to the accompaniment of the piano. The ever popular selections on the gramophone, the rich tenor voices being carried through the stillness of the night, with the dance hall which Mr. Bob is putting up, the long winter nights will go over very pleasantly. Next week I hope to take you north and south of 214.¹⁴

The correspondent had nothing to say about Mile 137 (Wabowden), but he did make some interesting observations about Thicket Portage at Mile 185.

I promised last week to take you down to Thicket Portage, Mile 185. At this point on the line there is a portage called Portage avenue. This is the portage mentioned by Sir John Franklin in his book; Sir John and

his party came down the river and across the lakes, and through Thicket Portage.

Mr. George Cowan carries on a trading post here. Both he and his good wife are known far and near for their kind hospitality.

The Indians of the north have been known to use this portage for hundreds of years on their way to and from Norway House, Cross lake and Nelson House, at this season of the year. It is the halting place for the Indians, where they all meet before going on their winter's fishing and hunting expedition.

Last week quite a number of Indian dances were given at night, much to the amusement of those who had never witnessed anything of that sort before. Close to this point a saw mill is at work cutting ties and timber for the work of construction. There is also a fox ranch built at this portage.¹⁵

Work Slowdown during World War I

By 1916, the war effort was putting a strain on railway construction. There were only about twenty-five hundred men working on the railroad in 1916, which was well below the number employed in previous years.¹⁶ There was also a shortage of rails.

¹⁴ Ibid., 8 September 1916, p. 1

¹⁵ Ibid., 15 September 1916, p.4.

¹⁶ At the end of May 1914, for example, there were "nearly 3 000 men actively at work, with each train adding to those already employed." *The Pas Herald*, 28 May 1914, p. 1.



Landing Supplies, Port Nelson
(courtesy National Archives of Canada, PA-041490)

Nevertheless, by September 1916, the end of steel was at Mile 300, and by December 7, when Ottawa ended construction for the winter, "most of the 425 miles of the railroad" had been graded, and the rails were down on "two thirds of the line."⁷⁷

Construction on the railway slowed down in 1917, although work continued on the terminals at Port Nelson and on the bridges at Armstrong Lake and Kettle Rapids.⁷⁸ By the beginning of 1918, the bridge at Kettle Rapids was finished. McMillan Brothers Ltd. had also completed their contract to grade the road and moved their machinery and remaining supplies south to The Pas. Construction was winding down, and this fact gave credence to rumours that

the Hudson Bay Railway was going to be abandoned because of a shortage of money and labour.⁷⁹ Indeed, no rails were laid in 1918, and by the beginning of 1919, there was real concern in Western Canada over the railway's future. This was reflected in a newspaper article, which appealed for its completion.

AGITATION OVER H.B.R.Y. GROWS DETERMINED The situation about the H. B. Ry. is: total length, 424 miles [678 km], The Pas to Port Nelson. Estimated cost, including terminals at The Pas and Port Nelson, \$26,000,000. Estimated spent to date \$21,000,000. Estimated amount required for completion of the road, \$4,000,000. The grade was finished in 1916. Steel is laid for 332 miles [531 km], leaving but 92 miles [147 km] to completion. Terminals at Port Nelson

⁷⁷ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 15 December 1916, p. 1. The official reason given by Ottawa for shutting down construction was "the rigors of the northern winter," but in fact construction of some kind had occurred throughout the winter months in previous years.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 6 April 1917, p. 1.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 5 October 1917, p. 1.



Aerial View of Kettle Rapids on the Nelson River, showing line of the Hudson's Bay Railway, c.1928
(courtesy National Archives of Canada, PA-04 1606)

about half completed. Terminals at The Pas partly begun. The first 200 miles [320 km] of the road from The Pas runs through the mineral belt, and through spruce, jack pine, poplar and tamarack. The waterfalls of the Grassy and Nelson rivers lie close to the railway, and two million horse power is obtainable for the electrification of the road. The object sought in building this railway is a central Western Canada ocean outlet for Western commerce via Hudson Bay. According to the mercator's projection, the distance from Port Nelson to Liverpool is 3,200 miles [5120 km]. From Montreal the distance to Liverpool is 3,007 miles [4811 km]. The rail distance from Winnipeg to Montreal is 1,400 miles [2240 km]. Since the railway started, there has developed the finding of rich minerals and the mining of them within 100 miles [160 km] of it.

*The fishing industry has grown from a few boxes a month to eight cars a week, and this amount is entirely won from the lakes near the railway. The fish in Hudson Bay remain untouched. Of this the government report say: "In Hudson Bay, teeming with fish of all kinds, is a resource undeveloped, which this railway will open up, and cause large and prosperous communities to spring into being." Hudson Bay fish can be delivered to the heart of the prairies within 24 hours.*⁶⁶

This was a positive report on the benefits of the railway, but there was a downside as well. Ironically, the rapid transportation that delivered fish to Saskatoon in a day also played a major role in an epidemic that struck the North in late 1918 – early 1919.

The Influenza Epidemic, 1918-1919

Spanish Influenza was a virulent disease probably introduced to North America from Europe by returning soldiers who spread it throughout the continent as fast as the trains could carry them to their homes.⁶⁷ Since rail lines connected The Pas with points in Southern Manitoba as well as Saskatchewan, it was only a matter of time before the disease arrived in the

⁶⁶ *The Pas Herald*, 24 January 1919, p. 1.

⁶⁷ Called "Spanish Flu" on the erroneous assumption that it originated in Spain, the 1918 influenza pandemic is conservatively estimated to have killed over twenty million people throughout the world. According to Ann Herring of McMaster University, who has studied the effects of the disease in Northern Manitoba, "Illness came on without warning heralded by a sudden shivering, severe ache in the eyeballs, pain in the legs and kidneys, followed by collapse." This was followed by a high fever and a hacking cough. All age groups were struck, but children between the ages of five and fourteen and adults between twenty and forty years of age were particularly affected. Most recovered but of the remaining twenty percent nearly half died of secondary infections leading to influenza pneumonia. Influenza was a viral infection spread through the sneezes and coughs of the afflicted. There was no cure. See D. A. Herring, "There were young people and old people and babies dying every week: the 1918-1919 influenza pandemic at Norway House," *Ethnohistory* 41(1)(1994):80-81

community, and from there spread by rail to points further north.⁶² Indeed, the Muskeg travelled back and forth along the Hudson Bay Railway throughout the epidemic, carrying fish, railroad ties, and other goods, as well as passengers.⁶³

Newspaper reports at The Pas suggest that influenza initially entered the North from Saskatchewan. Certainly the disease was on the prairies by October 1918.⁶⁴ On October 29, it had reached The Pas, the first cases being passengers on the train from Hudson Bay Junction.⁶⁵ On November 6, Dr. A. Larose went north on the Muskeg

to find out if the disease had spread to "the Northland," but found health conditions there "satisfactory so far."⁶⁶ However, by December 6, the flu had reached Mile 82 at Herb Lake, where one person had already died, and quite a number were affected.⁶⁷ There were no reports of cases further north at that time, but evidence suggests that the disease was already beyond Setting Lake.

On December 3, the HBC journalist at Norway House recorded a rumour that influenza had struck "an Indian camp at Clearwater Lake some 2 or 3 days



People and Supplies on the HBR, possibly at Herb Lake (Mile 82)
(courtesy Sam Waller Museum, PP 90.7.66)

⁶² However, there is no evidence in *The Pas Herald* to suggest that it was returning soldiers who brought the disease north. An article entitled "3,000 Soldiers May Return to Northland" appeared in the 10 January 1919 issue of the paper, evidently in *anticipation* of their return. See *The Pas Herald*, 10 January 1919, p. 1.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 1 November 1918, p. 4; 8 November 1918, p. 4; 15 November 1918, p. 4; 6 December 1918, p. 4.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 18 October 1918, p. 1.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 1 November 1918, p. 1. The first case was a fifty-five year old man from Saskatoon; the second was a resident of The Pas returning from a visit to Prince Albert.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 8 November 1918.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 6 December 1918, p. 1.

north of Cross Lake.”⁶⁶ The following day, a letter arrived with the Cross Lake packet confirming the report and adding that “seventeen deaths” had occurred.”⁶⁷ The camp in question may have been the one later mentioned in a newspaper report about the epidemic at Cross Lake. Apparently, “Those who suffered most were in the interior, outside of medical aid. In one camp of 27, sixteen died almost at one time with the flu.” The remainder would have starved to death had the Hudson’s Bay Company not had “provisions cached there.” Evidently they were in a weakened state because a party under the leadership of Albert Sinclair had to be “organized and sent there to bury the dead.”⁶⁸

Cross Lake was “the first afflicted” of the Indian reserves north of The Pas.” In all likelihood, the flu arrived via the Hudson Bay Railway at Mile 137, which was connected by a well-travelled trail to Cross Lake.” Dan McDonald, who was living with his wife at Mile 137, travelled

back and forth over that trail all winter because he and another man named Levoie were fishing commercially on Cross Lake. Before they pulled up their nets in February, they had made many trips, “their last consignment of whitefish leaving Mile 137 by the Muskeg on the 25th [of February 1919].”⁶⁹ However, they were not the only ones to travel that road, so it is anyone’s guess regarding who carried the disease to Cross Lake.”⁷⁰

The railway certainly played a part in its spread there, as it had done at The Pas and Herb Lake, although *The Pas Herald* reported little about illness at other places along the line. Indeed, the only evidence of influenza at Thicket Portage (Mile 185) was a rather macabre report about Ole Olson’s “good” fortune:

Ole Olson, Thicket Portage, is better off by \$10 and a fox. One of his traps, with a fox caught in it, was dragged some distance from its anchorage. A fellow trapper took a chance that it might be a silver fox for \$10. That night he was stricken with the “flu” and Ole got the money and fox.”

⁶⁶ PAM, HBCA, B 154/a/87, fo. 9. Norway House Post Journal, 1918-1923. Although the names were identical, this lake was nearby and should not be confused with Clearwater Lake just north of The Pas.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* The report came from C. H. M. Gordon, the Hudson’s Bay Company factor at Cross Lake.

⁶⁸ *The Pas Herald*, 7 March 1919, p. 3. Albert Sinclair, maternal grandfather of Eva Dram of Wabowden, was a forest ranger and game guardian, who also served as Chief of the Cross Lake Band.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 14 February 1919, p. 1.

⁷⁰ There were no newspaper reports of influenza at Mile 137 itself, but this may have been an oversight, either because no deaths occurred there or because they were included in the Cross Lake statistics.

⁷¹ *The Pas Herald*, 7 March 1919, p. 3.

⁷² *Ibid.* In the same news report, it states that Bishop Charlebois arrived by dog team on February 13, and the very next day the wife of C. H. M. Gordon, the HBC factor, also arrived. Undoubtedly there were many other travellers whose journeys went unrecorded.

⁷³ *The Pas Herald*, 31 January 1919, p. 4.



Dog Teams resting at Mile 137 on way to Cross Lake.
(courtesy Sam Waller Museum, PP 94.2.91)

Perhaps a little black humour helped some people deal with the deaths that were occurring everywhere. For others, silence was the answer. There were only passing references to mortality rates from flu at The Pas, where news stories focused on efforts to contain the disease and highlighted any signs of its abatement.⁷⁶ Reports on the disease among the Native population, on the other hand, tended in the opposite direction. In a February report, for instance, the headline read, "Influenza

Takes Toll of Indian Tribes – Number of Deaths Placed at 289."⁷⁷ By far, the highest numbers of deaths occurred at Cross Lake and neighbouring Norway House, with one hundred and twenty and one hundred and thirty deaths respectively being reported in the middle of February 1919.⁷⁸ Indeed, in the case of Norway House, fully fifteen percent of the population may have died.⁷⁹

There were also numerous deaths at Cumberland House, Red Earth, Beaver Lake, and Pelican Narrows, where the

⁷⁶ As the newspaper explained, "Fear of contracting the disease should not enter the minds of any of our citizens. Your worries have a depressing effect. So cheer up, and look the emergency in the face." *Ibid.*, 1 November 1918, p. 1. It was not until March that the newspaper reported that there had been 293 cases and 23 deaths due to the flu. *Ibid.*, 7 March 1919, p. 1.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 14 February 1919, p. 1. Reporting the deaths of aboriginal peoples may not have created the same anxiety among the townspeople of The Pas, because it confirmed a widespread notion at the time that aboriginal people were dying out anyway because of their lack of resistance to European diseases. With this mindset, death was regrettable, of course, but expected.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 7 February 1919, p. 1. According to R. Talbot, manager of the HBC post at Norway House, there had been one hundred and seven deaths, or twelve percent of the population by 22 January 1919. This suggests a total population of approximately eight hundred and ninety-two people. By the middle of February, the death toll had risen to an estimated one hundred and thirty people, or fifteen percent of the population. *Ibid.*, 14 February 1919, p. 1.

situation was desperate.

In one house there were 20 lying on the floor helplessly sick, with four dead bodies lying in amongst them. The reports coming in say that the conditions at the Narrows are horrible, and every family is down with the flu and helpless. It is thought that, unless relief is given immediately, the entire Indian tribe at Pelican will be wiped out...Charles Dysart rushed in yesterday with the latest news of the epidemic...Pelican Narrows death list is now 30 and when Dysart left they expected 8 more to die that day. He says they are rolling the dead up in blankets and putting them on the roof of shacks.⁴²

There were still no cases at The Pas Reserve, which was remarkable evidence of the effectiveness of a locally imposed quarantine, and the disease had not yet been reported at Grand Rapids, Cedar Lake, or Moose Lake.⁴³ However, there were mild attacks of influenza the following week at The Pas Reserve, and a week later seven deaths were reported at Moose Lake.⁴⁴ One of them was Jacob Tobacco, who died "under most dramatic circumstances."⁴⁵

**EPIDEMIC
- INFLUENZA
(SPANISH)**

**This Disease is Highly Communicable.
It May Develop into a Severe Pneumonia.**

There is no medicine which will prevent it.
Keep away from public meetings, theatres and other places where crowds are assembled.

Keep the mouth and nose covered while coughing or sneezing.
When a member of the household becomes ill, place him in a room by himself.
The room should be warm, but well ventilated.
The attendant should put on a mask before entering the room of those ill of the disease.

TO MAKE A MASK

Take a piece of ordinary cheesecloth 8 x 16 inches. Fold it to make it 8 x 8 inches. Next fold this to make it 8 x 4 inches. Tie cords about 10 inches long at each corner. Fasten over mouth and nose as shown in the picture.

ISSUED BY THE PROVINCIAL BOARD OF HEALTH

Public Notice issued by the Alberta Board of Health
(courtesy Glenbow Museum Archives. NA-4548-5)
"To Make A Mask - Take a piece of ordinary cheesecloth 8 X 16 inches, fold it to make it 8 X 8 inches. Next fold this to make it 8 X 4 inches. Tie cords about 10 inches long at each corner. Apply over mouth and nose as shown in the picture."

⁴²Ibid. 7 February 1919, p. 3. People in the fatal last stages of influenza presented a terrible sight. Images from Herring include: "typhoidal state" characterised by cracked lips, a dry, shrunken, glazed brown tongue, lint-picking fingers, incontinence, and a semi-conscious stupor; "faces turned an ashy purple"; and "a horrible influenza stench, reminiscent of rotting corpses on a battlefield." Herring, 81.

⁴³Even before any cases of the disease had occurred, Dr. Stephansson, the medical health officer at The Pas had ordered the closure of schools, churches, poolrooms, and the theatre. Meetings "of any nature" were forbidden, and all other gatherings discouraged. Later, when people were stricken with the flu, they had to remain in their homes under quarantine until the proper authorities lifted the order. Although there was no known cure, the doctor maintained that people who received serum twice by inoculation seven to ten days apart might still get the disease, but a milder form of it. *The Pas Herald*, 1 November 1918, p. 1, and 15 November, p. 1.

⁴⁴Ibid. 21 February 1919, p. 4; 28 February 1919, p. 4. Eighty percent of the people who contracted influenza made a full recovery, possibly because they had "mild" attacks.

After pulling up his fishing nets he went home and informed his wife that he was leaving her and to call the children for prayer and advice. He afterwards don[er]ed his black suit and went out to the lake bank and died. Influenza was the cause of death.⁶³

On to The Bay: Keeping the Dream Alive

By April 1919, the epidemic had run its course, and attention turned to other matters, not the least of which was the future of the Hudson Bay Railway. It did not look promising. J. D. McArthur had lost the contract for its completion, and management of the railroad was transferred to the Canadian National Railway.⁶⁴ A quarter of a million railroad ties lying along the track, and designed to be used in the final phase of construction, had been hauled away during the winter.⁶⁵ By June, the construction office at The Pas and the shops at Piquitona had been closed, and much of the rolling stock moved elsewhere.⁶⁶ This included "a few hundred hand-cars" and nearly all of the "Hartt dump cars." In resignation, *The Pas Herald* noted, "That the dismantling is well

completed is evidenced by the absence of the whiskey jacks, who have gone to more active fields."⁶⁷

The Muskeg continued to operate, although there were not-so-subtle complaints about the cost of transport. One such item appeared in the paper in May.

It cost Dan McDonald \$400 to send a car of freight to Mile 239 on the Hudson Bay railway. A few years ago J. D. McArthur charged \$72 to bring a car of ice and fish from that point to The Pas, and the charges now are reported to be near \$800. Mr. McDonald denies that he is buying the railway on the installment plan.⁶⁸

Dan McDonald, Josie Grenon, and twenty-six fisherman were among the trappers and prospectors that headed north on the Muskeg on 21 May 1919. They were travelling to Mile 239, just past Kettle Rapids, apparently to engage in commercial fishing, which had become increasingly important along the railway line.⁶⁹ In fact, fifty-three carloads of fish had been transported south to The Pas in 1918, and in 1919, the Muskeg operated "a fast express with fish" on alternate weeks "in order to catch the Tamarack

⁶³ Ibid., 4 April 1919, p. 4.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 2 May 1919, p. 1.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 11 April 1919, p. 1.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 6 June 1919, p. 1.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 3. The whiskey-jack, or Canada jay, is an inquisitive bird often found hovering around campsites in the northern forest in anticipation of the food they have to offer. The name is derived from the Cree *wiskatjān*.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 23 May 1919, p. 3.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 4.

for the south on Fridays.”¹⁷ Most of the fish was purchased by Armstrong Trading Company, which was one of the largest fish purchasing firms in North America. Known as Booth Fisheries Company after 1919, its store at The Pas was the largest such establishment in Manitoba, “handling everything a modern departmental store” carried.¹⁸

Fishing activity, as well as mineral exploration and forestry, helped to keep alive the dream of a railway link to Hudson

Bay. Lobbying by western interests had secured \$300,000 for repairs and maintenance of the existing line in 1919 and kept the door open for a resumption of construction. Surveying was another hopeful sign. P. B. Street had completed a survey of townships along the railway in 1916, but additional surveying of homesteads was scheduled for the summer of 1919. In June, D. L. Evans was looking for thirteen men at “\$2.25 a day and food” to work “at Mile 75, and then along the Nelson River from Mile 185.”¹⁹



**Mr. Paul and Delivery Wagon for the
Armstrong Trading Company, 1912**
(courtesy Provincial Archives of Manitoba, N19240)

¹⁷ Ibid. 13 June 1919, p. 4; 20 June 1919, p. 4. The Tamarack was the train that travelled south from The Pas.

¹⁸ Ibid. 12 September 1919, p. 3. Its manager at the time was S. H. Johnson, son-in-law of Henry McKay of Grand Rapids.

¹⁹ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 31 March 1916, p. 3; *The Pas Herald*, 6 June 1919, p. 1.

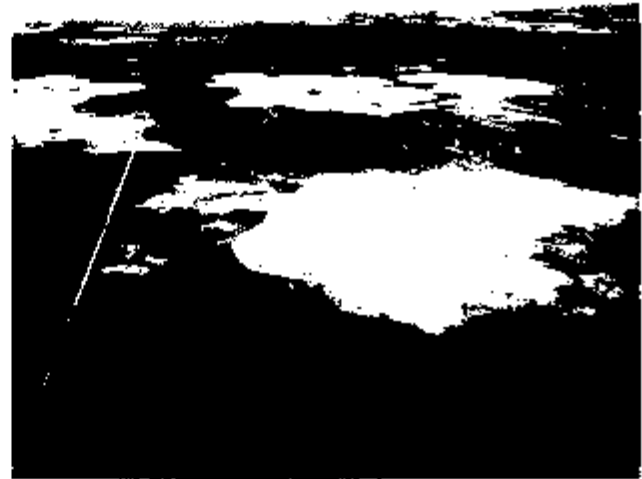
Chapter Four

Wabowden Takes Shape, 1914-1925

Mile 137: Early Development

It is not absolutely certain when people began to gather at Mile 137, but it must have been around 1914, because the Hudson Bay Railway arrived that summer, and plans were announced in the fall to establish the first division yards north of The Pas at this location.¹ Known as "Division 2, Goose Lake, Mile 137," it was under the direction of a division engineer and three resident engineers.² Besides these men, there were many labourers employed on the railway line in the vicinity, and in 1915, the place took on added importance when a new gravel pit was opened "four miles off the track at Mile 137" to replace the nearly exhausted one at Reader Lake.³

Mile 137 was also on a major fur trade route to Nelson House, which made it an excellent location for distributing supplies both winter and summer. According to local sources, summer transport was done by canoe from Kiski Creek.⁴ However, in early 1919, winter transport got a boost when



Aerial View of Mile 136
(courtesy National Archives of Canada, PA 40857)

the first horse-drawn freight toboggans left for Nelson House driven by Joseph Tait and Felix McKay.⁵ By 1920, this system of freight traffic had become so popular that a number of new trails were cleared to accommodate two-horse teams.⁶

Trader Arthur Mercer of Cross Lake was among the first to recognize the significance of the site for the transport of supplies and furs. He travelled out to Mile 137 in February 1915 and headed south via rail to The Pas with "over four hundred

¹ *The Pas Herald*, 23 October 1914, p. 1.

² *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 23 April 1915, p. 1.

³ *Ibid.*, 26 February 1915, p. 1.

⁴ Christianson, "History of Wabowden."

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

prime mink and two hundred red and cross fox." *The Pas Herald* was quick to see the implications.

Cross Lake north of Norway House opened trading negotiations with The Pas when A. Mercer arrived here with a load of fur, which in times past he has taken to Winnipeg. According to Mr. Mercer the Hudson Bay railway has made it possible for Cross lake traders to get in easy touch with markets via The Pas, and this town will henceforth serve the needs of the outlying districts both as a market and base of supplies. A saving of 500 miles is made to Cross lake traders by coming to The Pas and other posts will benefit proportionally.



Dog Train
(courtesy Carl and Eva Dram)

By the following winter, the trappers at Setting Lake had certainly recognized the benefits of the railway. In December 1915, the Setting Lake "Indian free traders" and trappers went into The Pas with "large bundles of raw furs which they sold to the Armstrong trading company."¹ W. F. Rose, identified as a trapper from Setting Lake, sold his furs at The Pas in March 1916, and Pat Lamont, a "free trader near Setting

lake," took furs to The Pas in February and April 1916.² These furs and other goods were carried on the Muskeg, although not always on time. In February 1915, for instance, the Muskeg "went dead at Mile 137 and limped in [to The Pas] behind an extra Sunday morning [train] after three days of a tie up."³ This disrupted its regular schedule, which greatly inconvenienced Cross

Lake people "who expected supplies up from The Pas and were going to bring them in by dog train from the track."⁴

The Hudson's Bay Company, which had long dominated the fur trade in the north, also acknowledged the value of the railway. Prior to its construction, most goods were transported to and from northern posts like Nelson House and Cross Lake via Norway House and Lake Winnipeg. This changed, however, after the rail line reached Mile 137. According to A. Bassett's report for the District of Keewatin on 20 August 1915,

¹ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 5 February 1915, p. 1.

² *Ibid.*, 17 December 1915, p. 1. The reference to "Indian free traders" is unclear, but probably means those aboriginal trappers who traded their furs with the buyer who could offer them the best prices rather than selling them exclusively to the HBC as in earlier times.

³ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 10 March 1916, p. 4; 18 February 1916, p. 4; 7 April 1916, p. 3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 26 February 1915, p. 4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

The operation of Hudson's [sic] Bay Railway will affect the transport of only Nelson House and Split Lake, and next year, any goods for these posts will be shipped via The Pas to the most convenient siding for transferring to the posts (in the vicinity of Manitou Rapids).¹⁷

Cross Lake was not immediately affected. In spite of Mercer's example, it took longer for the HBC to make changes in its transport system there, perhaps because of the longstanding connection between Cross Lake and Norway House. However, economy eventually brought matters to a head. The district manager's report, probably written in January 1919, stated that

At Cross Lake, it has been arranged to send out the furs in winter via Mile 137, Hudson's [sic] Bay Railway, and The Pas, as this entails only a two day trip with dog team, instead of the long ten day trip via Norway House and Lake Winnipeg. By using this route, the furs can be sent out at less than half the cost by the other route. The same route will also be used for the Nelson House furs.¹⁸

Nevertheless, freight for Cross Lake continued to be transported from Winnipeg to West Selkirk by rail, and from there to Norway House via Lake Winnipeg on the

steamer *Wolverine*, which was owned by the Northern Fish Company. Once at Norway House, the goods were unloaded and transported by local trippers, either by canoe or York boat to Cross Lake.¹⁹ By 1920, this too had changed. Not only were the furs going out via Mile 137 to The Pas, but winter freight was coming into Cross Lake by the same route.²⁰

The HBC at Mile 137

It is not certain just when the Hudson's Bay Company established a base at Mile 137. According to a local report, by 1918 all the Hudson's Bay Company's freighting for the area was done from here.²¹ There was no HBC post in town, but according to a local source, the Company kept two large tents full of supplies there. In the summer of 1918, a forest fire swept through the area, destroying the supply tents and chasing the town's residents to the safety of the islands in Bowden Lake. The loss of these supplies could have been disastrous to the outlying towns that depended on them, but fortunately Dick Davidson's store had been saved. The freight canoes continued to operate, carrying emergency supplies

¹⁷ HBCA, A.74/44, fo. 71, Annual Reports from District Officers, Outfit 1914, Keewatin, 31 May 1914-31 May 1915.

¹⁸ HBCA, A.74/47, fo. 55, Annual Reports from District Officers, Outfit 1917, Keewatin, 1 June 1917-31 May 1918. This report was evidently delayed by a change in management that occurred at this time in the Company.

¹⁹ HBCA, A.74/48, fo. 55, Annual Reports from District Officers, Outfit 1918, Keewatin, 1 June 1918-31 May 1919.

²⁰ HBCA, A.74/49, fo. 43, Annual Reports from District Officers, Outfit 1919, Keewatin, 1 June 1919-31 May 1920.

²¹ The HBC had started to freight into Nelson House and Split Lake from Mile 137 in 1915.

from Davidson's until the HBC could get their tents restocked."

It is odd that this story, considering its dramatic components, cannot be confirmed in *The Pas* newspaper, which often contained accounts of fires along the railway, especially those causing damage to property.¹¹ The fire

is also unmentioned in the HBC reports of the day.¹² Nevertheless, it contains plausible elements. Certainly, the HBC was making changes in its transport system at this time, and it makes sense that it

would have had some kind of temporary storage system in place at Mile 137 prior to establishing a more permanent base. Also, Dick Davidson had a store there. According to oldtimers, he established his store in 1917, and they remembered that basic necessities, like traps, flour,

sugar, tea, and blankets could be bought there, as well as luxuries such as sewing machines.¹³

Lamont and Davidson

There was no mention in *The Pas Herald and Mining News* of Dick Davidson or his store in 1917, but as early as 1916 the

newspaper made reference to Pat Lamont, who was described as "a free trader at Setting Lake."¹⁴ Lamont was still trading there in February 1917, but by the fall of 1918 he was at The Pas "on leave of absence" to settle

"his business affairs" before returning to "military duties."¹⁵ Whether that settlement involved Davidson is not recorded, but by January 1919 Lamont had been released from service in the army and was back at Mile 137, apparently in partnership with Davidson. Later that year, the Hudson's



Dick Davidson sorting Wolf Pelts in front of Wabowden store, 1919
(courtesy Carl and Eva Dram)

¹¹ Christianson, "History of Wabowden."

¹² For examples, see *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 4 June 1915, p. 1; 21 July 1916, p. 1; 4 August 1916, p. 3, and 27 June 1919, p. 1.

¹³ Neither of the distinct reports for 1917 and 1918 made mention of any loss of property at Mile 137. See PAM, HBCA, A.74/47 and A.74/48. The report for 1919 contained the first reference to goods being transported to Mile 137. See PAM, HBCA, A.74/49, fo. 43.

¹⁴ Christianson, "History of Wabowden."

¹⁵ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 18 February 1916, p. 6; 7 April 1916, p. 3.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 2 February 1917, p. 6. *The Pas Herald*, 27 September 1918, p. 5.

Bay Company described "Davidson and Lamont" as their "competitors"²³ They were not the only opposition to the HBC at Mile 137. Tom Riddoch of Great West Stores also had a store there, established "at the Point" in 1919, according to local sources.²⁴ More details on these enterprises were provided in a newspaper report the following year.

Mile 137 is the next station on the line, noted for 150 years as the winter portage between Cross lake and Nelson House. A short distance away is the annual meeting place of the Indians from both areas. As fur trading is the very life of the settlements along the railway, Mile 137 marks the beginning of a series of posts clear to Port Nelson. Here Lamont & Davidson are established with a post at Nelson House, and trippers in their employ to seek out the fur trappers in out-of-the-way places and exchange merchandise for their furs. The Great West Stores have their headquarters here. It is the largest free-trading concern in the north, the creation of Tom Riddoch, and a successful enterprise. Here he maintains a stopping-place as well, where Mrs. John Carter provides food for all.²⁵

The Role of the Local Newspaper

The newspaper played a vital role in

keeping people informed about local events and issues. Were it not for the *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, we would not know that "Fred Fitter," a veteran who had shattered his knee "at the front," was recuperating at Mile 137 in 1917, or that he later travelled to Winnipeg to work for the CNR.²⁶ The newspaper also reported that Dan McDonald and his wife were at Mile 137 in 1919 and 1920, as he was still fishing in the neighbourhood.²⁷ There was also a man named James Bryan nearby at about the same time. Although his occupation was not given, Bryan was highlighted in *The Pas Herald and Mining News* for having paid his newspaper subscription after two years in arrears.

He said his conscience had been troubling him a good deal about this account, and he had a hard struggle between it and getting Mrs. Bryan a new bonnet so that she could come to The Pas.²⁸

This light-hearted commentary on Bryan's conscience was an indirect reminder to others with unpaid subscriptions that they needed to "shape up." Efforts at social control, however, could be much more pointed, as one man discovered when

²³ PAM. HBCA, A.74/49, fo. 68.

²⁴ Christianson, "History of Wabowden." The Point was on Bowden Lake. Riddoch also had stores at Mile 185 and 214.

²⁵ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 22 October 1920, p. 1.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 3 August 1917, p. 4, and 24 January 1919, p. 3. The term "at the front" is in reference to the front lines of the conflict in Europe during World War I. "Fitter" may have moved first from Mile 137 to The Pas, perhaps for medical attention, prior to going to Winnipeg for work. Certainly his wife and child seemed to be living at The Pas, when they left in January 1919 to join him in the city.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 18 April 1919, p. 1, and 15 October 1920, p. 1.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 9 January 1920, p. 3.

he found himself exposed in the "Local News."

We are asked to roast Dennis Ryan for getting drunk and beating his wife up and driving her out in the hot sun. This we have refused to do, and if Mrs. Ryan is unable to wallop that water rat surely to goodness a newspaper roast will have no effect at all.²⁷

In fact, the newspaper could have considerable effect in an age where there was limited recognition of and even fewer protections for people subject to spousal abuse. Often public disapproval was the only means of checking bad behaviour, and the newspaper in such instances provided a service to the community by calling a spade a spade.

The Pas Herald and Mining News also kept the people informed on more general matters of local and regional interest. One contemporary issue was income tax, which had just been imposed by the federal government, initially as a temporary measure. In April 1920, the paper included the following crisp reminder:

Income taxes are payable before the end of this month, or the government will charge 25% interest. Forms may be obtained from the postmaster. Farmers and ranchers are exempt from this taxation. All people are subject to this tax, male and female who

earned or received amounts above \$1,000 during 1919. Any attempt to evade making a return is subject to court trial and upon conviction to a fine of \$100.²⁸

Taxation might have been a concern for some, but prohibition affected everybody. In the fall of 1920, the results of a national vote on prohibition were printed locally. Although the three prairie provinces voted "dry," Northern Manitoba was overwhelmingly "wet." At Mile 137, the tally was 6-2, while at Grand Rapids it was even higher at 36-0, indicating that "the stout gents" of that community seemed "to want a drink."²⁹ The editor of the paper made no pretence about where he stood.

This result was expected by those on both sides in touch with the situation. Anything smattering of restrictive measures upon the ancient and long borne rights of the individual will certainly be given a knockdown in this north. It is the temperament of the pioneers who live here. They want freedom, free exercise of a choice to do right or wrong, and the Lord help those who succeed in wresting it from them.³⁰

Whether or not the provincial vote "dried up" the enthusiasm of northerners is hard to say, but perhaps they were too busy to care. In the summer of 1920, forty men, mainly "Indians," were working in three

²⁷ Ibid., 10 September 1920, p. 3. However, "Denis Ryan," a common Irish name, may well have been a pseudonym.

²⁸ Ibid., 2 April 1920, p. 4.

²⁹ Ibid., 29 October 1920, p. 2.

³⁰ Ibid.

Fur Traders at Mile 137 and Elsewhere

survey parties along the Hudson Bay Railway.²² Another hundred men were employed re-laying 138,560 ties on the railroad between The Pas and Mile 218 and repairing the trestle at Cormorant Lake.²³ This was encouraging news for the people along the line, as practically nothing had been done in 1919.²⁴ It was particularly important as a cheap means of transport to the free traders, who were by this time under considerable pressure from the Hudson's Bay Company. Its aggressive tactics had been reported in *The Pas Herald and Mining News* in the fall of 1919.

The Hudson [sic] Bay company is on the trail of free traders and fur buyers throughout Northern Manitoba, and it is after them in a competitive way, by boosting the price of furs to the skies. Free traders are coming into The Pas angered and empty handed. The old company has been letting things go along loosely during the war, and recently it awakened with a roar and sent out its fastest dog runners to all posts, with the word to get the furs anyway.²⁵

The traders had become numerous by 1920. At Mile 137, the aforementioned Dick Davidson, Pat Lamont, and Tom Riddoch held sway. At Mile 185 (Thicket Portage), Jack Thomas of Great West Stores, George Cowan, Percy Taylor, and Alec and Giddy [Gideon] Halcrow provided a lively competition with each other and the HBC. Percy Carter was the representative for Great West Stores at Mile 214 (Pikwitonei), and his local competitors were A. E. May, who also acted as "magistrate, train agent and postmaster," and Bob Long, who traded in addition to maintaining a stopping place for travellers. Carl Laubman was the only trader at Mile 239 (Manitou Falls), C. Hawkins had a trading post at Mile 279 (Landing River), and Luke Clemons maintained his post at Mile 341 (Kettle Rapids).²⁷

All of these men were colourful characters. Carl Laubman was described as "a powerful-built chap, and his great physique

²² *Ibid.*, 21 May 1920, p. 1. The going wage was a dollar a day with forty cents an hour overtime. Previously, the railway had relied on foreign labour, but this was now largely unavailable, because of immigration restrictions after World War I. Among "enemy aliens" excluded altogether were the Ukrainians, who had previously provided so much labour for railway construction. Consequently, railroad officials turned to the local Indians, who were willing because of a poor spring muskrat hunt and equally poor fur prices. *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 11 June 1920, p. 4, and 18 June 1920, p. 1; Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 247.

²³ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 4 June 1920, p. 1.

²⁴ Early reports in 1919 suggested that the job of upgrading the roadbed and laying steel into Port Nelson would be completed that year, but by April it became evident that the CNR had abandoned that idea perhaps permanently, or so the newspaper speculated. See *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 29 March 1919, p. 1, and 11 April 1919, p. 2.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 14 November 1919, p. 1.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 22 October 1920, p. 1.

is tempered with a uniform good nature and a fine hospitality. His idea of hospitality is to cook up six ducks, three chickens and slathers of moose meat for three men to lunch upon. He trades with the Indians, and his business is large and profitable." " Luke Clemons of "the Kettle" was

The foundation and life of the place, a northern monarch whose slightest gesture is enough to bring in a moose or a speckled trout. He rules with dignity and kindness, and his trading-post is known to the bay. He handles freight and mail for Port Nelson, York Factory and bay posts, and to see his men shoot the rapids loaded to the canoe gunwale, is one of the sights worth seeing. He has quarters for travellers, where, if you wear a white collar, you'll get a white sheet on your bed. He has everything to make a home, and he makes it."



Luke Clemons (1878-19???)
(courtesy Ed Carter)

Uncertain Years, 1920-1922

Whether others were able to "make a home" depended in large measure on the uncertain future of the railroad, on which there had been no major new work since the end of 1917. However, the project was given a boost in the summer of 1920, when a senate report concluded that the railway was both "feasible and profitable."¹⁰ This change of attitude came largely because of concerted lobbying from the west and led the government to confirm in July the grants allocated for the road repairs already promised.¹¹

Although most of the roadblocks to the completion of the railway now appeared to be removed, there was still the thorny issue of the

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid. For a detailed biography of Luke Clemons, see *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 30 January 1925, p. 1. Legend has it that Luke was a nephew of Mark Twain, but no evidence has been found as yet to support this claim. Personal communication with Edward H. Carter, 8 April 2002. Ed Carter is personally acquainted with members of the Clemons family and has done extensive search on their origins. Raised at Pikwitonei until he was sixteen, Carter is a nephew of John and Percy Carter who operated Tom Riddoch's Great West Store there in the 1920s.

¹² *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 18 June 1920, p. 1.

¹³ Ibid., 30 April 1920, p. 1, and 9 July 1920, p. 1.

northern terminal. The senate report had recommended Churchill, rather than Port Nelson, a matter that would take additional study, and more delays, before it could be resolved.

In the meantime, life went on. The year 1920 was the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Hudson's Bay Company, an event noticeable even in a remote place like Mile 137. It was here in April that "four Indian chiefs from Cross lake, Oxford House and Norway House" boarded the Muskeg on the first

leg of their trip to Winnipeg to take part in the celebrations.⁴² Pat Lamont also made use of the train to take "several bales of furs" down to The Pas in July 1920. According to the newspaper account, "This same quantity would fetch around \$50,000 fo[u]r months ago," an allusion no doubt to the drop in prices that had occurred in that time.⁴³ Perhaps it was the search for better returns that prompted Lamont to travel east

to Montreal in August to attend the fur sales there." According to *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, the fall fur sale at Montreal in late September would "enable fur men and trappers to get a line on the prices that will prevail up to Xmas." The paper predicted that fur would be "in demand at good prices, but not anywhere near as high as last winter."⁴⁴



Hudson's Bay Company's 250th Anniversary
(courtesy Carl and Eva Dram)

Back (l to r) C. Gordon, H.B.C. manager with three of his children; William, Lily, and Walter; Catherine (Beardy) McIvor, T. Mallett, Fred Beebe (married Mary Garrick). Front (l to r) A.B. (Albert) McIvor, H. Fraser, T. Garrick

Men like George Cowan and Tom Riddoch no doubt hoped for those prices, as they faced unexpected expenses. While Lamont was away in Montreal, a fire swept through

Thicket Portage, destroying one of Cowan's warehouses, Riddoch's store, the water tank, Eastern Fish Company's warehouse, and several shacks.⁴⁵ Fires were also reported at Nelson House, Split Lake, Sturgeon Landing, Lake Athapapuskow, and Moose Lake, but none did the damage that occurred at Mile 185. Nevertheless, by October all was back in order, with Riddoch's post "now rebuilt and

⁴² Ibid., 30 April 1920, p. 1.

⁴³ Ibid., 9 July 1920, p. 4. Prices, of course, varied according to supply and demand.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 20 August 1920, p. 4.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 27 August 1920, p. 1.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 3 September 1920, p. 3.



Mr. Cowan with Group of Trappers at Thicket Portage, n.d.
(courtesy Ed Carter)

(l eft to right) Mr. Cowan, unknown, Art Wynn, Jack Carter (young boy), unknown,
Jack Grimsley, William "Bill" Tront, Harold Anderson? and unknown.

flourishing as ever."¹⁷

Optimism could have been the watchword of these sturdy northern folk. Certainly a positive attitude was required to establish a business along the Hudson Bay Railway considering the instability of the times. In early 1922, people were complaining again about the dreadful condition of the line between The Pas and Mile 214 (Pikwitonei), and by the end of the year, those complaints became louder and more insistent as the CNR actually began to tear up the track north of Mile 214.¹⁸ Determined lobbying on the part of The Pas Board of Trade and Western politicians turned the tide, and by January 1923, the dismantling

had ended. Then, in April, the federal government "again voted in favor of completing the Hudson Bay Railway."¹⁹

Commercial Development at Mile 137 in the Early 1920s

It took stubborn resilience to repeatedly face Eastern Canadian interests opposed to the Hudson Bay route, and the same quality kept people committed to the mining claims, traplines, and businesses along the already completed railway. Even a little restaurant represented enormous challenges for its owners. According to local sources, the first restaurant at Mile 137 was established by Mr. [Jon] Gislason and his daughters in 1919.²⁰ Three years

¹⁷ Ibid., 22 October 1920, p. 1

¹⁸ Ibid., 24 March 1922, p. 1, and 22 December 1922, p. 4. Evidently the CNR bosses thought the railroad was a dead issue and that the track north of Mile 214 could be taken up for use elsewhere

¹⁹ Ibid., 12 January 1923, p. 1, and 6 April 1923, p. 2

²⁰ This information cannot be confirmed from newspaper reports, but Jon's son, Gilly Gislason, was mentioned in a list of passengers on the Muskeg in March 1922 and another son, John Gislason Jr. of Mile 137 hit the news in September 1924 when he accidentally shot his brother-in-law, Wilhelm Lesopoy, while hunting. See *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 3 March 1922, p. 3, and 26 September 1924, p. 1. According to other sources, Jon Gislason bought a house at Wabowden in about 1920 and converted it into a boarding house, which his family then operated for five years. "John Gislason - 'Jack-Of-All Trades,'" *The Selkirk Enterprise*, 9 April 1969, p. 8; personal communication by R. Shirrit-Beaumont with Bryan Barnell, great-grandson of Jon Gislason, December 2002

later, Bert Hubble and his family arrived and also established a restaurant that they managed for a number of years.” It took courage to establish an enterprise of this nature in so isolated a spot, especially when it faced opposition, and there was plenty of that in the 1920s, not just for them, but for their neighbours as well.⁸⁷ Lamont and Davidson, who had their headquarters at Mile 137, faced increasing pressure at this particular time from the Hudson’s Bay Company.

After World War I, the HBC stepped up its efforts to drive rival traders out of business. By raising the prices they paid for furs, HBC traders forced the opposition to either increase its prices or forego obtaining the available furs, a tactic that defeated the firm of Lamson and Hubbard at Little Grand Rapids, Deer Lake, and Berens River.⁸⁸ At Mile 137, the HBC faced Tom Riddoch’s Great West Stores as well as the firm of Lamont and Davidson, each of which sent out trippers by dog team to the Indian camps where they traded goods and cash for the fur as it was caught. Initially, HBC strategy was to do the same from its

already established posts at Cross Lake, Nelson House, and Split Lake.⁸⁹ However, recognizing that “Messrs. Lamont and Davidson and the Great West Stores” were the “most active firms” it had to deal with, the Company decided to adopt a more aggressive policy toward them, and one of its first acts was to purchase Tom Riddoch’s Great West Store at Mile 137.⁹⁰

The acquisition of Riddoch’s store in the fall of 1922 gave the HBC a base on the railroad, although the store and dwelling were in too poor a condition to merit any additional expenditure to repair them. As District Manager J. Bartleman observed, “until something more definite is known as to what is likely to take place on this Railway, it perhaps might be just as well to put up with the present poor Buildings.”⁹¹ Located next to the railway on a point that jutted out into nearby Bowden Lake, and managed for its first five years by James Murray Cran, the post did business with railway employees, prospectors, trappers, and townspeople. It eventually handled all mail, freight, and fur shipments to and from Cross Lake, Norway House, Oxford

⁸⁷ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 16 June 1922, p. 3.

⁸⁸ Other real or potential obstacles to business stability included the cost of transportation, the uncertain future of the railroad, the ups and downs of the trapping economy, and the speculative nature of mining ventures.

⁸⁹ PAM, HBCA, A. 74/50, fo. 89, Annual Reports from District Managers, Keewatin, 1920.

⁹⁰ PAM, HBCA, A. 74/49, fo. 69.

⁹¹ PAM, HBCA, A. 74/51, fo. 93 and 97, Annual Reports from District Managers, Keewatin, 1921. According to an HBCA source, the post was established on Bowden Lake in 1922. HBCA, Wabowden Post History.

⁹² PAM, HBCA, A. 74/53, fo. 183, Annual Reports from District Managers, Keewatin, 1923.

House, God's Lake, Nelson House, and Island Lake.⁷

The presence of an HBC post had no immediate effect on Riddoch's other stores at Thicket Portage and Pikwitonei, and Lamont and Davidson showed no sign of pulling up stakes in the face of HBC opposition. In fact, they built a new store at Mile 137 the following year, most of its fixtures purchased from Booth Fisheries in The Pas.⁸ And, as the paper pointed out in November 1923, they ran neck and neck with the HBC in providing quality goods for their customers.

The Pas Canoe Company are sending 25 toboggans north by next Wednesday's train. These toboggans, made of hickory, maple and oak, were made in the company's workshop here, and have been bought by Lamont & Davidson and the Hudson's Bay Company.⁹

Some idea of the location of Lamont and Davidson's new store can be gleaned from an item in *The Pas Herald and Mining News* in 1924.

At the last meeting of the Town Council of Setting Lake it was decided to make a public tennis court, and this is now on its way to completion. The old court, close to the Hudson Bay store, has been taken over by Mr. Cran. The new court is situated on the main street between the Hudson's



Davidson & Lamont's Trading Post
at Mile 137, 1922
(courtesy National Archives of Canada, PA-19203)

Bay store and Lamont & Davidson's. The Imperial Café, owned by Mrs. Hubble, is just across the street.¹⁰

Setting Lake was, of course, another name for Mile 137. The main "street" was no more than a path lying parallel to the railway line between the tracks and Bowden Lake, and the stores were on the river side of that path. Mrs. Hubble's Imperial Café was somewhere between the two stores, but on the opposite side of the "street", evidently next to the tracks for easy access to the train passengers. Lamont and Davidson's new store made the HBC buildings appear shabby indeed, but this changed during the summer of 1925. After the old HBC store and warehouses burned down in March, the Company constructed new buildings on the same spot, including a

⁷ S. J. C. Cummings, "H.B.C. Posts, Keowatin District, No. 6 - Setting Lake Post," *The Beaver* (December 1927): 121

⁸ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 14 September 1923, p. 4. According to local sources, including Christianson "History of Wabowden," it was a combined general, grocery, and hardware store. It was purchased in the mid-1960s by Jack Stephenson, later by Lu-Jack Enterprises, then by Jean and Allan Johnson, who renamed it Lakeside Grocceteria.

⁹ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 9 November 1923, p. 4

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 13 June 1924, p. 4.



Mile 137 H.B. Ry. Hudson's Bay Co. Post, 1922
(courtesy National Archives of Canada, PA019204)

warehouse, a bunkhouse, and a two-story structure that combined a store with living quarters.⁶¹

Social Life at Mile 137

It was not all business at Mile 137 (Setting Lake) in the 1920s. In November 1922, a wedding reception was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank N. Campbell, who had been married in Winnipeg earlier in the month.⁶²

Mr. R. Davidson (Reeve) helped to receive the guests who were very numerous. All wished the newly married couple the very best of luck, and the good wishes were responded to in a very tasteful manner. It was rather regrettable that our worthy game guardian was unable to be present

but it was attributed by some to jealousy. However, George [Ferguson] is understood to say that his time will yet come.⁶³

Whether "his time" ever came is unknown, but it was not the only instance that Ferguson failed to show up. According to the newspaper, he was at Setting Lake in the spring of 1923 "to organize the Canoe Club for the summer" (with Mr. Davidson as president). However, a week later, the same paper reported that "the reorganizing of the Canoe Club at Setting Lake had been deputed to Mr. F. Campbell, owing to the unavoidable absence of Mr. Ferguson."⁶⁴ Evidently, his duties as game guardian made Ferguson's whereabouts as unpredictable as the poachers he sought to catch.⁶⁵

Dick Davidson, the "mayor" of Mile 137, formally opened the Canoe Club on May 24.⁶⁶ Its itinerary included a summer tour of Nelson House and a regatta there on August 2 during treaty days. "Evinrude motors" were "strictly barred," but this was not expected to dampen the enthusiasm of

⁶¹ The fire occurred 11 March 1925. PAM, HBCA, A.74/54, Annual Reports from District Managers, Keewatin, 1924. According to Buhler, "Wabowden," the fire was caused by a furnace explosion. The new bunkhouse and warehouse were each nine by six metres in size, the main store was twelve by seven metres, and the lean-to kitchen and dining room at the back of the main building ten by four metres. PAM, HBCA, G.7/5, fo. 207b, HBC Canada Fur Trade Post Plans, Setting Lake, 1924-1925, mf. 17M2. According to Christianson, "History of Wabowden," when W. H. Hutton was manager in 1928, the store was moved from Lot 8 about two and a half km south to Lot 14, the present site of Dwyer's store. See a 1926 photo of the new store on Bowden Lake, page 80.

⁶² *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 2 November 1922, p. 1. Frank had married the Widow Perry of Setting Lake.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 17 November 1922, p. 1.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 27 April 1923, p. 1, and 4 May 1923, p. 1.

⁶⁵ The game guardian was responsible for enforcing the laws related to hunting and fishing.

⁶⁶ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 1 June 1923, p. 1. It is uncertain whether Dick Davidson was an elected mayor, or whether it was an informal title given to him by his neighbours. However, the reference below to the Christmas party at the home of the "deputy mayor" suggests the possibility at least that elections were held.

the "large number of entries" anticipated.⁷⁷ For those uninterested in racing in the regatta, there was always the Tennis Club, which planned to begin the season by "holding a dance."⁷⁸

A good meal and a dance always brought people together. One such event occurred on 25 December 1923.

A dance and supper was held on Christmas night in the home of the deputy mayor. About fifty couples took part. Everyone declared it was the finest affair that had been here for many years. Fortunately it was a moonlight night, so everybody was able to see their way home. Mr. Stewart, the postmaster, gave a wonderful exhibition of a Scotch sword dance, dressed in the Stewart tartan, while Mr. Fraser was in his element in loss the caber. Mr. Davidson rendered a couple of songs during the evening in his usual style which were loudly encored.⁷⁹

Mr. Davidson was often the centre of attention. At the dinner held at the beginning of November to close the season for the Canoe Club,

President R. Davidson paid a warm tribute to the excellent way the club was carried on this season, and also referred to the great energy displayed by Vice-President G. Ferguson. After the financial report was read by the Secretary, it was found

the club was entirely free from debt, and great hopes are entertained for next year's sport.⁸⁰

Agricultural Possibilities Investigated

Indeed, there were great hopes for the economy as well. Mile 137 was already a transportation centre with connections to Nelson House, Cross Lake, and places further afield, like Oxford House and God's Lake. Business was especially active during the winter months when horse-drawn sleighs carried goods to each of these places from the rail terminal at Mile 137. This, of course, increased expenses because the accelerated use of horses during the cold months meant an added need for fodder, a necessity that encouraged speculation about the agricultural possibilities of the region.⁸¹ This was not surprising because Mile 137 was located in a clay belt, which in the view of geologist J. B. Tyrrell was as "fine a land" as could be seen "anywhere in Manitoba." It covered an area of perhaps 26,000 square km or more, stretching from about 96 km north of The Pas along the Hudson Bay Railway for a distance of from 240 to

⁷⁷ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 4 May 1923, p. 1; 18 May 1923, p. 1, 1 June 1923, p. 1

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 4 May 1923, p. 1.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 4 January 1924, p. 1

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 23 November 1923, p. 1.

⁸¹ Horses were not the only domestic animals at Mile 137. Mr. Sutherland wintered turkeys and geese there in 1922-1923, and freighter A. H. Jeffries brought in a 'carload of cattle' in 1924. See *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 27 April 1923, p. 1 and 30 May 1924, p. 3.

320 km. According to Tyrrell, it "resembled the land around Dauphin, and was rich and fertile, in every way suitable for agricultural growth of grains of all kinds."¹²

The "Diamond Queen" would have agreed. The proof was her fine garden of vegetables and mushrooms at Mile 82, where she and Gilbert Lacroix maintained a stopping place for the Herb Lake mining camp.¹³ Even more impressive was the field of oats Lacroix planted in 1920 to feed his horses. It yielded sixty bushels to the acre.¹⁴ In 1925, a wheat sample "over three feet high, well headed out and fully ripe" and "good samples of oats and timothy hay" were taken in to The Pas from Pikwitonei (Mile 214).¹⁵ That same year the experimental farm at Brandon had agricultural plots at Miles 137 and 182 on the Hudson Bay rail line.¹⁶ George Cowan was in charge of the one at Mile 182, where the wheat was planted on May 23 and was "about 3 feet high, well headed, and nearly ready for cutting" in September. There were also plots of oats and alfalfa.



Sophia Ryan, "Diamond Queen"
(courtesy Sam Waller Museum, PP 93.18.66a)

He and his wife, whose flower garden was "splendid," also had "the honor of growing the first [crab] apple north of 54."¹⁷ At Mile 137, Dick Davidson was in charge of the plot. According to a passer-by in October 1925, "Wheat and oats were fully ripened and looked good." He also noted that "Potatoes and garden truck" were also grown "in abundance by a number of settlers."¹⁸

¹² *Ibid.*, 21 November 1919, p. 1. In spite of Tyrrell's enthusiasm, agriculture never developed to any degree in this northern clay belt.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 22 October 1920, p. 1. The "Diamond Queen" was a northern "character," who never turned away a hungry traveller. But "Heaven help anyone who annoyed her; she could really pronounce their pedigree in no uncertain terms." On the other hand, she was very refined in conversation. Little was known about her, but stories abounded. She was said to have been a music hall artist named Sophie Mae, who had once been a close associate of a mining magnate in South Africa. In another story, she was on a day trip to The Pas, when she allegedly found herself seated beside a "clerical gentleman," with whom she was already acquainted. During their conversation, she was said to have quipped, "No doubt you have heard many tales about me, and some may be true. I had two so-called faults, but do not worry, old age has resolved one and prohibition the other." Bickle, 193

¹⁴ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 22 October 1920, p. 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 14 August 1925, p. 4.

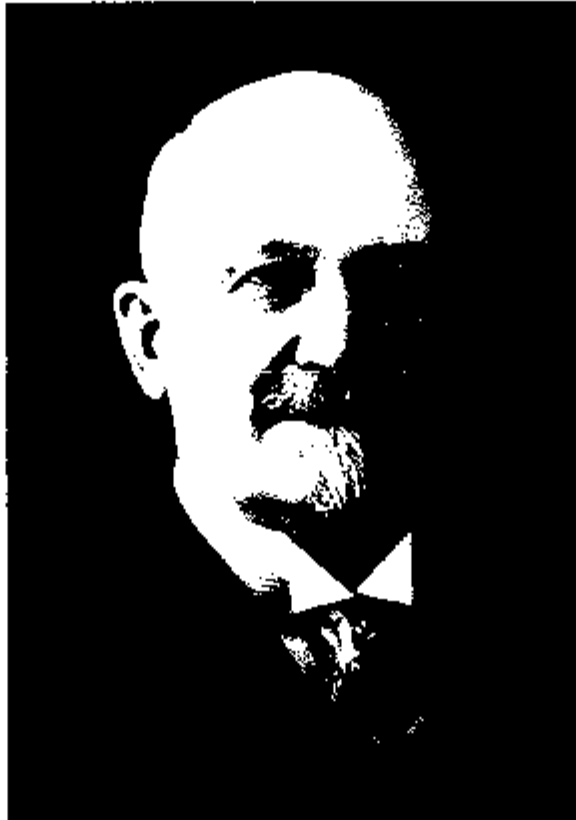
¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 11 September 1925, p. 1.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2 October 1925, p. 1

The rationale behind these plots was clarified in the minutes for the annual meeting of the Agricultural Society in The Pas. Apparently, when the Hon. W. R. Motherwell, Minister of Agriculture, visited the district, such plots were recommended to him in order to dispel the myth that "any kind of agricultural endeavor [in the north] was doomed to failure before it ever was started."¹⁶

The Minister decided to give the recommendation a fair trial for three years and issued instructions accordingly. Should these first trial stations prove successful, of which this first year's effort has abundantly demonstrated, it was further suggested that a 40-acre experimental station fully equipped and made permanent, be established at the most satisfactory point known along the Hudson Bay Railway. From this experimental station each season, would be distributed to our people various kinds of seeds duly grown in northern Manitoba, and therefore naturally better suited to our soil and climate."



Hon. William Richard Motherwell, n.d.
(courtesy Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-A733-1)

The project was under the direction of J. Duff, Guild Supervisor of Illustration Stations for the Dominion Government, Department of Agriculture, at the Brandon Experimental Farm, and had been highly

successful in its first year. Wheat, coarse grains, grasses, and vegetables were grown in "a medium silt clay loam with a fairly large proportion of fine sand" at both Mile 137 and 182. At Mile 185 the designated plot had previously grown garden stuff, but at Mile 137 it was on bush land that had just been cultivated for the first time. The minutes gave a detailed account concerning the performance of several

varieties of wheat, oats, and barley, and of sweet clover, common red clover, brome grass, and western rye grass. Green peas, carrots, and two varieties of potato were cited as yielding well, although the turnips were a failure." The Agriculture Society

¹⁶ Ibid., 15 January 1926, p. 1.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 1-2.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 2.

concluded with much satisfaction that

This notable achievement in scientific research may well be considered one of the outstanding events in the life of Canada during the past year. It makes practicable the growing of wheat considerably farther north than heretofore. So with all this wonderful performance being practically demonstrated almost 200 miles north of here, the people of The Pas community will readily realize what nonsense it is when they hear thoughtless utterances made that things will not grow profusely and mature properly north of the 53rd parallel of latitude.⁸²

Agriculture never developed to any extent in the region, perhaps because the Depression and World War II turned attention elsewhere. After the war, some virgin land was opened to agriculture on the northern periphery of the prairies, but with fewer and fewer farmers throughout the already established agricultural areas, as well as declining prices, there was little incentive to open up new areas in the North.



Potatoes at Mile 137, 29 August 1924
(courtesy Provincial Archives of Manitoba, N12217)

⁸² Ibid.

Chapter Five

The Hudson Bay Railway's Completion, 1925-1929

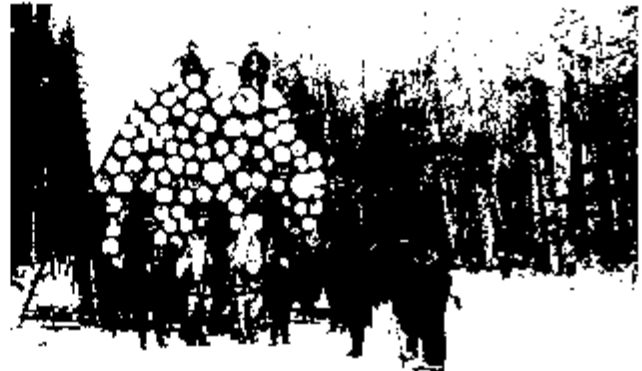
1925: A Turning Point in the Fortunes of the Railway

Although there was interest in the agricultural potential of the North in the early 1920s, there was a distinct lack of interest in the completion of the Hudson Bay Railway during that same time period, at least in Ottawa. After some hopeful signs early in 1923, work on the line was reduced to a snail's pace. In fact, the federal government moved so slowly that there was little accomplished that year.¹ In 1924, it voted funds to repair the line to Kettle Rapids, but refused to commit itself on the completion of the railway to Port Nelson.² Nevertheless, two hundred men were kept busy all summer laying 200,000 ties, so that by the fall the road was in reasonably good repair well beyond Mile 137.³ In fact, when Col. James and O. D. Hill made a trip to Port Nelson, they reported that negative stories on the road were a misrepresentation of the facts.

*It was a real railroad as far as Mile 239,
better than the average branch line and in*

some places as good as the main line, with bridges of a fine type. Both were surprised at the country through which the road runs....They were much impressed with the neat trim appearance of all the stopping places along the line, and especially at Mile 137, where Lamont & Davidson have their store. A new siding has recently been built to their place, and the whole presents a very prosperous and up-to-date appearance.⁴

In spite of this glowing account, when the work for the summer was done, it was estimated that there were still 300,000 additional ties needed to completely rehabilitate the railway.⁵ Yet, in 1925 only about 100,000 were laid between The Pas and Mile 239, or half the number of the



Lumbering Operations associated with the
Construction of the HBR, near The Pas, 1924
(courtesy National Archives of Canada, PA147445)

¹ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 17 August 1923, p. 2

² *Ibid.*, 21 March 1924, p. 1, and 30 May 1924, p. 1.

³ *Ibid.*, 8 August 1924, p. 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 15 August 1924, p. 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 17 October 1924, p. 1.

previous year.⁶ Clearly, even rehabilitation was not guaranteed.

Nevertheless, 1925 marked a change in the fortunes of the railway. During the federal election campaign in the fall of 1925, the Conservatives under Arthur Meighen pro-

mised to complete the line to Hudson Bay. When the votes were counted, they had obtained the most seats, but not a majority; consequently, the Liberals, who had been in power since 1921, were able to retain power by joining forces with the Progressive Party in a coalition government. A scandal in the Customs Department, however, resulted in a temporary loss of Progressive support,

and Mackenzie King, the Liberal leader, resigned rather than face a vote of censure in the House of Commons. Instead of calling an election, the Governor-General asked the Conservatives to form a government in the summer of 1926, but it was defeated

in the Commons. In the ensuing election, the Liberals won the most seats, but they had to rely on the Progressives to form the government. Since the Progressives, like the Conservatives, favoured railway completion, the Liberals were forced to move in that direction, too.

In the middle of May 1926, *The Pas Herald and Mining News* reported that "the order is 'full speed ahead' and no time will be lost in getting down to real work." In June, the House of Commons unanimously approved \$3,000,000 for the rehabilitation work, even though the Minister of Railways made it clear that the following year he would be asking for



Arthur Meighen, n.d.
(courtesy National Archives of Canada, PA-117662)

an additional "\$3,153,000 to complete the line, and then more than \$20,000,000 to construct the harbor works and elevator."⁸ By the beginning of July, work was being "rushed ahead with all possible speed."

⁶ Ibid., 23 October 1925, p. 6

⁷ Ibid., 14 May 1926, p. 1.

⁸ Ibid., 18 June 1926, p. 1.

There are fourteen outfits at work between The Pas and Mile 256, and six trains are required to keep them going....Engineer McLachlan is sparing no effort to have the work of rehabilitation completed as far as Kettle Rapids this fall.¹

By the middle of the month, the newspaper was reporting that it appeared “the project was no longer a political football” and that “an honest effort was being made to put the road through and give the route a fair trial.”²

There are now over 600 men at work on the line and six or seven trains are kept busy. Most of the work is going on between Mile 137 and 185, but gangs of men are spread along the line from Mile 14 to Armstrong Lake.³

Mile 137 in Mid-Decade: A Busy Place

By July it was evident that summer work on the railroad was being stepped up, but many people remained sceptical about the government’s commitment to railway completion. After all, it had reneged on its promises so many times in the past. Among the people at Mile 137, the issue may have been irrelevant, because they already had a rail link to the south, and winter roads

and summer waterways connected them to other places in the north. In fact, Mile 137 was an important regional transportation centre. Ross Navigation Company, for instance, was engaged throughout the winter of 1925-1926 in hauling freight from Mile 137 to Nelson House.⁴ Traders from nearby Cross Lake continued to obtain goods and transport furs via Mile 137, and traders from further east also made use of the route. In January 1926, for example, T. Wass of Island Lake travelled through Mile 137 on his way to The Pas to sell furs, then after a business trip to Winnipeg, returned to Island Lake the same way.⁵

Law officers also passed through the community. Inspector Meade of the RCMP left The Pas in February 1926 for Mile 137 and travelled east from there to Island Lake and Trout Lake on a journey that lasted two months.⁶ Sergeant P. Rose of the Manitoba Provincial Police outfitted at Mile 137 at about the same time, then set out to the north on a six week journey that took him to such places as Nelson House, Indian Lake, and Seal River, before his return to The Pas.⁷ A couple of weeks later, he went back to Mile 137 to “take charge

¹ Ibid. 2 July 1926, p. 1.

² Ibid., 16 July 1926, p. 1.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., 26 February 1926, p. 4.

⁵ Ibid., 22 January 1926, p. 4.

⁶ Ibid., 16 April 1926, p. 1.

⁷ Ibid., 2 April 1926, p. 1.



Sgt. & Mrs. Percy Rose with sons Kenneth & Gerald
(courtesy Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

of Leslie Mulligan, a trapper, who had been brought there mentally deranged."¹⁶ At about the same time, Constable Wells went north for the body of Olaf Isakson, who had "walked to Mile 214 and, entering Bob Long's restaurant, walked upstairs and shot himself."¹⁷

Undoubtedly Mulligan and Isakson came up in conversation in Hubble's Café at Mile 137, as people tried to make sense of their tragic deaths. In the end, though, it was all speculation. Frontier society attracted a wide variety of unusual, often eccentric characters, and certainly the North had its share. There was Hugh Vickers, Justice of the Peace at Herb Lake, who was a graduate of Oxford University, but had "exchanged the scholar's life for the trapper's and prospector's."¹⁸ Then there

was Mr. Planischek, who had trapped in the north since 1906. Born in Mexico to Serbian parents, who died when he was three years old, Planischek had travelled extensively before settling "some 50 miles north west of Pelican Narrows" on the Churchill River. When interviewed in 1926, he was trapping, as well as farming a "nine-acre plot" (3.6 hectares) on which he grew wheat, oats, barley, and vegetables. He even ground his own flour using a home-made mill.¹⁹ Olaf Isakson, too, had ranged widely before settling in Manitoba. After leaving Sweden in 1903, he had spent time in the United States and Cuba before coming to the North as a trapper. Ill health was cited as the cause of his suicide, but he may simply have been "bushed," a Northern term for the disorientation



Tom Andrews, a Trapper at Mile 214 before 1928
(Courtesy Ed Carter)

¹⁶ Ibid., 16 April 1926, p. 1

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 30 January 1925, p. 1.

¹⁹ Ibid., 22 January 1926, p. 1.

brought on by long stretches of isolation. McCauley, a trapper at Mile 22, probably suffered from this malady, too. He argued with Sergeant Rose about obtaining a trapping license, and "so peculiar were his words and behaviour that the sergeant had him examined by two doctors on his arrival in Town [The Pas], and he was found to be insane."⁷² A trapper from Setting Lake named Bowman also exhibited peculiar behaviour when he refused an operation for appendicitis and subsequently died.⁷³

The Race to Oxford Lake

Gold fever was another "illness" that surfaced from time to time, and although it seldom resulted in permanent injury, it could put a prospector's life at risk. Such was the case in the summer of 1926, when prospectors raced to stake their claims, after a promising mineral discovery was made east of Mile 137 "in the neighbourhood of Oxford Lake."⁷⁴ The find was the work of prospectors J. Burton Sullivan and Jim Morrison, who had done some "surface development work" at the site, including "stripping, pitting, channelling and sampling," before travelling to Minneapolis in search of money to develop a mine. While there,

the two men separated following a quarrel, after which Morrison and his American associates rushed north with the aim of "blanketing" the area around the original discovery with additional claims. According to *The Pas Herald and Mining News*,

*The first rush started last week, when 10 United States prospectors, backed by southern capital, went north on the Northern Navigation Co.'s weekly steamer from Selkirk...the Americans plan to blanket the country in the neighborhood of the original find.*⁷⁵

Not one to take things lying down, Sullivan was soon hot on their trail.

Sullivan, an ex-member of the Provincial Police and formerly stationed at Norway House, followed them up accompanied by the McClachey brothers, who were in on the deal. They arrived in Winnipeg shortly after the others and found they had sailed from Selkirk for Norway House. Failing in their efforts to obtain an aeroplane to beat the other party in, they boarded the first train leaving for The Pas and arrived here last Thursday. So hurried was their departure for the north that they did not even have time to check their baggage, which, however, arrived on the same train as themselves.

Sullivan was at home in The Pas and everything was lined up for a fast trip in a remarkably short time. Others entered into the spirit of the game and assisted all they could. The party of three left on the Muskeg last Friday morning confident that, by day and night travelling, they could beat

⁷² Ibid., 4 December 1925, p. 4

⁷³ Ibid., 19 September 1924, p. 1.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 30 July 1926, p. 1.

⁷⁵ Ibid.



Kenny Rose, son of Sgt. Percy Rosa,
on gas car around Mile 300
(courtesy Sam Waller Museum, PP 94.2.700)

the other outfit to it. Sullivan knows the country like a book and when he sets out for any place he usually gets there. Sullivan claims that he and his partners held six claims on the richest part of an island on Oxford Lake and he has no intention of allowing the others to stake over it. The outcome of the race will be watched with much interest by mining men and others in the north.²⁴

Toward the end of August, the newspaper reported the exciting outcome.

J. Burton O'Sullivan, with the McClachey Brothers and A. J. Demers, who left here for Oxford Lake about a month ago... arrived back in Winnipeg last week after an exciting trip. They won the race, staked their claims and took out samples. Travelling by rail and gas car, the determined men left Mile 239 on the Hudson Bay Railway July 21, and plunged into the forests on their 175-mile journey southward to Oxford Lake. Their course was mainly over the lakes and rivers of the region, but the portages, Mr. O'Sullivan states, were long and arduous, and the flies a constant torment. The party never took more than four hours sleep a night.

²⁴ Ibid.

To their dismay, however, in midcourse, they were overtaken by one of the fierce forest fires which have devastated the country. The tongues of fire travelled like lightning, they report, moving like a sheet of flame over the tops of the spruce trees. Once, Mr. O'Sullivan says, the four men were cut off on a rocky point, and for six hours they lay flat on their faces on the rock, with the fire leaping between them and the mainland and the turbulent waters of a fast flowing river at their backs. Over all hung a cloud of acrid smoke. Travelling ankle deep in burned spruce the four men at last reached Oxford Lake to find the prize was theirs. The southern party had not arrived. Quickly the claims were staked. A sample of antimony assayed over 50 per cent pure metal, and



Forest Fire, n.d.
(courtesy Provincial Archives of Manitoba,
Ted Tadda Collection, 84)

gold assays run around \$7.00 a ton. The main lead of the vein, Mr. O'Sullivan states, is ten feet wide and has been traced for 2,000 feet before disappearing under the surface of the lake.

Their arduous journey was not yet completed, however, for but a few days remained if the prospectors were to catch a southbound boat at Norway House. The 150-mile journey, Mr. O'Sullivan states, was made in four days, and three days later, the party arrived in Winnipeg.²³

Mile 137: First Divisional Centre North of The Pas

News reports of Sullivan's exciting adventures undoubtedly reached residents of Mile 137, which had become a hive of construction activity after the announcement that it would be the first divisional centre north of The Pas. Indeed, by the end of the year so much work was done that the place was barely recognizable.²⁴ Throughout the fall, trains loaded with timber, steel and other materials came up from The Pas two or three times a week, often stopping briefly at Mile 137 before going further on. By this time, most of the seven to eight hundred men employed on the line were along the last fifty miles before Kettle Rapids.²⁵

Apparently, not all materials originated in Southern Manitoba. According to local

sources, at about this time a man named Bill Moore ran a small logging enterprise at Mile 137, which supplied ties to the Hudson Bay Railway.²⁶ Evidently, the presence of a railway was good for business. Certainly Roderick "Roddy" Garrick, a local oldtimer, remembered that there was little work available before its arrival. Some residents freighted for the Hudson's Bay Company, while others worked for the Company to provide fish to feed the dog-teams that hauled the freight. Some people also trapped, although trapping was generally unprofitable at that time. Lynx sold for \$5.00 and Red Fox for \$1.50, but Roddy remembered that Fred Beebe once caught two Silver Fox and sold them for \$4,000. The money sat in the cupboard all winter,



**Cutting Ties for Hudson Bay Railway,
Thicket Portage, c.1918**
(courtesy Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

²³ Ibid., 20 August 1926, p. 1.

²⁴ Ibid., 12 November 1926, p. 3.

²⁵ Ibid., 10 September 1926, p. 1, and 29 October 1926, p. 4.

²⁶ Christanson, "History of Wabowden."

because there was no place to spend it.²⁷

By 1927, there were a number of places at Mile 137 where people could spend their money. Besides Lamont and Davidson's trading post and Hubble's Imperial Café, there was F. W. Quinsey's store, pool room, and barber shop, which opened in March.²⁸ These businesses catered to long-time residents as well as to the men working on the divisional yards and along the railway. The yards alone employed as many as sixty men, even after workforce reductions at the end of 1926.²⁹ Trappers and prospectors also came into the community to be outfitted with supplies and equipment to carry on their work.³⁰ Besides these, there were the freighters, whose expanding winter transport business was having an impact locally as well.³¹ A. H. Jeffries began freighting into Island Lake in the winter of 1926-1927, a distance of 496 km, and Karl Bayley, of the trading firm Bayley & Johnson, passed through Mile

137 with four bales of fine fur from God's Lake in February 1927.³² By April, Jeffries had made a successful trip to Oxford Lake, and it was expected that all winter travel to this district would go in future via Mile 137 rather than Norway House.

Railway Construction Falters, then Resumes

In the spring of 1927, there was some pessimism along the line concerning railway prospects, as all indicators suggested that the work was slowing down. *The Pas Herald and Mining News* speculated that the government was waiting for the report of Frederick Palmer, the British engineer who had been hired to compare the relative merits of Port Nelson and Churchill to determine which was the best suited to be the northern terminus of the railway.³³ By the middle of May, it became evident that the focus of the work for 1927 would be "confined to putting the

²⁷ *Ibid.* By today's standards \$4000.00 may not seem all that much, but in the 1920s, and certainly the 1930s, it was a great deal of money indeed. It seems a high price for two pelts, but perhaps prices were artificially inflated when the HBC attempted to put its competitors out of business.

²⁸ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 4 March 1927, p. 4. F. W. Quinsey was first mentioned in partnership with H. J. Brinton in 1925. They were described as fur traders at "Nelson House" in one instance, but a later newspaper item indicated they had a trading post at Setting Lake. Quinsey bought out Brinton in the summer of 1925 and carried on trading alone. *Ibid.*, 23 January 1925, p. 3, and 17 July 1925, p. 3.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 17 December 1926, p. 4. Once construction of the yards had been completed, the railway laid off everyone, except the sixty or so men engaged in the day-to-day operation of the facility.

³⁰ Among them would have been August Nelson and S. Brostrom, who were trapping fifty-six kilometres north of Mile 137 in 1927. *Ibid.*, 29 July 1927, p. 3.

³¹ As a transition centre for winter freighting, Wabowden provided eating and hotel accommodations for freighters between trips, as well as stores where they could purchase needed supplies. The more freighters, the greater the impact on the local economy.

³² *Ibid.*, 21 January 1927, p. 3, and 18 February 1927, p. 3. Bayley was on the road nearly a month, an indication of the time people were prepared to spend in travel to reach the railroad.

³³ *Ibid.*, 4 March 1927, p. 1, and 6 May 1927, p. 1.



Hudson Bay Railway Tugs "Geo. W. Yates" and "Kathleen" in for repairs, Port Nelson (courtesy National Archives of Canada, PA041502)

road already completed into first-class shape as far as Limestone River," so that "heavy trains" could travel that far without difficulty.³ This was not full speed ahead to the Bay, but it was no small undertaking either. There were already "1000 men...at work between The Pas and Mile 214" and it was expected that "about 2000" would be employed later in the season. According to the *The Pas Herald and Mining News*,

All the men engaged on the line this year have been engaged locally and this has relieved the unemployment situation to a considerable extent. With the report being spread by outside newspapers that \$5,000,000 was to be spent on the line this year and that 5,000 men would be employed, men have been flocking in here since early spring, most of them having little or no money. The railway authorities have been putting them to work as fast as possible, but, with only one steam shovel available, they could not handle them all and there is still a large number awaiting work. The result is that numbers of them are almost starving, and they may be seen

³ Ibid., 20 May 1927, p. 2

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Christianson, "History of Wabowden."

any day fishing and roasting their catch on the river bank. This, with what they can get from private citizens, is their sole means of sustenance. Last summer gangs of men were made up in Winnipeg and elsewhere and shipped in, but there is no need of anything like this being done this year."

Some townspeople at Mile 137 were fortunate to get jobs grading and constructing the railway at this time. It was hard work for low pay. Stanley Malko, who worked on the rail line in 1928, recalled that nearly everything was done by hand with the aid of horses. The only tools were shovels and wheelbarrows, and labourers were paid ten cents for every hour they worked.⁶ Much of this money was spent locally, not only by townspeople employed on construction, but also by the newcomers distributed along the tracks nearby. These men would come quite a



Man-made Island at Port Nelson Mile 424 (courtesy National Archives of Canada, PA 210846)

distance at times, not just for supplies, but for education as well. This was illustrated in Frank Wallace's July 1927 report at Mile 137 concerning the activities of Frontier College, which had formerly been known as the Reading Camp Association.

The work is going better here. The train crews take advantage of the reading material, and I have had, on two occasions, section men travel by hand car 14 miles [22 km] on Sunday for a lesson in railroad English, tools, forms, etc.

The railway furnished me with a fairly comfortable car complete with bed mattress and stove. They also put in three long benches and a long table running down the center at one end.

The camp I am in is a constructed one with the men living in bunk houses and eating at the work house. About 80 men are employed in this camp. Of these 80 men, 40 are English. Most of them are well educated and are only in the north country to escape from easy access to liquor.

Of the 40 foreigners, 20 can read and talk fair English, and of the 20 left I have eleven in my class, nearly all of whom are regular in attendance.

I started classes on the 28th of June and have been running five nights a week since that time. As overtime for the larger part of this road has been eliminated, it leaves the men their spare time in the evenings for recreation and study.

My class consists of nine Poles and two Finns, nearly all of whom have a fair education in their own language, but little or no knowledge of English. My work, therefore, mainly consists in teaching English stock words and phrases at present.³⁹

³⁹ Bickle, 122.

⁴⁰ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 11 February 1927, p. 3. Since there was no jail at Mile 137, Renick may have been sent south to Dauphin.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 11 February 1927, p. 3.

Evidently the workforce consisted of a broad cross-section of people, some of them local residents, some recent immigrants to Canada. They came for the work, but according to Wallace some were also running away from alcohol addiction. If so, the flight was often in vain, at least for men like J. Renick. Described as a carpenter working at Mile 137, Renick was convicted early in 1927 "of having home-brew in his possession and sentenced to three months imprisonment."⁴⁰ The Provincial Police had discovered the home-brew while investigating another case, and when they had it analyzed, "it was found to contain 92% alcohol."⁴¹

In spite of cases like Renick's, there was little time for self-indulgence on the railway in the summer of 1927. By July, the newspaper reported:

Work on the Hudson Bay Railway is proceeding at top-notch speed. One thousand four hundred and thirty men are now on the job. Numerous gangs are spread all along the line from Mile 80 to Mile 339, and the work being done is about the same throughout, consisting of filling, levelling, retieing and ballasting. Steam shovels are at work at The Pas and Mile 329. Another has recently arrived and has proceeded north. It will be located at the pit at Mile 127. At The Pas, filling in of the trestle approaches to the bridge over the Saskatchewan is about completed. In the yards, seven miles [11 km] of trackage has

been laid and filling in and ballasting is under way. The new concrete roundhouse and shops are nearing completion.

Men are now working on the interior. When finished, this will be one of the finest yards of its size on the continent. Work on a similar yard at Mile 137 is slightly further advanced. The most modern equipment is being used all along the road. Especially is this noticeable in the service being furnished the workmen. There are now three complete new outfits of bunk, cook and dining cars at different points on the line. The bunk cars are furnished with steel bunks. The dining cars are 60 feet [18 m] long and the cook cars have the latest improvements for handling the requirements of large gangs. Throughout special attention is paid to sanitary arrangements. The new hospital unit has been placed in [working] condition. This is a revelation to those who are familiar with old-time railway activities.¹²

Details on construction progress were

available in August.

An idea of the work involved in reconditioning the line is to be had from the fact that some 500,000 new ties have been placed to date. Of this number 400,000 were renewals. An immense quantity of ballasting material was required to raise and widen the grade, 300,000 cubic yards of gravel having been used for this purpose. At the same time 88,000 yards of material were removed in widening the cuts. To date 180 miles of ballasting has been completed.

Work has also been going ahead at the various divisional points. At The Pas, the sand houses, coal deck, and other buildings required are completed, while the turn-table and engine house are well under way. The yards are being laid with 80-pound steel and a considerable amount of ballasting has been done. Work is even further advanced at Bowden, Mile 137, where the next divisional point is located.¹³



Hospital Cars on Hudson Bay Railway
(courtesy Glenbow Archives. NA-3258-3)

¹² Ibid., 29 July 1927, p. 1. The reference to "old-time activities" is a reminder of the inadequate working conditions that prevailed for working men in earlier years of railroad construction. Poor food, even poorer accommodations, and the lack of hospitals were common complaints at that time.

¹³ Ibid., 5 August 1927, p. 2.



Ballast Pit

(courtesy Glenbow Museum Archives, NA-2471-37)

Interestingly, this was the first reference to "Bowden," as an alternative to "Mile 137." Even after it became "Wabowden," the new name did not immediately replace the popular "Mile 137," which had been used for years by people along the railway. On the other hand, "Setting Lake," the name devised in 1921 by postal authorities when the first post office was established, soon died out after the official name change."

Fort Churchill replaces Port Nelson as the Northern Terminus

Not only place names changed in 1927. In August, the citizens of The Pas and communities along the Bay line learned that Fort Churchill had replaced Port Nelson as the projected northern terminus of the Hudson Bay Railway. The headline on the front page of *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 19 August 1927, read "Fort

Churchill Will be Hudson Bay Port" and the text, included below, provided the details behind the decision.

Hon. C. A. Dunning, minister of railways, with Frederick Palmer, British harbor expert, and a party of departmental and railway engineers, arrived in The Pas last Friday afternoon on their return trip from Hudson Bay. They were travelling by special train and made a record trip over the Hudson Bay line, from Limestone River to The Pas. Their train stopped a little over half an hour at The Pas where divisional superintendent, W. Johnson, of Dauphin, was awaiting them.

Interviewed by a Herald representative, Mr. Palmer confirmed the statement sent by wireless from Port Nelson regarding the selection of Fort Churchill as the location for a harbor and the northern terminus of the Hudson Bay railway. Mr. Palmer had practically arrived at this decision before he went north but when he made a personal examination of the two ports the last doubt was removed and he pronounced emphatically in favor of Churchill.

There is just this much difference, Mr. Palmer said, that if the work on the line had been continued in 1918 and the steel laid to the Bay at Port Nelson, the Hudson Bay route would have been a dead issue to-day. It would take something like six years, he said, to develop a port at Nelson and then it would not be anything nearly as good as the harbor which can be built at Churchill in two years time. A staff of engineers have been working at Churchill since April last, drilling and map[p]ing the harbor. Their investigations show that a depth of 40 feet [12 m] can be secured without touching rock. Dredging at Churchill, he

⁴⁴ According to local sources, the first post office was established on 1 April 1921 at Setting Lake and remained there for seven years before it was moved to the townsite. Originally, a plane came in with the mail every two weeks; later, it came in by rail on a mail car, which functioned as a post-office while it was at the station. Christianson, "History of Wabowden." This requires explanation. Like the HBC store, the first post office was called "Setting Lake" and was probably located at or in the vicinity of Lamont & Davidson's store near the point on Bowden Lake. Also, the contract for mail delivery may have been given to an air service rather than the railway in the early years because it was cheaper and/or more reliable.



Hudson Bay Railway snowed in
near Churchill, May 1929
(courtesy Bart Hasselfield and
www.zambonista.com/hbr)

stated, could be accomplished as easily as at Nelson, and a mile [1.6 km] of docks could be built at comparatively little cost. In Mr. Palmer's opinion grain can be carried over the Hudson Bay railway and shipped to Europe via Fort Churchill in less than half the time than it could be done via Port Nelson. It will take a year longer to build the railway, he said, but when it reaches tidewater, the harbor will be ready.

Mr. Dunning and the others of the party were so absolutely convinced that Mr. Palmer was right that orders were at once issued to get ahead with the work. When the party returned to Port Nelson, the wireless was brought into use and orders issued by that means. A wireless set on one of the government vessels lying at Port Nelson was found to be in good working order and this was sent to Churchill so that that place will also be in touch with the outside world. Some 25 men who have been working at Port Nelson since last

spring are now engaged in transferring supplies and equipment to Fort Churchill. It is expected that a dipper dredge, now lying in the dry dock at Halifax, will leave for Fort Churchill about the end of this month.¹²

Work slowed down on the railway after November, but work did not cease altogether.

Section houses have been put in at every second station, some fourteen miles [22 km] apart, and the line will be kept in good shape all winter. Supplies and material for next season's work will also be taken in and there will be considerable activity at the end of steel...A large number of men will also be engaged on the right-of-way, beyond the Limestone River, making the grade and getting things in readiness for the laying of steel next summer.

The pessimism that had prevailed in the early months of 1927 was nowhere evident in the November newspaper report on progress during the year.¹³

The past summer has been the busiest seen on this line for years and next year promises to be the banner year. If the programme mapped out is adhered to, the steel will be well on the way to Churchill by the time the snow again flies (it does not snow all the time, even at Churchill), and the following year should see the completion of the line and the establishment of a seaport in Manitoba, the central province of Canada.¹⁴

¹² *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 19 August 1927, p. 1. A "dipper dredge" was a type of dredge or machine with a scoop, series of buckets, etc. for removing mud, sand, or other materials from the bottom of a river, harbour, etc.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 11 November 1927, p. 2.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* The port never achieved its potential under the CNR. Although the reasons are still being debated, political pressure from lobbyists for the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence route has been cited, as well as the shortness of the shipping season on Hudson Bay. OmniTRAX, an American-based company, purchased the railway in 1997, and has established a modern and efficient operation. In 2001, it moved approximately 470,000 metric tonnes (MT) through the port (its allocated share of Canadian Wheat Board grain, durum wheat, peas, canary seed, and flax), although it could have easily handled 1,000,000 MT. See news releases, 27 November 2000 and 12 November 2001, <http://www.omnitrax.com/pres-rel.shtml#fc>. In fact, according to Randy Jamieson of Omnitrax, the railway is positioned to handle *in excess of* 1,000,000 MT. The roadbed is affected by discontinuous permafrost condition, but OmnitRAX has an "on-going remedial work... to ensure roadbed integrity" (Personal Communication, 5 December 2001).

Wabowden Prospers with the Turn in the Railway's Fortunes

People at Wabowden must have received this report with considerable satisfaction. The renewal of construction on the railway had meant a boom for them. The building of the divisional yards had brought new people into the community, and by the winter of 1926, the village even had its own school. Cyrilla Wilson, formerly a teacher at Pikwitonei, arrived there in November to take charge of the children, and "was teaching in the new school" by December.⁴⁸ Remaining at least until the summer of 1927, she was probably replaced by Miss V. Andrews, who was still teaching at Wabowden in March 1928.⁴⁹ By late summer 1928, the community was planning to build another new school "as soon as a satisfactory school site" had been approved.⁵⁰ In all likelihood, that decision was made by a Board of Trustees authorized by the Department of

Education." According to a local source, Mr. Davidson provided a structure, consisting of one large classroom and separate living quarters for the teacher, to be used as a temporary school. It is not clear whether it was the first or second school in the community, but Davidson rented it to the trustees for \$15.00 a month, fuel and stoves included.⁵¹

Organised religion also came to Wabowden when Rev. H. A. Brown of Toronto arrived at the beginning of May 1928. Brown was one of three United Church missionaries sent north that summer to establish missions in the railway communities.⁵² Others were on the move, too. In August, the HBC sent Mr. Anderson to replace Bill Hutton as manager of its store at Wabowden. Hutton had only been there since September 1927, when J. M. Cran left the Company, apparently to go prospecting in the neighbouring region.⁵³ Tom Riddoch had

⁴⁸ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 19 November 1926, p. 3; 31 December 1926, p. 4.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 8 July 1927, p. 4; 16 March 1928, p. 4.

⁵⁰ *The Prospector and Northern Manitoban*, 10 August 1928, p. 8 (This short-lived paper was devoted mainly to news connected with mining.) The "new school" was the second in two years. In all likelihood, the first was a makeshift facility that was never intended to be anything more than temporary.

⁵¹ According to Christianson, "History of Wabowden," a Board of Trustees was set up to govern the school. This Board consisted of three trustees and one secretary-treasurer, each of whom was paid a salary of \$25.00 per year.

⁵² *Ibid.* It is not clear whether it was 1930 or earlier that Davidson provided the school. In 1930, an agreement was made with Miss A. G. Hall of Winnipeg to teach for a salary of \$45.00 per month. By August, eleven pupils had been enrolled in grades one and two, with another twelve students expected by September. The school ran smoothly until the Second World War, then government grants were cut back, and with most of the local men in the army or engaged in trapping, it was almost impossible to find someone to haul and cut fuel for the school or to do repairs. For a number of months, there were insufficient funds to pay the salary of the teacher. Mr. Trudeau Christianson, "History of Wabowden."

⁵³ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 4 May 1928, p. 6.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 14 September 1928, p. 3, *The Prospector and Northern Manitoban*, 10 August 1928, p. 2 and 8.

also moved north to Mile 349 (Bird), where he had established another store.²⁵

Mining Speculation Benefits Wabowden

Reports of high quality mineral deposits at Setting Lake generated considerable excitement locally in the summer of 1928. Samples assayed at "\$13.66 per ton in copper" and there were "good values in gold and silver" as well.²⁶ In addition, high quality galena, the source of lead, "had been traced for six miles along the islands which run length-wise up the lake."²⁷ Local prospector J. U. St. Godard, who had been in the area for some years, was optimistic about its extent, although mining engineers had declared "quite emphatically" that the ore did not exist "in quantity."²⁸ Mining fever was widespread. According to one report, "Fred Baebe [sic]," who claimed "to have a very good prospect," was "looking forward to being a mining magnate in the near future."²⁹ John Novikoff, commonly known as "John by Gosh," was reported to have refused "to divulge the results of his recent mining venture around Goose Lake."³⁰ A



John W. Low, Prospector, c.1935
(courtesy Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

week later, after "one of the richest strikes" was reported "on good authority" at Fish Lake, seven or eight miles away, many of Wabowden's remaining residents were "busy staking claims," too.³¹

²⁵ Ibid., 17 August 1928, p. 8. *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 19 October 1928, p. 1.

²⁶ Ibid., 31 August 1928, p. 3. The silver strike at Setting Lake was still attracting considerable attention in October. Ibid., 26 October 1928, p. 1.

²⁷ *The Prospector and Northern Manitoban*, 17 August 1928, p. 8.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 10 August 1928, p. 8.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 17 August 1928, p. 2.

Mining had an impact in other ways as well. After promising strikes, companies usually moved in with men and equipment to do further exploration or develop the sites into working mines. This, of course, stimulated local economic development, as it meant an increase in the sale of goods and services for nearby businesses. Mile 137 (Wabowden) was strategically situated in 1929 to take advantage of such opportunities. Potentially rich mineral deposits had already been discovered in the Cross Lake and Oxford Lake districts, and Ventures Limited and Sudbury Basin Mines were planning to move in equipment to begin development.⁶² After looking at other alternatives, they chose the route through Wabowden because it was on a direct rail link to the south, as well as on a well-travelled winter road to the east, probably "the best road into the Oxford Lake country."⁶³ The contract for transporting the equipment was given to "Slim" Milligan, who immediately hired a gang of men to improve the existing road, so that it could carry heavy loads.⁶⁴ It is unknown whether any of his men came from Wabowden, but in any case, local businesses benefited from the purchases

of these additional wage earners.

The Pas to Churchill: Promises of a Bright Future

By 1928, the Hudson Bay Railway was nearing completion, and in October *The Pas Herald and Mining News* printed an interview with a man who had recently travelled up the line as far as Mile 356. He noted the changes that had occurred since he had last been on the train. The roadbed was in "exceptionally good condition all the way to Mile 336," which was as far as the freight train travelled at that time, and the older part of the line was comparable to "any main line" and "far better than most of the branch lines in Manitoba."⁶⁵ There were now station houses at the various stopping places along the way, where formerly there had been only a "hole in the bush."⁶⁶ Most importantly, people were beginning to develop the economic potential made possible by access to a rail line.

Recreation was one such possibility. Although there were few changes in the first thirty-nine miles (62.4 km), "a considerable number of people" were building summer cottages at Mile 17,

⁶² *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 4 January 1929, p. 1.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 18 January 1929, p. 3.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 4 January 1929, p. 1.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 19 October 1928, p. 1. The roadbed beyond Mile 336 was too unstable for the heavy freight trains, but by October 1928, the passenger train was travelling as far as Mile 412. A description of conditions for rail travel in spring time between Gillam and Churchill can be found in S.A. Keighley, *Trader, Trapper, Trapper: The Life of a Bay Man* (Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer, 1989), 116-117.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*



Marble Quarry, Mile 39 1/2, Hudson Bay Railway
(courtesy Sam Waller Museum, PP 93.18.575)

Clearwater Lake, which promised to be "a very popular summer resort in a few years' time."⁶⁷ Marble quarrying was another possibility. At Mile 39, a mining company had established a new marble quarry right along side the railway and extending back a considerable distance.

The marble is of excellent quality and can be quarried in large blocks. Several carloads have already been shipped and some large blocks are lying ready for shipment. Quarrying machinery has been installed, and it would seem as if a real industry would be developed."

At Mile 42, or Cormorant Lake, the federal government maintained a base for the aerial forest patrol.

Three or four planes are stationed here and the forestry department also has a base in the vicinity. The air force camp is extremely

well located. It is an ideal site for an air base, the landing facilities in a good-sized land-locked bay being hard to surpass. The camp itself looks as pretty as a picture, located among the trees on a slope up from the water's edge, the walks and paths being all laid off with whitewashed stones in approved military style."

The community of Cormorant Lake was thriving "about half a mile to the south of the camp," and there were summer cottages, a few homesteads, and a school operated by the provincial government in the vicinity."

The siding at Mile 82 had not changed much since 1920.⁶⁸ Connected to Herb Lake by a 14.5 km government road, its few inhabitants hoped for a revival of mining in the area. The "Diamond Queen"



Gold Mine at Herb Lake
(courtesy Sam Waller Museum, PP 93.18.577)

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid. The marble quarries along the Hudson Bay Railway are under the management (2003) of Manitoba Marble Inc., which is owned by John Kobar of The Pas, a great-grandson of Wabowden pioneer, Jon Gislason.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ A similar report about the Herb Lake siding appeared in *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 22 October 1920, p. 1.

was still "holding the fort at the end of the road and few of the old-timers would dare pass her door without calling in."¹²

"Setting Lake, at Mile 137, or Wabowden," which was the first divisional point beyond The Pas, provided a bustling contrast to Herb Lake. The traveller noted that the yard was "well laid out, with round house coal dock and sand chute."¹³



The Diamond Queen's Cafe and Store
at Wekusko-Herb Lake on the HBR
(courtesy Sam Waller Museum, PP 94.2.623)

The Hudson's Bay Company has a good sized post here with a residence for the manager, in a very pretty location. There are two or three other stores and a pool room, besides the usual restaurant. They are looking forward to having a fair-sized town here in the near future and the location is ideal."¹⁴

The traveller may also have noticed improvements in the railway crossing,

where A. Jeffries had "four teams" working in August. Also, Bert Hubble's house and W. A. McArthur's store were probably on their new cement foundations by this time.¹⁵ There may even have been a new school under construction, although the newspaper article made no mention of it.¹⁶ Whatever the case, it was evident that the people were preparing for the projected expansion of the area.

Mile 185 (Thicket Portage) at Wintering Lake was the home of free trader George Cowan and his wife, but it was his garden that captured the interest of the traveller bored by "miles of bush and muskeg." It was located in a "good-sized clearing," had been "improved right along," and boasted "the furthest north apple tree in existence."¹⁷

¹² *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 19 October 1928, p. 1. For more information about the Diamond Queen and other Northern "characters" see Keightley, *Trader, Tripper, Trapper*.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *The Prospector and Northern Manitoban*, 10 August 1928, p. 8, and 14 September 1928, p. 8.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10 August 1928, p. 8. According to the news report, "A new school will probably be built this fall as soon as a satisfactory school site has been approved of."

¹⁷ *The Pas Herald and Mining News*, 19 October 1928, p. 1.



Aerial View of Wabowden, 1946

(courtesy Aileen Turner)

The prominent buildings in the upper right hand section of the photograph are (left to right) the railway station, coal dock, sandchute, water tank, and roundhouse. The Roman Catholic Church (middle right) had been moved from The Point. Later, it was moved again to its present location.

Various views of Wabowden



View of Wabowden, before 1946

(courtesy Catherine McLeod)

Bowden Lake and "The Point" are in the background, the railway is in the foreground with houses in between.



HBC store on Bowden Lake, 1926

(courtesy Aileen Turner)

The store was moved downtown, behind the railway station, a few years after this photo was taken.



Wabowden's Roundhouse, Water Tank and Sandchute, n.d.

(courtesy Aileen Turner)

- A) Roundhouse
- B) Water Tank
- C) Sandchute



Coal Dock, n.d.

(courtesy Aileen Turner)

Freight bombardiers are in the foreground



View of Wabowden, before 1946

(courtesy Catherine McLeod)

The Hudson Bay Railway Station is in the foreground, the HBC Store is behind it, connected to its warehouse by a wooden walkway. Chiponias's shack is center background and the Silver Leaf Hotel's storehouse is to the right background.



View of Wabowden, before 1946

(courtesy Catherine McLeod)

(Left to right) E.B. Hubble Residence; J.M. Cran Residence (currently the post office); the old post office and weather station operated by J.M. Cran; HBC Store (on the site of Dwyer's Store); Mary Doughty's Café, poolroom and boarding house; Silver Leaf Hotel; two HBR residences in the foreground next to the tracks.



Mile 214 prior to 1928

(courtesy Ed Carter)

(Left to right) school, a house?, bunkhouse, wireless radio shack and Luke Clemons' stopping place and restaurant.

Pikwitonei at Mile 214 had gone into decline.

Several of the old-timers are still holding forth, but the railway shops, which at one time gave the place the appearance of a busy little village, have been moved further north. The location on the banks of the Pikwitonei river is very pretty. The railway crosses the river valley on one of the longest trestles on the line. This was the end of steel for a number of years until the government saw fit to proceed with the construction of the line.

Gillam, located just before Kettle Rapids at Mile 327, was the next divisional point after Wabowden.

Where two years ago there was nothing but bush there is now a thriving settlement with a church, school, pool room and restaurants. The townsite is on a slope up from the track and the houses look very pretty among the trees. This is the headquarters of Rev. S. A. Martin, missionary for the United Church, who has been successful in getting a church built here. This building also serves as school room, and reading and rest room, in fact, it is made full use of nearly twenty-four hours a day. Rev. S. A. Martin and his family

have living quarters in the rear of the main building. His daughter, Margaret, is school teacher."

Tom Riddoch, who had "pioneered at many of the stopping places along the line," was managing his store at Limestone River, or Bird, which was located about thirty-six kilometres north of Gillam at "the largest gravel pit on the line." At Mile 356, a few kilometres further on, D. McDonald ran a

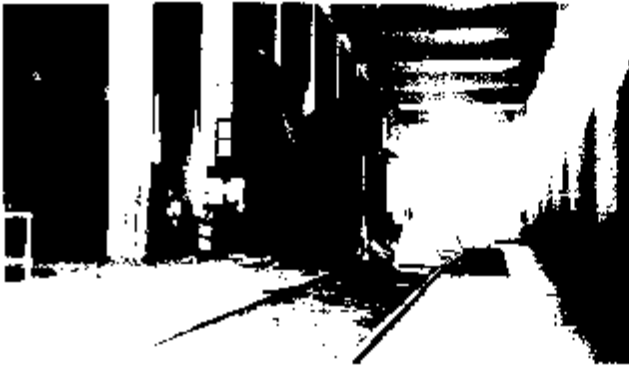


Mary Buck and Company at Mile 214

(courtesy Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

Bill Ivens, M.L.A. and three other members of Legislature visit Mary Buck and her family camped at Mile 214 of the HBR.

¹¹ Ibid



Railway Loading Bays at the Port of Churchill
(Courtesy Sam Waller Museum, PP 2000.11.14)

restaurant, "one of the best on the line and largely patronized by railway employees and travellers."⁷⁹ Beyond this point, the railway extended a further eighty to a hundred kilometres, but the roadbed was "not so good" as this section was under construction.⁸⁰

By now, the end of railway construction was in sight. According to October reports,

Work along the new railway will be carried on all winter and it is anticipated that the steel will reach Fort Churchill some time next summer. The Dominion Construction Co. last winter set an example of how railways could be built in the winter months

and the contractors for the Hudson Bay Railway will follow their lead this winter and work will be pushed forward.⁸¹

In fact, construction moved along so rapidly during the winter that the Hudson Bay Railway to Churchill was completed ahead of time on 29 March 1929.⁸² According to local sources, a large, modern train station was built in Wabowden that year, too, the final chapter in a railway saga that had begun over twenty years before.⁸³ For more than thirty years, until the highway came in from the south, the railroad would be the lifeblood of the community.



Transfer of First Load of Grain through the Port of Churchill
(courtesy Sam Waller Museum, PP200.11.11)

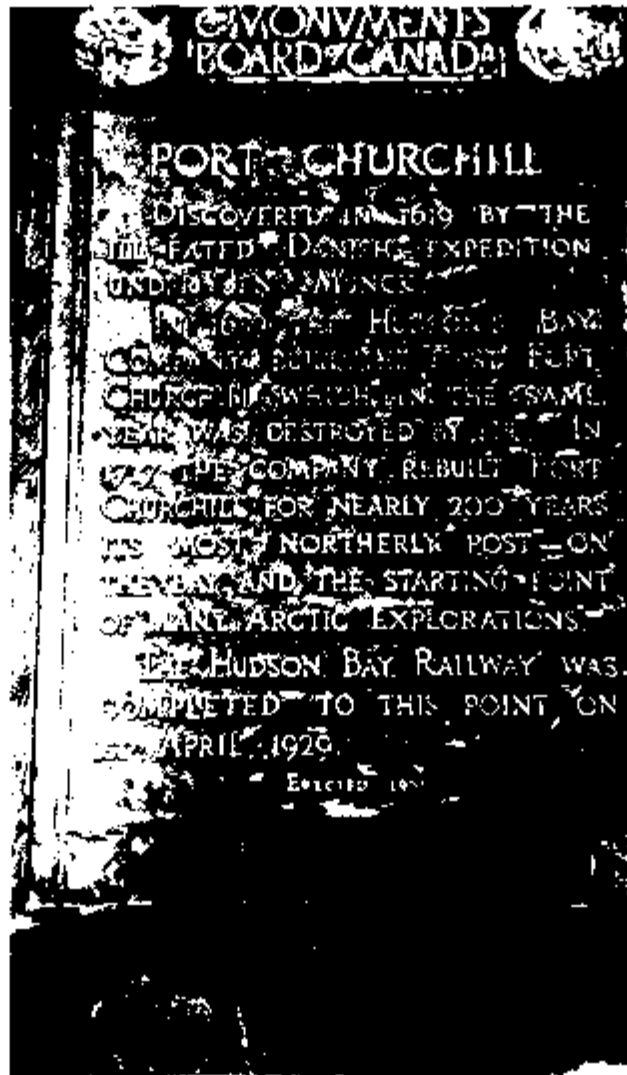
⁷⁹ Ibid. This was at Amery, "where the railway branches off to go to Churchill." Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid., 26 October 1928, p. 7.

⁸² Bickle, 115.

⁸³ Christianson, "History of Wabowden."



Brass Plaque erected at Port Churchill in 1931

(courtesy Sam Waller Museum, PP 89.24.10)

The plaque reads. "Port Churchill discovered in 1619 by the ill-fated Danish Expedition under Jens Munk. In 1689 the Hudson's Bay Company built the first Fort Churchill, which in the same year was destroyed by fire. In 1717 the Company rebuilt. For nearly 200 years its most northerly post on The Bay and the starting point of many Arctic explorations. The Hudson Bay Railway was completed to this point on 1st April, 1929."

Chapter Six

Wabowden After 1929



Wabowden Station, 1944
(courtesy Canada Science and Technology Museum, CN001144)

Once the railroad was completed, Wabowden became a relatively quiet railroad town. For years the arrival of the train, with its mail and passengers, was the social event of the week. Jillian Clarke, who worked in Wabowden as a companion-helper for the Anglican Church in 1943, recalled that "there was one train a week into Wabowden...and everyone met the train and waited for the mail to be sorted and handed out." This practice continued for years.² Rose Ohryn, who

drove a taxi during the 1960s, said that everyone, "even little children and women with their babies," would come to meet the train.³

Cars were later arrivals. Art Bisson had the distinction of owning the first car in Wabowden in the early 1930s. However, since the only "road" in town was a small wooden boardwalk that led to Davidson's store, Bisson turned his Model "A" Ford first into a truck, then into a more useful snow-plane.⁴

¹ This section of the text is based on a history compiled more than twenty years ago by Laurie Christianson with the assistance of Garry Arnold and others from the community. It has been updated for inclusion here by the addition of new data from interviewees, as well as more current information on the town itself.

² According to Aileen Cran Turner, there were two trains per week, one passenger and one freight with passenger coaches. Aileen Turner in conversation with R. Shirriff-Beaumont, October 2003.

³ Rose Ohryn in conversation with Catherine McLeod, January 2002. Rose and her husband Paul arrived in Wabowden in the early 1960s. Paul worked for Booth Fisheries – buying and packing, then shipping fish to The Pas.

⁴ Bisson was a local trapper. Henry Garrick in conversation with Catherine McLeod, January 2002.



Doughty's Restaurant/Pool Hall and the Silver Leaf Hotel, 1944

(courtesy Canada Science and Technology Museum, CN002941)

Note the radio antennae. The restaurant was to the left and the pool room to the right in Mary Doughty's

In 1932, the original Silver Leaf Hotel was built by Black and McArthur.² The two-storey building contained nine bedrooms and a beer parlour, which was an unusual amenity for a town of less than two hundred residents. For many years the only bar north of the Pas, it was frequented by travellers as well as local people, who could have a beer – nothing else was served – and get a haircut and shave as well. Nevertheless, it was a “men only” establishment for a long time. Aside from the two female employees who provided barber service, no women were allowed inside for the next three decades.³ The hotel continued to operate until 1971, when it was torn down and a new building erected under the auspices of the Wescana chain, which also operated a motel nearby. Now both are owned by Allan Chu Enterprises.

When the old Silver Leaf Hotel was in operation, its patrons took their meals next door at Mary Doughty's restaurant, which was a little eating place and pool hall established in 1932. Until its closure in the 1950s, it was the social centre of the community where people came to visit and relax with friends, wait for the train, or sit and talk with travellers passing through town.⁴

During the Second World War, visitors to Wabowden included American soldiers, who patrolled the rail line to protect it from enemy attack. The army also set up a weather station in the building that is now the post office and relayed weather reports to the Air Force. After the departure of the army in 1945, J.M. Cran and his daughter Aileen operated the weather station until



Weather Station, late 1940s to early 1950s
(courtesy Aileen Turner)

The HBC bombardiers are picking up mail for Norway House.

¹ George Black and Mr. McArthur were in the Wabowden area doing mining exploration work prior to building the hotel. Florence Hamilton in conversation with Catherine McLeod. January 2002

² Florence Hamilton, her sister-in-law Martha Beebe, and later Alice Halcrow did housekeeping chores at the hotel, but no barbering. Florence Hamilton in conversation with Catherine McLeod. January 2002.

³ Mary did not close shop; she simply relocated and carried on. Even after her retirement in 1970, she continued to bake pies and sell them from her own home until shortly before her death.

1950. Then James Clarkson Cran, J.M.'s son, managed the station until it was closed in 1970. During the height of the Cold War in 1956, a bomb shelter was built to house the weatherman, so that he could continue to take atmospheric readings and relay them to Winnipeg in the event of a nuclear attack. Fortunately, there was never any need for the facility, so it was eventually filled in.⁸

By the mid-1930s, the Anglican Church had stationed resident Messengers in Wabowden.⁹ The old Anglican Church and Mission House were built around 1936, followed by a parish hall in 1938. Soon afterward, the Roman Catholic Church was completed on the Point, where it remained until the 1950s, when it was moved to its present location. The arrival



Wabowden Anglican Church, August 1936
(courtesy Provincial Archives of Manitoba,
Dorothy Baker Collection, #257)

of these churches had an impact on the treaty Indian residents of the town. These people were still considered a federal responsibility, even though living off reserve. Consequently, their children had been excluded from the provincially-funded public school in Wabowden, based on the notion that only those who paid taxes should be allowed to send their children to a tax-supported school. To meet the needs of these treaty children, who were far from the federal Indian schools at Cross Lake and Norway House, the missionaries set up classrooms in the churches where the children could be taught the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic. These classrooms operated until the 1950s, when off-reserve Indian students were finally allowed to go to public schools.



Roman Catholic Church, early 1990s.
(courtesy Catherine McLeod)

⁸ The bomb shelter was made from a culvert approximately 2 m in diameter and 4 m in length. A contractor from The Pas got the job to fill it in, and Pete Braun hauled the gravel for the job. Pete Braun in conversation with Catherine McLeod, February 2002.

⁹ The Messengers, or more correctly Bishop's Messengers, were members of the Anglican religious Order of St. Faith's, founded by Marguerite Fowler (1884-1970) in 1928 at Brandon, Manitoba. Serving in the remote and northern sections of the Diocese of Brandon, they provided Christian service to the community, and, in the absence of the clergy, they could also baptise, bury, and hold regular prayer and church services. For more information see <http://collections.ic.gc.ca/cree/pioneer/Relig/10.htm>.



Wabowden Community Club, 17 May 1954

(courtesy Aileen Turner)

Presentation of a \$100 cheque to the Wabowden Community Club. (Left to Right) Ray Bohay (proprietor of the Silver Leaf Hotel), Mr. W. Yakubec, Mrs. R. Bohay, Mrs. Katherine Jonasson, Mrs. Mary Doughty and Mr. J.C. Cran

Parents whose children attended the provincially-funded school at Wabowden faced their own challenges. After the war was over, the townspeople raised money through the Wabowden Community Club for some much-needed repairs to the neglected school building.¹⁷ Jim Cran and John Pollog put in a concrete basement, Jim Cran and Ray Bohay installed a furnace, and Joe Monias painted the exterior walls.¹⁸ A fence was also constructed around the playground to protect the pupils from stray horses. All labour for these improvements

was donated by the community. Even the trustees, Alex Bailey, Henry Harpe, and Mike Pazkowski devoted time to roofing the building.¹⁹

In September of 1946, with fifty-three pupils enrolled in the one-room school, it became obvious that something larger was needed, and a two-storey addition was attached to the old school to provide the required classroom space. This served the community until a larger school for Kindergarten to Grade Nine was built in 1959.

¹⁷ This school was located right across the CNR tracks from Davidson's Store on property occupied now by Jim and Frances McIvor. It had a wood furnace in the basement, and Rosezella Brouillette remembers putting wood into it "through a chute on the side." Rosezella Brouillette in conversation with Catherine McLeod, January 2002.

¹⁸ Laurie Christanson. John Pollog was a local trapper and Ray Bohay the manager of the hotel. Rosezella Brouillette in conversation with Catherine McLeod, January 2002.

¹⁹ Bailey, Harpe, and Pazkowski all worked for the CNR. Rosezella Brouillette in conversation with Catherine McLeod 2002. Henry Harpe lived at Wabowden from 1945 to 1962, then lived in The Pas until 1992, when he moved to Winnipeg. F. Henry Harpe in conversation with R. Shmitt-Beaumont, 6 and 18 March 2002.

During the 1950s, Cecil Smith, a local conservation officer, organised the curling club, which included Stan McCrae, Frank Funk, Henry Harpe, Jim Cran, and other interested people from the community.¹³ Nobody had extra money, so the club members put their heads together and came up with a relatively low-cost plan to build a rink. The sale of a team of horses donated for that purpose provided them with much needed start-up money.¹⁴ They also acquired building materials from an old army barracks at the radar site up the line at Bird. Dismantled and brought down to Wabowden, the barracks were reassembled into a respectable two-sheet curling rink.¹⁵ All this was accomplished by volunteer labourers, who also went across Setting Lake for logs to frame the ice sheets.¹⁶ Once these were in place, the rink was flooded, and the fun began. For a number of years, that rink provided an outlet for Wabowden's avid curlers and their supporters.¹⁷

Wabowden got its first police detachment in 1945, when two officers were moved into town from Gillam. Much later, when construction was underway at the Thompson mine in 1957, Wabowden had the only holding facilities for the area. Prisoners were taken from the mine site by gas car to Wabowden, where they were locked up until appearing in court before magistrate Jim Cran.¹⁸ On cold winter nights, they were given a room in the Silver Leaf Hotel. Police officer Elmer Cutts recalled that at such times he never worried about locking them up because there was nowhere for them to escape during the winter. The detachment was closed and moved to Thompson in 1961, but the need for a police station between Thompson and The Pas soon became apparent, and a new R.C.M.P. office was established in 1965.¹⁹

In 1955, the Department of Agriculture established a sub-station of the Brandon

¹³ McCrae was the shop foreman for the CNR at Wabowden. Funk and Harpe were also railroaders. F. Henry Harpe in conversation with R. Shirriff-Beaumont, 18 March 2002.

¹⁴ *ibid.* Harpe thinks the horses were brought down from Bird. Possibly they were used by the radar station there.

¹⁵ Typical of rinks throughout rural Manitoba, Wabowden's consisted of two enclosed sheets of ice as well as a heated "waiting room" at one end, which had a series of windows facing the ice for spectators watching the games. The curling club also had a concession booth, where people could buy coffee, drinks, and snacks. Information provided by Helen Dram and Bonnie Monias, 17 June 2002.

¹⁶ F. Henry Harpe in conversation with R. Shirriff-Beaumont, 18 March 2002.

¹⁷ Catherine McLeod, March 2002; Robert D. Shinnie in conversation with R. Shirriff-Beaumont, 16 March 2002.

¹⁸ This was J.C. Cran, but J.M. Cran had been the magistrate in earlier years. The "jail" was a small, square building owned by Dick Davidson on property between the tracks and the lake now occupied by Eric Nilsson. Alex Jonasson in conversation with Catherine McLeod, January 2002.

¹⁹ Three officers are presently stationed in Wabowden. They patrol about 43 k north and 50 k south along Highway 6, and about 70-75 k on Provincial Road 373 to Cross Lake. Information provided by Catherine McLeod, January 2002.



Experimental Farm, Wabowden, n.d.
(courtesy Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada)

Experimental Farm in Wabowden. Its purpose was to test various methods of fertilization, to try out different ways of clearing and draining land, and to conduct experiments to find the most successful crops for the climate. V. W. Bjarnason was in charge of this sub-station from 1955 to 1957. In 1957, Peter Braun took over and ran the experimental farm until it closed in 1965.

It is a matter of record that Wabowden first got electricity in November 1963, but few know that this innovation was inspired by a flock of chickens owned by two local entrepreneurs named Carl Fortney and Robert Shinnie.⁷¹ Quick to recognize an opportunity when they saw it, Carl and Bob obtained laying hens, which they fed

on grain purchased at a dollar a bushel from local "farmers," whose enterprise gave new meaning to the term.⁷² Indeed, their unorthodox harvest methods did not resemble in any way, shape, or form those used by more traditional agriculturists. They simply headed for the local CNR yards, where they rolled up their shirt-sleeves, put their hands to the broom, and swept out the empty grain cars returning from the Port of Churchill. With this steady supply of chicken feed, Karl and Bob were able to increase their flock to a thousand birds and supply eggs to the local stores and nearby reserves at a much lower cost than competitors from the south.⁷³

It was the purchase of a small generator, in order to provide adequate light in the hen-houses, that eventually led to the idea of wiring the whole town.⁷⁴ Rock Island Power Limited was formed in 1960 by Shinnie, who became president of the company, and Bill Martin, who was a lawyer from The Pas. They obtained a charter from the Government of Manitoba, then installed a diesel electric generator and power grid according to Hydro specifications. Rock Island Power began generating with sixty-five subscribers, including twenty

⁷¹ Shinnie was a pilot for Teal Air, then when that company closed, he went to work for Lamb Air which operated float planes out of Wabowden for a number of years. Robert D. Shinnie in conversation with R. Shirrit-Beaumont 6 and 16 March 2002.

⁷² Ibid. Their first chicken barn was at Rock Island Farm on the north side of Wabowden near Rock Island Lake. Later, they had two barns near Shinnie's house, one for young poults and the other for laying hens. After the chicken business was discontinued, the buildings were sold to the Deschenes and converted into houses.

⁷³ Ibid. The eggs were transported by air, when Bob delivered supplies for the HBC.

⁷⁴ Ibid. The generator provided power for Shinnie's house as well as for the lights and ventilating fans in the hen-houses. Bob believes they may also have sold power to the hotel and possibly the HBC at that time.

commercial services.²⁴ In 1965, it was taken over by Manitoba Hydro, which operated the generating plant for a time before bringing in hydroelectric power from its new development on the nearby Nelson River.

In the late 1950s, Wabowden served as a base camp in the Nickel Belt for prospectors involved in the mineral search then taking place in Northern Manitoba. Several airways operated out of Wabowden, transporting supplies and equipment to geologists and prospectors. These airways, Taylor Air, Teal Air, Trans-Air, Lamb Air, and Cross Lake Air played a major role in the growth of the mining industry in the north.²⁵ All are gone now, except Cross Lake Air, which still operates out of Wabowden as a charter and freight service.²⁶

Air transport was important to Wabowden even before the search for minerals began. Jack Hone, the first bush pilot, arrived in about 1931.²⁷ In the late 1930s, Jack Stephenson used a Tiger Moth bi-plane to transport freight for the commercial fishermen in the area. In 1946, Eric Taylor began flying out of Wabowden in his small two-passenger plane, hauling

passengers, fish, and mail. Within a few years, his business grew to include two more planes and pilots. Eric was well liked in the north, and his dedication to his work was legendary. Regrettably, he died in a plane crash on 17 November 1952, while trying to take the mail into Cross



Eric Taylor (2 May 1918 - 17 November 1952)

(courtesy Catherine McLeod)

Originally from Saskatchewan, Taylor did over 52 bombing missions in Germany. He was one of the first pilots with a bush plane operation in Wabowden.

²⁴ *Ibid.* The grid covered the entire town and the vast majority of households.

²⁵ *Ibid.* Taylor Air was bought out by Teal Air, which was owned by Jim Shore of Winnipeg. Trans-Air was one of the forerunners of Canadian Airlines, which was eventually absorbed by Air Canada.

²⁶ Cross Lake Air was started by George Dram, after Teal Air went bankrupt. Using float planes, the Company served the fly-in fish camps, as well as the tourist trade, until 2002.

²⁷ Aileen Turner in conversation with R. Shmitt-Beaumont, 28 October 2003. Aileen recalls that Dick Davidson built a house for Hone and his wife to rent.



Memorial to Eric Taylor, Wabowden, 2001

(courtesy Raymond Shirritt-Beaumont)

The inscription reads: "May our youth of today live to serve others as he so faithfully did."

Lake during a snowstorm. In recognition of their esteem for this great northern pilot, the communities of Nelson House, Cross Lake, and Wabowden each erected a monument to honour his memory.

With the mining boom that occurred in the 1950s came a population increase at Wabowden. In 1956, the government census put the town's population at only two hundred and eighty four people, but by 1960 there were over five hundred residents. In 1960, the old Gislason Restaurant was torn down and replaced by Oscar Thorsteinson's Starlite Café.²⁵ This building was later bought by Don and Gladys Deschenes, who eventually sold it to the Jonasson family. Today this building, known as the Wabowden Ice Cream Parlour, is operated by Myrna

Dram. Wabowden's first liquor store, which opened in the corner of Art Stephenson's store, was established in the early 1960s.²⁶

Construction began on the highway between The Pas and Thompson in 1959, and it was completed in 1964. Formerly, the only roads had been made of railway ties. In some places, the road was only a tractor trail ploughed through the bush. According to Paul Ohryn, who ran a taxi service in Wabowden at the time when the roads were just being built, many people used to travel with plywood strapped to the tops of their cars. They would lay the wood over any places in the road that were too muddy and soft to drive through, and then would slowly drive over the plywood. This trick prevented them from getting stuck in soft ground. In cases when people



Wabowden Ice Cream Parlour, May 2003

(courtesy Catherine McLeod)

²⁵ According to Florence Hamilton, Jon Gislason was the first owner. Frances Hall vaguely remembers the name Gislason being associated with a restaurant, located somewhere between the post office and the hotel. She also thinks he operated his restaurant prior to Mary Doughty, so the building must have been old when it was torn down. Frances Hall in conversation with Catherine McLeod, March 2002.

²⁶ This was Dick Davidson's old store, which Stephenson had purchased. Information provided by Catherine McLeod, March 2002. However, Stephenson had previously operated a smaller store behind the ice cream parlour. Robert D. Shinnie in conversation with R. Shirritt-Beaumont, 16 March 2002.



Wabowden, Manitoba, 1954
 (courtesy Provincial Archives of Manitoba,
 John Reifschneider Collection, #218)

got hopelessly stuck in the clay, one of the tractors that patrolled the road would come and drag them out. Many travellers lost their bumpers that way.

In the early sixties, the town had exchange telephone service, but this was only in operation between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. on weekdays. However, by the end of the decade, the construction of a microwave tower made dial telephones possible, and also enabled residents to tune into CBC radio and television. The outside world was not so far away any more.

Up until 1967, Wabowden was under the jurisdiction of a resident administrator from The Pas. Recommendations were sent to the administrator by a local advisory council

on things such as road improvements and other matters of local concern. Under the guidance of the Department of Northern Affairs, the advisory council developed a more independent system with a mayor and community council. The first elected mayor was Don McIvor, and the first council included Peter Braun, Jack McIvor, Rudy Becker, and William Wachell.³⁰

During its first few months of operation, Council wrote the town by-laws and worked out a town planning concept to deal with the many new businesses and residential areas that were developing. All the roads in town were gravelled and oiled, a town clean-up campaign was initiated, and regular garbage pick-up began. Today, the Wabowden Community Council administers public works, including water



Wabowden Community Council Office, 2001
 (courtesy Raymond Shirrit-Beaumont)

³⁰ The first election was in 1969 or 1970. Rudy Becker sat on council for about ten years. He originally came to Wabowden to work on the construction of Highway 6. Later, he helped build the Soab and Man-bridge mines, then worked in them until they shut down. From 1984 to 1989, he operated a garage along the highway where My's filling station is now. He then worked at the school in maintenance. Bill Wachell, another councillor, was also involved in highway construction and freighted fuel as well to South Indian Lake by tractor train. Later, he and his wife jointly operated a little garage and coffee shop. Information provided by Catherine McLeod. March 2002.



Wabowden, after 1967
(courtesy Carl and Eva Dram)



Wabowden

In the background is Goose Lake, now called Rock Island Lake

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The old winter road to Cross Lake. 2. The Hudson Bay Store and Store House. 3. Frank Callow's garage and Coffee Shop. 4. Bill and Rose Wachell's home. 5. Hudson Bay Warehouse [before it was moved to the present location next to "The Lucky Dollar" Store, the old Bay Store location]. 6. The old Curling Rink built with materials from an old army barracks further up the Bay line. 7. C.N. Round House Location (It burned down some time before this picture was taken). 8. C.N. Dwellings where the Road Master, dispatch agent, etc. stayed. 9. C.N. Tool House | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. C.N. Houses 11. C.N. Bunk Houses 12. Bob and Shirley Shinnie's home. In front of their place was the Bailey's house. 13. The old Silver Leaf Hotel 14. Oscar Thorsteinson's Coffee Shop 15. C.N. Telegraph Office 16. C.N. Water Tank 17. Imperial Oil Station 18. Jack Stevenson's house and ware house 19. Old Pierone's house (Ernest's mom and dad) 20. John and Martha Beebe's house 21. C.N. Station 22. Carl and Minnie Fortney's former house 23. Mrs. Cochrane's house |
|---|--|

treatment and distribution, waste disposal, road maintenance, and infrastructure maintenance. Emergency services, such as fire fighting and ambulance, as well as recreation at the Ke-Na-Now Centre Recreation Complex, are under its jurisdiction. It also supplies funding for numerous community projects and is active in job creation projects for the town.¹⁷ Five full-time employees have been hired to carry out its day-to-day activities.¹⁸

The town's economy received a boost in the 1970s through forestry and mineral development. In 1972, Churchill Forest Industries began a logging operation at Sipiwesk employing fifty people to provide wood for its plant in The Pas, which later came under the management of Manfor, then Repap, and now Tolko. Several logging companies were operating locally in 2001, including Grass River Logging owned by Garry Mosiondz, Nelson River Logging (Jim and Albert McIvor), Mud Lake Logging (Brian Shlachetka), H. Mosiondz and Son, and Wabman Trucking. In that year, they collectively employed approximately seventy men and worked in a wide area that included the region about Thicket Portage, Pikwitonei, Thompson, and Leaf Rapids.



Fish Processing Plant, 2001
(courtesy Raymond Shirrill-Beaumont)

The Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation operates a fish processing plant at Wabowden, which was built in the late 1970s to service fishermen locally, as well as at Cross Lake, Thicket Portage, Pikwitonei, Snow Lake, and Norway House. The plant produces close to two million pounds of fish annually and hires many seasonal employees.¹⁹ It is the aim of the corporation to be the leading marketer of freshwater fish products in Manitoba and a high-quality and dependable supplier that gives value to the customer and increased returns to the fishermen.

A number of mines were opened in the area at about this time, too. Wabowden initially supplied construction workers, then services such as shopping and entertainment for the miners. The test mines at Bucko Lake and Bowden Lake showed promise, but in both cases the

¹⁷ In 2002, the community council consists of Mayor Reg Meade and Councillors Leon Benson, Walter Becker, Ross Foure, Ken Harman, Frances McIvor, and Catherine McLeod. Information provided by Catherine McLeod, 12 March 2002.

¹⁸ The employees are: administrator: Kendi Clearwater, clerk: Malinda Foure, Public Works: Clarence Bayer, Allan Johnson; Recreation: Dawny Bayer. Information provided by Catherine McLeod, 12 March 2002.

¹⁹ Leon Benson, Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, in a letter to Catherine McLeod, 10 March 2002.

nickel deposits were located under the lake bed and too difficult to reach. Shaft sinking was suspended on Bowden Lake in 1971 at a depth of three hundred and forty-seven feet and at Bucko Lake in 1973 at a depth of one thousand one hundred and seventeen feet. Other mines in the Wabowden area, such as Manibridge and Soab Creek, grew into small communities. The nearest of these, Manibridge Mine, opened in 1972. With a capacity of a thousand tons of nickel milled per day, it employed approximately two hundred people, some of whom resided with their families at the mine site, while others settled in Wabowden. A seventy-three-unit trailer court was built to accommodate them.

Between 1970 and 1977, when Manibridge Mine was in production, Wabowden's population rose by almost fifty per cent. A larger school was built to accommodate the increased number of school children in town. Opened in September 1974, it contained classrooms from Nursery to Grade 12, the first school in town to include a high school section, and it also had the town's first gymnasium. Around this time a new police station, as well as a residence for its officers, was built. A



Nursing Station, 2001
(courtesy Raymond Shirrit-Beaumont)

fire station was also built, a fire truck and ambulance purchased, and a volunteer fire fighting crew formed. Construction was completed on a new nursing station.²⁴ Some street lighting was installed in 1975, and partial sewer and water services were installed in the community in 1973.²⁵ Under the Manitoba Government's rural sewer and water assistance program, half of the installation cost was covered by a grant, while the other half was paid by the community.

Wabowden finally realized its dream of having a recreation complex in 1974 when, after three years of planning, the foundation was laid for the Ke-Na-Now Centre. The complex, built in slightly over a year, contains two sheets of curling ice, a

²⁴ By 2002 the nursing station employed two nurses and a community health worker. There is no resident doctor in Wabowden, and none comes to the nursing station. Nurses handle minor medical problems as well as public health, home care, school health, diabetes, blood pressure, and prenatal clinics. They also provide a call service during the evening after regular office hours and on holidays. Serious medical cases are medi-vaced to Thompson. Information provided by Catherine McLeod, March 2002.

²⁵ Almost all of Wabowden's residents are now connected to water and sewer, and street lights have been installed throughout the community. Information provided by Catherine McLeod, March 2002.



Ke-Na-Now Community Centre, 2003
(courtesy Catherine McLeod)

regulation-size ice hockey and skating rink, change rooms, a concession stand, and an office and community lounge. Measuring forty metres [134 ft] by eighty-two and a half metres [275 ft.], the five hundred thousand dollar (\$500,000) complex was completed with money from community council, Falconbridge Nickel Mines Ltd., government grants, and local residents. Much of the local fund-raising was done by the Lions Club, the Busy Bees Club, the local MMF, curling and community clubs, and the student council.³⁶ In 1977, Manibridge Mine was shut down. The Manibridge townsite was closed, and the mineworkers moved away. Wabowden's population dropped to seven hundred and fifty residents, compared to its 1971 census of one thousand and fifty-one. Wabowden School lost seventy of its three hundred

students.³⁷ For a time, there was increased unemployment and welfare, but Wabowden has since successfully adjusted. The town's population has stabilized at around six hundred residents.³⁸

Commercial fishing, logging, mining, government employment, trapping and other traditional resource harvesting, and the service industry now provide the basis for the town's economy. Setting Lake Park, scenic attractions such as Sasagiu Rapids and Pisew Falls, and numerous nearby lakes make Wabowden a popular vacation spot. Many tourists return summer after summer to camp and fish here. The future looks promising. As a result of the forward-



Mal Johnson School
(courtesy Hans Arnold)

³⁶ This community centre continues to be a focal point of social life in Wabowden. During a recent week-end, it hosted a 26-rink women's curling tournament, as well as a men's hockey tournament. It is open most days for hockey practice and other ice sports, as well as table games like ping pong, all organised through the recreational director. There are bingo games too, once a week. Information provided by Catherine McLeod, March 2002.

³⁷ Today, the school has twelve teachers, twelve non-teaching staff, and one hundred and seventy students, nursery to grade twelve. It was renamed Mal Johnson School, 24 October 1991, in honour of Melvin A. Johnson, 1944-1990, a community leader, who was especially remembered by the students as a caring friend and bus driver for thirteen years.

³⁸ The town has a store, a hotel and motel, two restaurants, a school, a gas station, three churches, a recreation centre, and a fish processing plant.



Sasagiu Rapids, 2001
(courtesy Adele Lafreniere)

looking attitude of mayor and council, the Wabowden Development Corporation was established with an office in the community council building, where prospective employers can obtain information on business opportunities. They can also utilize the services of the resident community economic development officer, who works to obtain funding for economic and community development. Successful projects undertaken by the office include truck driver training, the Community Connection Program (Computer Access), and business start-ups. The officer has also investigated the

feasibility of a day-care centre, supervised fund-raising for playground equipment, arranged workshops and seminars, and co-ordinated entertainment for the school and community.³⁹

Wabowden is a busy place, but it is not all work. The Abel Hall Memorial Sled Dog Races have been held at the beginning of February for the past five years. The two-day event begins on the night before the races with a supper at the Ke-Na-Now Recreation Centre to honour the mushers followed by a jigging contest. There is also an End of Winter Carnival to "celebrate winter and the coming warmer months." The Wabowden Jamboree is another annual event, held in September, where "residents and visitors have the opportunity to sing till their heart's content."⁴⁰

Wabowden is a good place to live. It has faced challenges over the years, and undoubtedly there will be more in the future. However, with imaginative development of its many assets, it has the promise of a prosperous and stable future.

³⁹ Information provided by Diana Delaronde-Colombe via Catherine McLeod, March 2002.

⁴⁰ *Explore Northern Manitoba's Grass River Corridor, 2002-2003 Visitor's Guide* (Flin Flon: Grass River Corridor Tourism Association), 37.

Appendix One

The Other Family of
William Sinclair (c. 1766-1818)



Charles McLeod at Chimney Site, 1954
(courtesy Catherine McLeod)

Charles McLeod of Wabowden has long been intrigued by the old chimney site on Setting Lake, but he had no idea that his connection with the place went beyond curiosity. Imagine his surprise when he discovered that he was the direct descendant of the man who was in charge of that post more than two hundred years ago. In fact, Charles traces his lineage back through his mother Ethel McLeod to her father, HBC clerk Charles Begg Isbister, who was born in 1869 to William Isbister, HBC postmaster at Oxford House.

William was the son of another HBC postmaster named John Isbister and his wife Fanny Sinclair, who was a daughter of William Sinclair. So that makes Charles a great-great-great-grandson of William Sinclair, something we did not know until recently because the information was hard to find in the old records. The reason for this is fairly simple. William Sinclair had a family he acknowledged in his will, but he had a second one of which he made no mention whatsoever.



Grave of William Sinclair (c.1766-1818),
York Factory Cemetery, 1957.
(courtesy Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Provincial
Archives of Manitoba, HBCA 1985/44/N3)

In the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, there is a letter *circa* 1815 from the London Committee requesting information on the families of its officers at York Factory.¹ Scrawled at the bottom of a draft copy

of this letter is a list of those officers and the number of children each had, with one exception.² Instead of a number beside the name of William Sinclair, there is an emphatic "No! No! No!" Evidently, Sinclair was upset by this intrusion into his private affairs, but there is nothing in the text to indicate why. The obvious question is: What exactly was William unwilling to reveal?



Donald Ross

Artist: Paul Kane

(courtesy Provincial Archives of British Columbia)

A clue can be found in a private letter dated 6 August 1845 written by Donald Ross, the officer in charge at Norway House, to HBC Governor George Simpson. In it, Ross complained about an alleged attempt by the Rev. James Evans, the Methodist

Missionary at Norway House, to entice John Isbister, the postmaster at Nelson House, away from HBC service and into mission work. Then he added,

The real drift of his [Evans'] conversation of yesterday with Isbister can only be thoroughly appreciated by those who are acquainted with John Isbister's family connections, his wife being a reputed half-sister of James Sinclair of Red River, and sister to Ben Sinclair our former steersman who is now under a course of instruction for the Missionary Ministry.³

This is an intriguing reference, because William Sinclair only acknowledged children by his Cree wife Nahoway. Now here was a claim that he

had at least two other children, namely the wife of John Isbister and her brother Ben Sinclair. How could this be explained? First of all, the word "reputed" was a euphemism in fur trade parlance for an

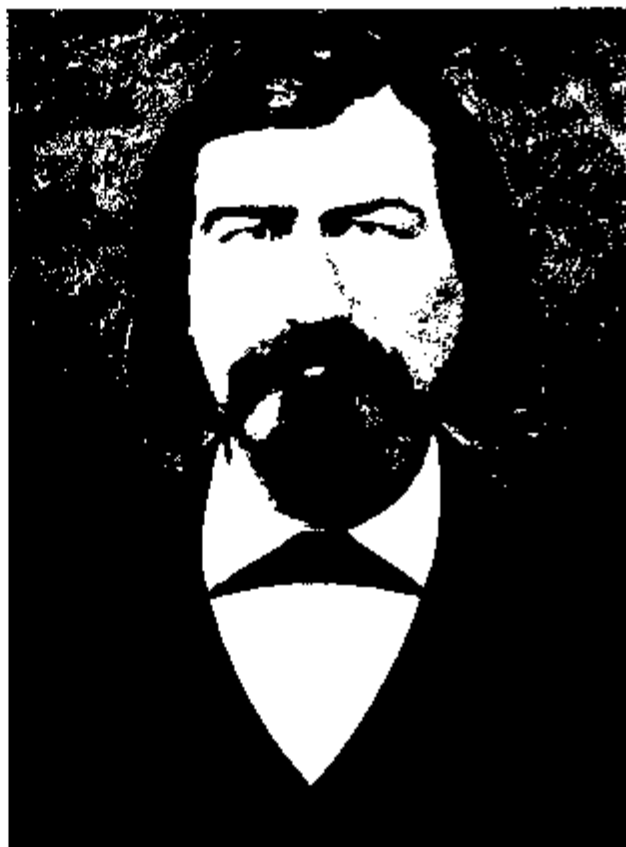
¹ Provincial Archives of Manitoba (PAM). Hudson's Bay Company Archives (HBCA), E.8/5, fo. 128, Private Records, Papers Relating to Disturbances, 1815-1819. ml 4M110.

² This draft letter was filed in an unusual place and although I recorded the HBCA source at the time, I have not been able to find it since. Raymond Sherritt-Beaumont, June 2003.

³ British Columbia Archives (BCA), AE R73-R736, Donald Ross Papers. Donald Ross to George Simpson, 6 August 1845.

unacknowledged family relationship, in this case an unacknowledged sister and brother of James Sinclair, the well-known son of William Sinclair and Nahoway. Since Ross was in a position to know, it is strong evidence that Sinclair had more than one family.

Ben Sinclair was from Oxford House, where he was listed as "Ben Sinclair or Moose o coot" on the Indian Census of 1838 along with two brothers, "Nee pen wees cum" and "Jem or Kay quois chestum."¹ Nee pen wees cum was baptised under the name John Sinclair by James Evans in 1840 and, like Ben, became involved in the Methodist Mission at Norway House.² Jem Sinclair or Kay quois chestum was a hunter, who seems to have remained at Oxford House.³ Another brother named Peemootaicapo, possibly known as George Sinclair, may have remained there as well. All of these men were connected to a chief at Oxford House named Aissaysaipeau.⁴ In fact, Kay quois chestum was the chief's "eldest son," Peemootaicapo his [second?] "son," and Nee pen wees cum his "third son."



Ben Sinclair (Moose O Coot)
(courtesy United Church Archives)

Although Ben was not so designated, as the youngest of these men, he was probably the fourth son.⁵

Fanny Isbister was also connected to Aissaysaipeau. In her scrip application,

¹ PAM, HBCA, B 239/2/10, fo. 41, York Factory Miscellaneous, 1808-1829, Oxford House Census, 1838, mf. 1M903.

² PAM, R145, GR 1212, Item 10, Norway House Wesleyan Methodist Register of Baptisms, 1840-1889, entry 100. His wife was entry 101. Ben and his wife Margaret were entries 98 and 99.

Jem Sinclair and his sons George and Robert were among the Oxford House hunters in 1855-1857. See PAM, HBCA, B 156/d/83, Oxford House Indian Ledger, 1855, and B.156/d/86, Island Lake Indian Debt Book, 1856, mf. 1M569. Jem, or James, had at least seven children. His son James, aged 13 years, was baptised at Oxford House in 1840. PAM, R145, GR 1212, Item 10, entry 92. Peggy, aged 11, was baptised at Norway House in 1843. Ibid., entry 401. Jane, aged 7 years, George, aged 4 years, and Mary, aged 2 years, were baptised at Oxford House in 1844. Ibid., entries 455-457. Robert, aged 2 weeks, son of James and Jenny Sinclair, Norway House [sic], and Kitty, a daughter of James and Janey Sinclair, Oxford House, were baptised in 1845. Ibid., entries 500 and 524 respectively.

³ PAM, HBCA, B.156/a/10, fo. 3, 23d, 24, 24d, Oxford House Post Journal, 1827-1828, mf. 1M115.

⁴ PAM, R145, GR 1212, Item 10, entry 347.

she stated that she was born on 1 March 1818, the daughter of William and Margaret Sinclair, but on the 1870 Census she said that she was born in 1816, and her father's name was Essissepow.⁹ More information on that connection can be gleaned from the Oxford House HBC journals. On 13 April 1828, for instance, "The Chiefs wife and daughter came bringing furs for one of her sons called Piemootaicapo."¹⁰ On the 26 April 1828, "The chiefs old wife with 2 of her sons & her daughter arrived the old lady and daughter are come to remain the Sons have brought their furs."¹¹ They were still at the post in May, when "the Chiefs old Wife" was put to work smoking fish.¹² Later that month, two drunken men "Knocked down the chiefs old Wifes Tent and frightened her so" that she ran for safety to the quarters of Richard Grant, the post manager.¹³

Evidently the woman and her daughter were living nearby. They were still there a year later, when Colin Robertson was in charge of both the post and the winter road

project underway near Oxford House. On 6 April 1829, he reported,

The Establishment has this day been thrown into Some disorder by a young woman the daughter of one of our Chiefs, who has been residing all winter at this place and Occassionally assisting the little Girl in attending on my family."

This young woman, whom Robertson described as "scarcely fifteen years of age," began to have fits followed by accurate "revelations" about the sins of nearly everyone at the fort.¹⁴ Her calls for general repentance turned the place up-side-down for the better part of two days, but after her demands settled on the young man she claimed God wanted her to marry, Robertson's patience came to an end. After threatening her with a pail of cold water, he noted that the fits soon ceased. Nevertheless, Robertson sympathised with the young woman, who had been "labouring under aconsiderable depression of Spirits, from the choice her Parents had made in the Sellaction of a Husband, having already fixed her

⁹ National Archives of Canada (NAC), RG 15, vol. 1507, General Index to Manitoba and Northwest Territories Half-Breed and Original White Settlers, 1885; PAM, Manitoba Archives, Census of Manitoba, 1870. Scrip was a one-time payment in cash or land made after 1870 by the Government of Canada to extinguish the Aboriginal entitlement of persons of mixed European/Aboriginal background in Manitoba and the North West Territories.

¹⁰ PAM, HBCA, B.156/a/10, fo. 22d.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, fo. 24.

¹² *Ibid.*, fo. 25.

¹³ *Ibid.*, fo. 25d.

¹⁴ PAM, HBCA, B.156/a/11, fo. 22, Oxford House Journal, 1828-1829, mf. 1M115. There was another man named Teatom at Oxford House in 1828-1829 that Robertson called "chief," but he was connected with the winter road. Aissaysaipeau was a hunter

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, fo. 23.

affections on one more pleasing to the Eye." Indeed,

*she displayed no small portion of ingenuity in attempting to profit by the ascendancy she had thus acquired, in bringing her own case under the favourable consideration of her parents, or those who might have some influence over them, which evinced an adroitness rarely to be met in so young a person, either in this or any other country.*¹⁷

Robertson never named anyone connected with this incident, but existing records provide clues. The "old wife's" husband was undoubtedly Aissaysaipeau, from whom she was separated in 1828, perhaps because he had taken a "young wife."¹⁸ The older lady had her teenaged daughter with her, in all likelihood the only one still unmarried.¹⁹ If this inference is accurate, then Fanny Sinclair was the young woman in the incident described by Colin Robertson. Not only was she the daughter of Aissaysaipeau, but her age on her baptismal record in 1842 was within a year of being the same as the unidentified young woman. Moreover, Fanny was unmarried in 1828 and undoubtedly living

at Oxford House. John Isbister was there, too. Richard Grant left him in charge of the post during the summer of 1828, and he was still in Oxford House on 1 June 1830 when his purchases suggested that Fanny had already entered his life.²⁰ Their eldest daughter was born eight months later on 1 February 1831.²¹

On the basis of all the available evidence, it would appear that Fanny Sinclair was the young woman at the centre of events in Oxford House during April 1829. If so, at the height of the commotion, she "opened upon her nearest relations, and the conduct of her parents was adverted in language truly painful."²² Disturbed as she was at the time, those allusions to her parents' conduct probably included references to her own patrimony and that of other members of her family. We have no direct evidence concerning Aissaysaipeau's relationship with William Sinclair, but in traditional Cree culture, a man might offer his wife for a time to a friend or trade associate and raise as his own any offspring that resulted. Indeed,

¹⁷ Ibid., fo. 24d

¹⁸ Aissaysaipeau was attentive to his new wife. When he came in to settle his debt in May 1829, he expressed his concern for her. Robertson recorded, "if I cannot purchase from the men a Blanket & a fathom of Cloth for his young wife, I care nothing about myself (Says the old Gentleman) but I must confess I am a little ashamed when I See my Wife So pitiful." Ibid., fo. 30d

¹⁹ There may have been two other married daughters. On 29 Apr 1828, "the chiefs Son Piemoutai capo" went to "Hell's Gate to find his Brothers in Law Billy Moar & Cheemouch." PAM, HBCA, B.156/a/10, fo. 24d.

²⁰ Ibid., fo. 28d; B.154/d/15, fo. 4d-5. Island Lake Servants Advances at York Factory, Summer 1830, mf. 1M567.

²¹ PAM, R.145, GR 1212, Item 10, entry 348.

²² PAM, HBCA, B.156/a/11, fo. 22d

this old custom, or something close to it, was practised at Oxford House as late as 1829, when Colin Robertson wrote at some length about it in a letter to a neighbouring post manager.²² The incident he described appeared to have been a temporary arrangement, but that was not always the case. Certainly the relationship between Aissaysaipeau and William Sinclair may have extended over many years. The custom of wife-sharing was perfectly acceptable in the context of a Cree hunting culture that often lived on the edge of starvation. In such circumstances, it was important to establish as many close relationships as possible with one's neighbours, because these bonds could come in handy during a crisis. Aissaysaipeau undoubtedly experienced the disastrous hunting conditions that finally prompted sixty families to desert the low country around York Factory in 1811. As a result, he may have been highly motivated to seek favour with Sinclair, so that he could call on him for provisions when hunting failed. Aissaysaipeau may have reasoned that Sinclair, who was

already known as a good trader "belov'd by the Natives," would be more likely to comply with such a request, if his own children were involved.²³

On the other hand, if Aissaysaipeau was incapable of fathering the children so essential to the survival of his small hunting band, he would have been doubly motivated to seek out a closer relationship with Sinclair. Although there is no direct evidence that Sinclair fathered any of Aissaysaipeau's children, other than Fanny and Benjamin, there are some provocative hints. In an 1830 letter to Robert Miles, who was married to Sinclair's daughter Betsy, Colin Robertson mentioned "George your relation (according to the rites of the country)."²⁴ This was "George the Indian," or "the chief Son george," who worked for Robertson at Oxford House that winter.²⁵ George may have been Piemootaicapo, who was described as Aissaysaipeau's son. Two of Aissaysaipeau's other sons are possibilities, too. Although there is no direct evidence that Jem or Kay quois chestum and Nee pen wees cum were Sinclair's children, the fact that they adopted

²² *Ibid.*, fo. 50d. For more information on this custom, see Mandelbaum, David G., *The Plains Cree* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1979, reprint 1990), 149-150.

²³ When Sinclair was at Split Lake House in 1797-1798, he was described as "a good Trader, a Steady Man, and belov'd by the Natives." PAM, HBCA, Search File - William Sinclair

²⁴ PAM, HBCA, B.156/a/12, fo. 71. Oxford House Journal, 1829-1830, mf. 1M115. It has been assumed that Betsy Miles was the daughter of William Sinclair and Nahoway. If so, George would probably have been her half-brother. On the other hand, if she were the daughter of Sinclair and Aissaysaipeau's wife, he could have been her full brother, assuming the same parents, or half-brother, assuming George's father was Aissaysaipeau. See below for the argument that Betsy may have been Sinclair's daughter by Aissaysaipeau's wife.

²⁵ PAM, HBCA, B.156/a/11, fo. 18d, 47; B.156/a/16, Oxford House Post Journal, 1834-1835, mf. 1M116. The entry for 8 November 1834 reads: "The Chiefs two sons George & Ben arrived."

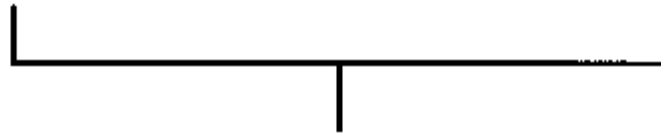
The McLeod - Sinclair Connection

Aissaysaipeau

A Chief of the Homeguard Cree at Oxford House in the 1820s. His children included *Kay qua ches tum* [James Sinclair]; *Pee moa tai capo* [George? Sinclair]; *Nepen wayskum* [John Sinclair]; *Moose o coof* [Benjamin Sinclair]; and *Fanny*, wife of John Isbister.

William Sinclair

HBC officer at Wegg's House in 1795-1796. later in charge at Oxford House, 1798-1812. Married to *Nahoway*, by whom he had a large family. He also had at least two other children, *Benjamin* and *Fanny*, and possibly more by the wife of Aissaysaipeau, who raised them as his own children.



Fanny Sinclair

Born c 1813 at or near Oxford House. Daughter of Aissaysaipeau's wife and William Sinclair. In c 1830, she married **John Isbister**. HBC Post Master, "according to the custom of the country" Children included: *Setsey*, 1831; *John*, 1832; *James*, 1833; *William*, 1835; *David*, 1837; *Adam*, 1839; *Fanny*, 1842; *Mary*, 1844; *Robert Miles*, 1848; *Ellen*, 1850; *Alexander*, 1852; *George Barnston*, 1855; *Benjamin*, 1857



William Isbister

HBC Post Master, married **Mary Ann Begg** in 1866. Children included: *James Anderson* 1867; *Charles Begg*, 1869; *William Robert Miles*, 1871; *John George*, 1877; *Alexander*, 1879; *William Christie*, 1881; *Edith Catherine*, 1885.



Charles Begg Isbister

Born 1869 at Oxford House. Married **Agnes Keyamaweyenew**. Children included: *William Robert Miles*, 1894; *Isabella Ellen*, 1896; *Elizabeth* 1901; *Agnes*, 1907; *Irene* 1908; *Ethel Grace*, 1910; *Charlie*, 1912?; *Frank* 1915?; infants Luke and Campbell



Ethel Grace Isbister

Born 28 December 1910. Married **Charles Henry Otter McLeod** 1928. Children: *Edith*, 1929; *Charles Harold*, 1931; *Agnes Dorothy*, 1934; *Hector Morrison*, 1936; *James Allan*, 1939; *Winston Churchill*, 1941; *Margaret Rose*, 1942; *Gordon Murray*, 1945



Charles H. McLeod

Born 13 April 1931 at Cross Lake. Married **Catherine Bishop**. Children: *Brian*, 1955-1955; *Grace Ann*, 1956; *Leanna Gay*, 1958; *Michael Charles*, 1960; *Dennis John*, 1961; *Lorraine Margaret*, 1964

Sinclair as their surname is suggestive.²⁴ Betsy Miles may also have been a child of Sinclair's by Aissaysaipeau's wife. Her name was not among those Sinclair identified in his will as the children of Nahoway. Like Fanny, she claimed William and Margaret Sinclair as her parents, which may have been an attempt to obscure her real identity. On the other hand, Aissaysaipeau's "old wife" may also have been named Margaret. We cannot assume that everyone at Oxford House only took Christian names in the middle of the nineteenth century when they became Christians. Already in contact with the traders for several generations by this time, most of the local Cree had European roots, so it followed



Charles McLeod at Chimney Site, 1998
(courtesy Catherine McLeod)

that some of them had European names as well.²⁵

Charles McLeod's roots are definitely Cree and European, and although other descendants may have difficulty proving their ties with William Sinclair, it is not so with Charles. There is no question that he can trace his ancestors back to Fanny Sinclair, whose relationship to William Sinclair is now clearly evident. Knowing that connection makes the old chimney site even more significant to Charles because his ancestor William Sinclair undoubtedly warmed himself beside its hearths many times in the winter of 1795-1796, just one of those little coincidences that makes history interesting.

²⁴ On the other hand, they may simply have adopted the name because their brothers Ben and George were already using it.

²⁵ For instance, Jem. John, and Ben Sinclair each married daughters of a local hunter named Ethiniskees and his wife Sophia Colen, country-born daughter of Chief Factor Joseph Colen.

Appendix Two

Who are the Garricks?



Mrs. Cochrane and the Garrioch Sisters, c.1940s?
(courtesy Minnie Fortney)

*(Left to right) Mrs. Cochrane, Emma Colombe, Sarah Linklater
and Mary Beebe.*

An interesting way to get in touch with history is to find out more about one's roots. Moving back through the generations can result in many twists and turns along the way as we pursue promising leads about our ancestors, and during that process, we often open fascinating windows into the past that can help us appreciate the legacy they have left us. The history of the Garriochs provides us with a perfect illustration. Many people at Wabowden can trace their origins back to one of three sisters, daughters of Baptiste and Mary Garrioch, who were Cree people associated with Cross Lake, but who lived at least seasonally on Setting Lake. The eldest of the sisters was Emma, who was

born in February 1880. According to the Treaty Annuity Pay List, she was married first to "Henry Stranger" in 1896 at Cross Lake. Later she married Henry Colombe of Pukatawagan. Her sister Mary was born in October 1883, and she married Frederick Beebe. Sarah, the youngest sister, married Henry Henderson, and then John Linklater. All of these women had large families, many of whose descendants still live at Wabowden or nearby.

The history of the Garriochs is intriguing, and perhaps none illustrates that fact better than George Garrioch, who first came into prominence as a signatory to Treaty Five on 24 September 1875. This historic event took place in a warehouse

¹ Surnames connected to the Garrioch sisters include: Mallett, Colombe, Braun, Monias, Nachbaur, Henderson, Garrick, Erickson, Bisson, Lundmark, Sanofsky, Hall, Jonasson, Wolanski, Mead, Shlacketa, Bayer, Fourre, Johnson, Ducharme, and Beebe.

at the HBC post in Norway House after negotiations between representatives of the Government of Canada and two different Cree communities, the "Wood Indians of Cross Lake," who still followed traditional spiritual practices, and "the Christian Indians of Norway House."² The Cree representatives consisted of two chiefs, elected that day by those present from their respective communities, and five councillors (three for Norway House, two for Cross Lake) appointed by the chiefs, after consultation with the same community members.³ Of these seven men, all of whom ratified the treaty later that same day, only George Garrioch



Lieutenant-Governor Morris, Representative of the Crown in Negotiations for Treaty Five (courtesy Provincial Archives of Manitoba)

could sign his name.⁴ This is all the more remarkable because he was one of three men representing the Cree of Cross Lake, who had less contact with Europeans than the Cree of Norway House.⁵ Undoubtedly, he had some formal education, which may explain why he was chosen as a treaty negotiator by the Cross Lake Cree, whom he served as a Councillor between 1875 and 1884, then as Chief from 1884 to 1887.⁶ In 1888, however, he was released from treaty, and Sandy Garrioch, who had been elected Councillor in his place in 1884, became Chief and remained so until his death in 1892.⁷

² Alexander Morris, Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba and the North West Territories, was chief negotiator for the Government of Canada, assisted by the Hon. James McKay, who acted as interpreter.

³ The Cree representatives for Norway House were Chief David Rundle and councillors James Cochrane, Harry Coustatag [Koostatak], and Charles "Pisequinip" [Papasekwanape]. Those for the Cree of Cross Lake were Chief Ta-pas-ta-num, or Donald William Sinclair Ross, and councillors, George Garrioch [Garrioch], and Proud McKay. See Alexander Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with The Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories including the Negotiations on which they were based* (Toronto: Bellfords, Clark & Co., 1880, Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1991), 148.

⁴ All the rest signed with a mark. See Government of Canada, *Canada: Indian Treaties and Surrenders From 1680 to 1890 – in Two Volumes, Vol. II* (Ottawa: Brown Chamberlin, 1891), 20.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ National Archives of Canada [NAC], Record Group [RG] 10, v. 9351-9362, Indian Affairs, Treaty Annuity Pay Lists, Treaties 1, 2, 3, and 5, 1875-1887, mf. C-7135 and C-7136.

⁷ *Ibid.*, v. 9362-9367, 1887-1892, mf. C-7136 and C-7137.

Although the relationship between George and other Garriochs was not specified in the Cross Lake annuity pay lists, there are important details about them.⁷ George, his wife, two boys, and a girl were on the first pay list in 1875. Margaret Garrioch, a widow, was listed most years between 1875 and 1894, when she “transferred to Treaty 3.” Baptiste first appeared in 1876, his family at the time consisting of two wives, a son, and a daughter. However, this changed in 1879, when he “put away wife no. 2,” who was listed thereafter as Jennie Garrioch. Sandy Garrioch, who was also on the pay list for 1879 with a wife, one son, and four daughters, had likewise given up one of his wives.⁸ She was listed separately along with a son and daughter under the name Sally Garrioch.

These changes in family structure require explanation. The practice of having more than one wife was not all that unusual

at the time among the more traditional Cree of Cross Lake, but during the 1870s most of them gave up this old custom and became Christians. It started in July 1875, when Chief Ta-pas-ta-num and members of his family from “John Scots [Setting] Lake” were baptised by Reverend John H. Ruttan, the Methodist missionary from Norway House.⁹ Others took the same step in August, including an elder named James Evans Chomohapākoos, whose family situation has already been discussed in Chapter two.¹⁰ A year later Sandy Garrioch did likewise and was baptised along with Annabella, the chosen wife, and six of his children on 23 July 1876.¹¹ There is no evidence that Baptiste became a Christian, but he too gave up one of his wives.¹² In all likelihood, the baptism of his wife Mary and infant son William Rupert on 18 August 1878 brought matters to a head in his household.¹³ In any case,

⁷ The pay lists recorded the annual treaty payments to named heads of households, whose dependant wives, sons, and daughters were listed by number.

⁸ Sandy Garrioch was listed in 1875 and 1876 as *Pah-kwab*, and in 1878 as “*Pahkwat* or Sandy Garrioch.”

⁹ Tapastanum was baptised on July 11 and members of his family on 18 July 1875. See PAM, R145, GR 1212, Item 10, Entries 1582, 1586-1602, 1613-1615, Norway House Wesleyan Methodist Mission, Register of Baptisms 1840-1889. Although apparently monogamous himself, as a prominent spiritual leader, Tapastanum’s conversion put pressure on others to conform to European marriage customs.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Entries 1589, 1613-1615. For the earlier reference, see Chapter Two, p. 16.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Entries 1667-1681. No mother was listed for these six children, but analysis of the pay lists establishes that Sally, John, Annie, and Harriet were the children of Annabella, while Maria and Thomas belonged to Sally. See NAC, RG 10, v. 9354-9369, 1879-1894, mf. C-7135 and C-7137. Ellen, the eldest daughter of Sandy and Annabella, was baptised on August 6. See PAM, R145, GR 1212, Item 10, Entry 1681. George, who was described when baptised in 1882 as a son of Baptiste, may in fact have been Sandy and Annabella’s son. The evidence is inconclusive. *Ibid.*, Entry 2139.

¹² He was not “Baptiste Armstrong” of “Oocer’s Lake,” who was baptised on 18 July 1875 with people from Cross Lake, John Scot’s Lake, and Nelson River. See PAM, R145, GR 1212, Item 10, Entry 1592. Keequanohotway, or Baptiste Armstrong, was listed separately from Baptiste Garrioch on the treaty annuity pay lists. See NAC, RG 10, v. 9354, pp. 133-135, Indian Affairs, Treaty Annuity Pay Lists, Treaties 1, 2, 3, and 5 1879, mf. C-7135.

¹³ PAM, R145, GR1212, Item 10, Entries 1850 and 1851.

by the summer of 1879, Jennie was listed separately on the treaty annuity pay lists, as was Sandy's wife Sally. No evidence has been found indicating that either of these wives ever became Christians.

The changes to traditional family structures among the Garriochs must have been painful indeed, but they do indicate the enormous price some paid to enter the new world order that was unfolding around them. It is possible that Treaty Five was a significant factor in their second look at Christianity after years of resistance, and it may also have made them willing to accept a new system of education as well. On the other hand, we cannot discount the influence of people like George Garrioch, who may have encouraged the Cross Lake people on both political and spiritual matters. Certainly there is evidence that he was active in promoting formal education. In an annual report written on 1 October 1884, Indian agent Angus MacKay recorded:

There are fifty children of school age in the band. The Government Indian School was opened by George Garrioch, in his own house, on the 6th February last. It was closed for the summer vacation at the time of my visit there. The teacher informed me

that there was an average attendance of twenty-five pupils. The appointment of Mr. Garrioch is only temporary – his education being somewhat limited – but he is doing very well for the present, and the band are well satisfied with the school. The walls of their new school house are about completed, but I was unable, at the time, to find anybody who would undertake to finish it, as required by the Department.¹⁵

The children of Baptiste and Mary Garrioch probably attended school at Cross Lake, at least for part of the year. Baptiste certainly lived there at times. In 1890-1891, for instance, he worked for the HBC, rafting wood home, keeping the dogs, and doing odd jobs about the post.¹⁶ The Company also hired him for summer tripping to the hunters in the neighbourhood, no doubt in an effort to prevent them from buying supplies and selling their furs to independent traders who were constantly challenging HBC influence.¹⁷ Evidently, the Garriochs remained loyal to the "Honourable Company," because Baptiste, Sandy, and Sandy's son Thomas were all listed among the hunters who traded with the HBC that year.¹⁸ It was a relationship that went back generations and involved long-established customs that could not be easily put aside. One of these was invoked in the winter of 1893-1894 at Cross Lake,

¹⁵ Department of Indian Affairs, Annual Report, Berens River Agency – Treaty No. 5, by Angus MacKay, 1 October 1884. Although his appointment was only temporary, Garrioch was paid \$390.00 for teaching in the March, June, September, and December quarters of 1886, and the March Quarter of 1887. See *Ibid.*, Annual Report, 1887, p. 184.

¹⁶ PAM, HBCA, B.268/d/13, fo. 4d-5, fo. 11d-12, Cross Lake Accounts, 1890-1891, mf. 1M1360.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, fo. 16.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, fo. 26.

when measles and grippe disrupted hunting and led to widespread hunger. In keeping with time-honoured tradition, the HBC responded and provided relief to one and all, including Baptiste Garrioch, whose family was suffering from measles, grippe, and starvation. Although Baptiste received only 13.5 k [30 lbs.] of flour, .9 k [2 lbs.] of bacon, and .22 k [$\frac{1}{2}$ lb.] of tea, which seems a small amount by today's standards, it was apparently enough in September 1893 to tide his family over the crisis.¹³

Misfortune was nothing new to the people of Cross Lake. Disease, famine, and bad luck were part of the normal course of events for the Cree of the boreal forest, and it had become natural for them to view the HBC as an ally in the struggle for survival. Similarly, the Company could ill afford to have its hunters die; thus, the relationship that had developed between them over the years was one rooted in mutual interest. The Garriochs of Cross Lake benefited from that alliance in the hard times of 1893-1894, as earlier Garriochs had done in their day. Indeed, there is considerable

evidence that the relationship between the Garriochs and the HBC went back as far as the 1760s.

Some of those ancestors were associated with the Hudson's Bay Company at Split Lake in the early years of the nineteenth century. Part of the Home Guard Cree, they were mainly hunters, but a few also worked occasionally as paid labourers of the Company. One such man was Wapasagy, whose history appears to be connected in some way to that of the Garriochs. We do not know when he got his first job at Split Lake, but there are references as early as 1815 to unnamed young Native men being hired there on a temporary basis by the HBC.¹⁴ By 1821, however, Wapasagy was listed by name among the contracted labourers at the post.¹⁵ His duties varied. On 18 September 1824, for instance, he was "employed in Setting Nets" and two days later in "taking the twist out of Several Skeins of Net Backing preparatory to its being made use of."¹⁶ On 10 January 1825, he was "cutting fuel" with William Folster and Donald Rabbit, the other Cree labourer at the post.¹⁷ And on 27 May 1825,

¹³ PAM, HBCA, B 268/d/14, pp. 10-11, Cross Lake - Miscellaneous Accounts, 1883-1894, mf. 1M1360. As early as June 1893, measles and starvation were present at Cross Lake. Bella Garrioch, Sandy's widow, received assistance at that time and again in March 1894, although in this second instance the reason was not given.

¹⁴ John Pocock Holmes, the man in charge at the time, recorded that he sent "2 Young Indian Men" on 15 October 1815 to guide men up to "White Owl Lake." PAM, HBCA, B 207/a/1, fo. 2d, Split Lake Post Journal, 1815-1816, mf. 1M144.

¹⁵ He was one of two Native men named, the other being Donald Rabbit. PAM, HBCA, B 239/g/1, p. 14-19, York Factory Abstracts of Servants Accounts, 1821-1822, mf. 1M799. According to another source, he had been a labourer for the Company since 1819. PAM, HBCA, B 239/g/4, p. 33, York Factory Abstracts of Servants Accounts, 1824-1825, mf. 1M800.

¹⁶ PAM, HBCA, B 207/a/2, fo. 3d, Split Lake Post Journal, 1824-1825, mf. 1M144.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, fo. 11d.

he and James McBeath were "plastering the Powder Magazine," a job which kept him "making mud" until the end of the month.²⁴

When away from the post, Wapasagy generally acted as a packet man, taking letters and sometime goods from Split Lake to other posts in the region. In one such trip, he left Split Lake on 24 January 1825 for Nelson House via Net Lake and did not return until March 16, nearly two months later. On his arrival, Wapasagy delivered letters from both places to Roderick McKenzie, the post master, who was naturally interested in trade prospects in those quarters. Then, on the eighteenth, he was off again to Net Lake with a letter of instructions for John Scott, the man in charge there.²⁵ On his return, Wapasagy helped with preparations for the annual trip to York Factory. This was a busy time of the year. Not only did the furs collected since the previous fall have to be sorted, counted, dried, and baled, but boats also had to be repaired and made ready for departure. When that time arrived, Wapasagy helped load the furs onto the boats, then assisted as an oarsman and lineman during the often dangerous trip down the Nelson River. At York Factory, he helped unload the furs and waited

along with everyone else at the post for the arrival of the ship from London. When that occurred, there was a flurry of activity as trade goods were unloaded and furs took their place for the journey home to England. Then Wapasagy and the other crew members loaded the trade goods onto the Split Lake boats and set off on the return trip up the Nelson.

Split Lake must have seemed small and isolated after the hustle and bustle of York Factory, and perhaps even more so in 1825 for Wapasagy, whose son, for the second year in a row, was not at home to greet him upon his arrival. Nevertheless, Wapasagy had few regrets because a window of opportunity had opened up for his only child, an opportunity that was undreamed of even a decade earlier. It happened like this. With the approval of the HBC, the Reverend John West established a mission school at Red River in 1820, the purpose of which was to evangelize and educate Native boys for service in the Church of England. After his departure, the school carried on under the direction of the Reverend David Jones, who arrived from England in 1823. Sometime during the following year, Jones appealed to the Company officers at York Factory for students, and they complied with four boys

²⁴ Ibid., fo. 20d.

²⁵ Ibid., fo. 2, 15. One wonders if this John Scott was ancestor to the John Scott from Selkirk Lake, who converted to Christianity in the 1870s.

from "Port Nelson River." On September 5, these boys set out with James Hargrave and three loaded boats for Red River and were received at the mission school on 12 October 1824.²⁶ Baptised as James Settee, Wapasagy's son later became a well-known Anglican missionary, but of his three companions, whose Christian names were John Spence, David Jones, and William Garrioch, much less is known.²⁷ However, there is evidence suggesting that for William Garrioch at least that no longer need be the case.

Although we do not know his Cree name, William received his Christian name from his teacher, William Garrioch, who assumed his duties at the school on 1 August 1825, about a year after the boys had arrived there from Nelson River. Garrioch was a conscientious teacher, and according to the report he sent to mission headquarters in August 1826, the progress of his students was good.

James Settee, John Spence, David Jones, and William Garrioch, all arrived here at the same time, the two first have gone through all the elementary books your Committee send out, and are now reading in the New

Testament, spell tolerably in polysyllables, have learnt Watts' first Catechism by heart, and have gone a considerable way thru' the Church Catechism, and write tolerably. The other two have proceeded no farther than our Saviours parables, which is the second book we give them, but in Watts' first Catcheism, in spelling and writing, William leaves David far behind. These four are from the low Country from the Cree Indians."

Evidently William was behind James and John, who may have been older than he, but well ahead of young David. Nevertheless, it was progress, in spite of the fact that Mr. Garrioch was not completely satisfied.

Some evil propensities, and much carelessness is prevalent among them, the light of knowlege, in the head gains some grounds but the light of grace in the heart does not yet manifest itself to our observation. They enjoy line upon line & precept upon precept in rich abundance, in a Gospel faithfully preached, in the privilege of attending the weekly prayer meeting, and the Sunday Evening School."

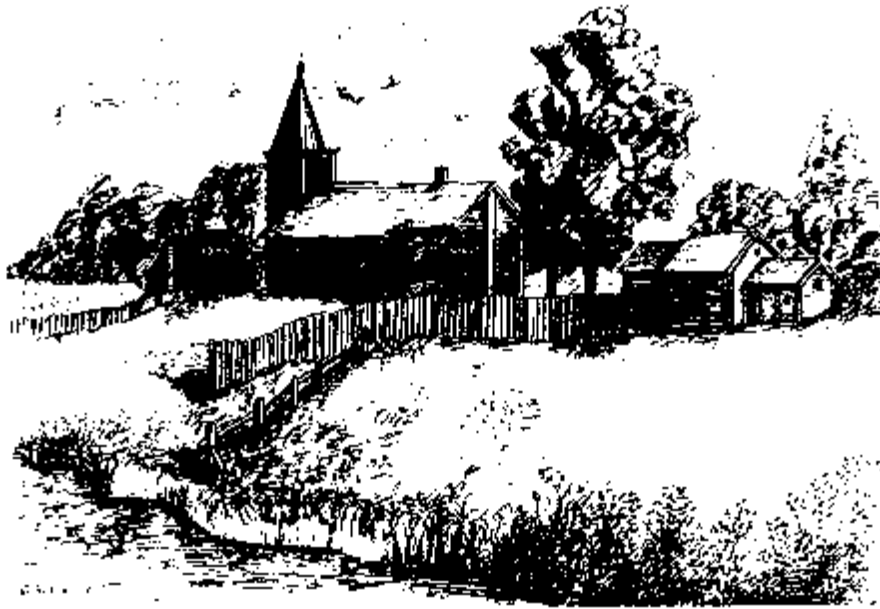
Although doubtful about their religious development, Garrioch was willing to concede that, "Now and then I pass in on one of them perhaps reading the bible, and on another getting some part

²⁶ PAM, HBCA, B 139/a/132, fo. 32d, York Factory Post Journal, 1823-1824, mf. 1M163, Church Missionary Society [CMS], Class "C", North West America Mission, Rupert's Land, C.1/M 1, Mission Books, Incoming Letters 1822-1833, item 40, Rev. David T. Jones' Journal, 22 June 1824 - 12 June 1826, entry for 12 October 1824, mf. A77, *ibid.*, item 26, Letter from Rev. David T. Jones to Rev. Josiah Pratt, dated Red River Parsonage, 22 October 1824.

²⁷ For James Settee's baptism, see PAM, MG7, B-1, St. John's Baptisms, 1813-1828, no. 644, mf. M277. Little is known about John Spence, but David Jones returned to the North, married and settled at Norway House, where he died in 1846. William Garrioch may have died young, or returned to the north, as there seems to be no evidence of him at Red River beyond his baptism. For that see *ibid.*, no. 647.

²⁸ CMS, Class "C", C.1/M 1, Item 47, Wm. Garrioch to the Secretary, Red River Settlement, 8 August 1826, mf. A77.

²⁹ *Ibid.*



Rev. John West's Church and Mission School at Red River
(courtesy Provincial Archives of Manitoba, N12946)

of his Catechism by heart, but in general, juvenile sports, or idleness appear to be more relished than anything else."³⁰ In other words, they were typical boys!

William was not the only Garrioch from Nelson River to attend school at Red River. At least two others, George Garrioch, the schoolmaster at Cross Lake, and his brother John Garrioch of The Pas were also students there at a later date.³¹ Much information on the origins of these men is contained in their applications for scrip.³² On his, John said he was born at

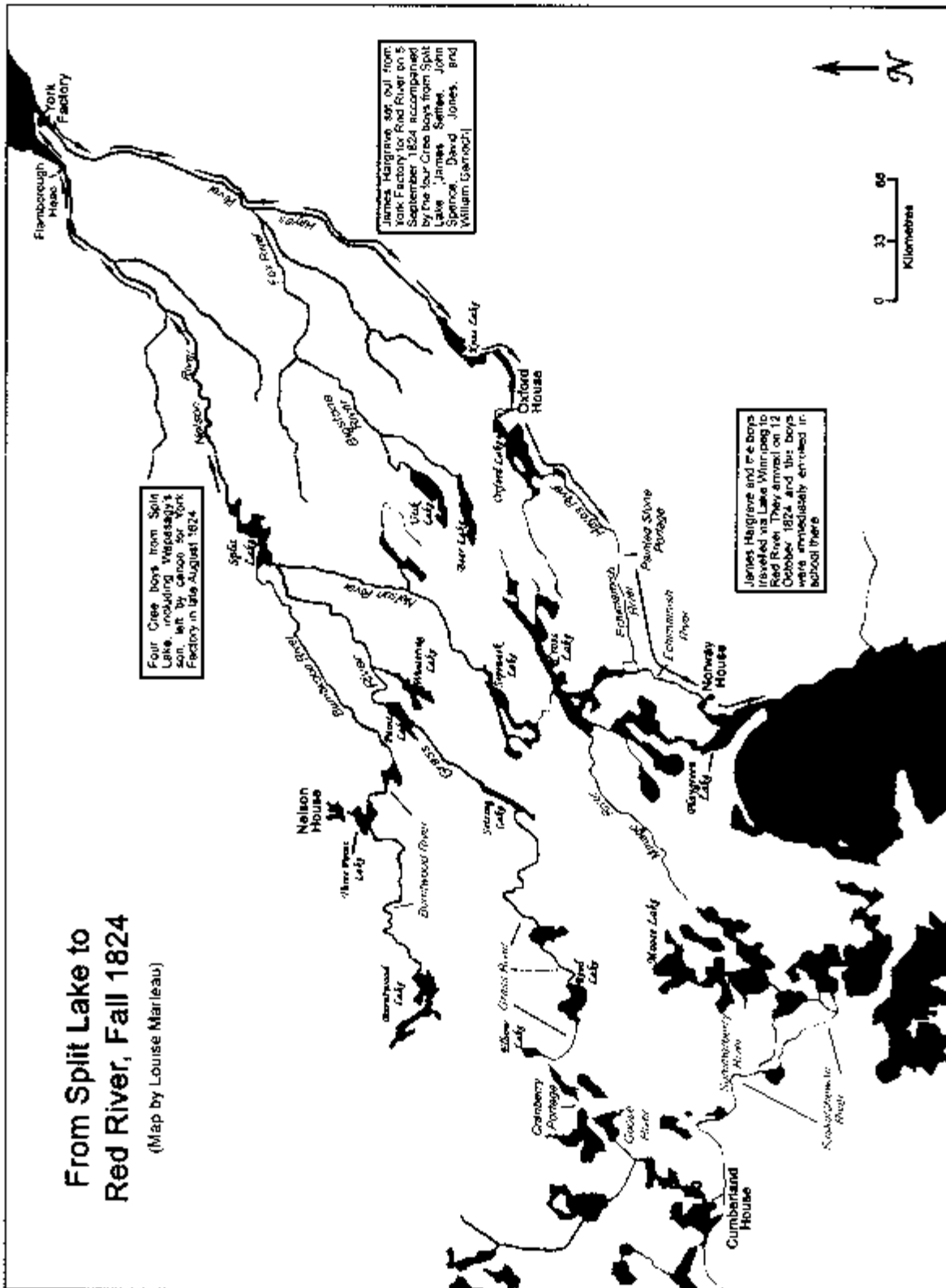
Nelson River in 1820. Although he did not mention going to school at Red River, he did say that he obtained his surname from "his godfather, Mr. Garrioch, the school master" just as William had done. John worked for the HBC at Fort Alexander until 1870, then went to Red River and remained there until 1873, after which he moved to Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, for four years. From there he relocated lower down on the Saskatchewan River near The Pas, where he was living at the time of his application.³³ When his brother George applied for scrip, he said that he had been

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ In his scrip application, George Garrioch described John as his brother, but they may have been cousins. The children of sisters, as well as the children of brothers, were considered siblings in the Cree relationship system.

³² Scrip was a one-time payment in land or money to extinguish the indigenous claims of Native people who had both European and aboriginal roots.

³³ NAC, RG 15, Department of the Interior, Half-Breed Scrip Applications of 1886-1906, v. 1348, Forcier-George, Claim No. 2010, mf. C-14971.



Family Ties of The Garriochs of Cross Lake

Joseph Smith

HBC labourer, trader, and explorer, arrived at York Factory on 27 August 1753, died inland abt. 26 May 1785.



The Little Englishman

Weemestigosis?, born at the mouth of the Nelson River, circa 1754, died at Split Lake[?] after 1823. A leading Chief of the Hudson Bay Cree.



Daughter

of The Little Englishman, she lived up the Nelson River at Split Lake. Husband a Nelson River Cree. Mother of John and George, and probably William. Possibly mother or grandmother of Sandy and Baptiste.

Wapasagy

White Lobster, HBC labourer at Split Lake 1820-1832, became a settler at Red River in 1833-34. He and his wife may have been baptised there in 1834 as John and Harriet Smith. One son: *James Nelson Smith* or *James Settee*.

William Garrioch

of Split Lake, born circa 1810-1820, bap. 24 June 1827 at St. John's, Red River. Student at the mission school there. Nothing further known about him.

John Garrioch

born circa 1820 at Nelson River, married Sophia at Red River, eight children. *Archibald*, 1840s; *Simon*, 1840-1843; *George*, 1842-1842; *Ann*, 1844-1848; *Peter*, 1846-1848; *Sophia*, 1849-1849; *John*, 1850-?, *Sarah* 1853-1853. No descendants.

Rev. James Settee

formerly *James Nelson Smith*, b. circa 1809 on Nelson River, died 1902, bap. 24 June 1827 at St. John's, Red River. Student at the mission school there. Later, a clergyman and missionary for the Church of England.

George Garrioch

born 1830s? at Split Lake. Signatory of Treaty Five, Councillor of Cross Lake Band 1875-1884, Chief 1884-1887. Married *Bella Beardy*, son *William Rupert* and another child died before 1870, adopted son *George* (1874-1882) died as a child. No descendants

Sandy Garrioch

Pah-Kwab, born circa 1831, died 1891, Chief of Cross Lake Band 1887-1891. Married (1) *Annabella*, children, *Ellen*, 1862; *Sally*, 1864; *John*, 1868-1888-9; *Annie*, 1872; *Harriet*, 1875; *Bella*, 1878; *Samuel* 1880-1882; possibly(?) *George* 1882-1882; *Charlotte*, 1884; *William Alexander*, 1886; son, name unknown, 1890. Married (2) *Sally*. Children: *Maria*, 1868; *Thomas*, 1871.

Baptiste Garrioch

of Cross Lake, Married (1) *Jane/Janey*, born ?-died 1889-90. Children: daughter (Mary?), possibly(?) *George* 1882-1882. Married (2) *Mary*, born 1858, died 1891-2. Children: Son, b. before 1875, *William Rupert* 1877; *Emma*, b. Feb. 1880 [m. *Henry Colombe*]; *Mary*, b. Oct. 1883 [m. *Fred Beebe*]; *Sarah*, b. Aug. 1886 [m. (1) *Henry Henderson* (2) *John Linklater*].

born at Split Lake in 1837, but provided no details on his schooling. Like John, he worked for the HBC for many years at Fort Pelly, then at Peace River before moving in 1875 to Cross Lake. At the time of his application, he was teaching at the reserve school and had been there four or five years.”

If John and George were younger brothers of William Garrioch, statements about their family background would apply equally to him. According to his scrip application, John did not know his father, but he maintained that both his parents were of mixed European-Aboriginal or “half-breed” background. His mother he described as “Smith said to be an illegitimate daughter of Captain Smith an Englishman.” George, on the other hand, described his father as an “Indian,” but he agreed with John in part concerning their “half-breed” mother, whom he described as “the daughter of a son of an English Captain.” Interestingly, James Settee had a similar background. According to his own accounts, his father was the son of “the Little Englishman,” who was himself the son of a “Captain Smith.”²⁹

Although there are discrepancies in this information, it appears likely that these young men were all closely related. If Captain Smith only had one son, the Little Englishman, then the Garriochs were probably descended from a daughter and James Settee from a son of this latter man, making them first cousins to each other. Baptiste and Sandy Garrioch of Cross Lake may also have been related. Although it is possible that they assumed George Garrioch's surname because of their admiration for him, it is equally possible that they were brothers or cousins who had not had the opportunity to attend school at Red River.” In any case, they must have been related in some way, because they were all Nelson River Cree.”

The culture of the Nelson River Cree in the first decades of the nineteenth century was much more complex than might be supposed from a study of the Hudson's Bay Company records alone. Indeed, it is easy to conclude from a superficial reading of the old journals that the Cree along the Nelson River were mostly traditional trappers and hunters, heavily dependent upon the HBC, often in debt, often starving, and inclined to binge drinking. As

²⁹ Ibid., Claim No. 2117.

³⁰ Ontario Archives, Egerton R. Young Collection, James Settee, “An Indian Camp at the mouth of Nelson River, Hudsons Bay”: NAC, MG29, B15, v. 32, file 68. Robert Bell Collection, James Settee, “Settee's life.”

³¹ Scrip, baptismal, and treaty annuity pay records suggest that George, Baptiste, and Sandy Garrioch were probably of the same generation. George may have been drawn to Cross Lake because of his close relationship to the other two men.

³² Evidence suggests that the Nelson River Cree were initially a relatively small group of people, made up of survivors of the 1781-1782 small pox epidemic, as well as Home Guard Cree from York Factory and elsewhere along the coast who went up the Nelson River system after that date. Few in numbers, they would have become interrelated quickly.

with most stereotypes, there is an element of truth in this characterisation. The traditional practises surrounding hunting and trapping were still firmly in place, and the presence of the Hudson's Bay Company for well over a hundred years had not freed the Cree from the threat of periodic starvation.³⁶ Also, the introduction of alcohol by the European traders had a negative influence on the aboriginal culture and its ability to sustain itself.³⁷ Nevertheless, generalisations never tell the whole story, particularly when they are based on a point of

view from outside the culture. Fortunately, there is a view from the inside. James Settee's writings not only provide us with a clearer picture of the circumstances leading up to the departure of four young Cree lads for Red River, but also contains

surprising revelations about the cultural world in which they lived.

There is no question that James Settee was



Rev. James Settee, 1870s
(courtesy Provincial Archives of Manitoba, N80)

Nelson River Cree, but nothing about him or his family easily fits the stereotype described above. Wapasagy, his father, had all the skills of a traditional hunter, but he worked for wages as a contracted labourer of the Hudson's Bay Company. As Settee explained it, "my father was in the Company's Service as a Guide transporting the supplies for the interior for the northern districts."³⁸ Wapasagy avoided the use of

alcohol. According to his son, "My father would leave the Camp if he saw there was to be a carousal. He could not join in it, as he was put in trust of the property to transport to other places – by that means

³⁶ Indeed, it can be argued that the presence of the Company only made matters worse. The Hudson's Bay Lowlands offered a precarious existence at the best of times, and starvation occurred even before the arrival of the traders. However the introduction of the gun and expansion of the fur trade put great strain on local food resources. In the resultant hard times, the Cree became dependent upon rations supplied at the fur trade posts.

³⁷ The HBC journals at York Factory contain many poignant tales of the deadly effects of alcohol upon the Cree, when the loss of one hunter due to drink could spell disaster for all his dependants. The traders took such instances as a matter of course, and seemed unable to see or do anything about alcohol's devastating consequences. This is not that surprising, since alcohol abuse was a major problem in British society that was generally unacknowledged throughout the eighteenth and much of the nineteenth century.

³⁸ NAC, MG29, B15, v. 32, file 68, "Settee's life."

he avoided any troubles.”⁴¹ His family also lived year round at the post. “We remained at the Company’s Fort,” James recorded, “there were stockades around the buildings.”

Evidently James Settee and his family were among those of the Nelson River Cree who rejected the negative social influences that often accompanied the fur trade; at the same time, they accepted the opportunities that the trade afforded them. This explains why some jumped at the chance, when formal education became a possibility for their children. According to Settee, his grandfather “advised my Father to send me to the english school that I might learn the great Book which the english people love.”⁴² Evidently, the old man recognized the value of literacy, an openness to new ideas that he passed on to his children and grandchildren at Split Lake. Settee also made his own observations. “I saw the Company’s men sitting some days with their books in their hands,” he wrote, “I was curious to Know what they looked into their books for hours.” That curiosity made him receptive to the idea of going to school at Red River, when the opportunity came along in the fall of 1824. As he described that event,

My father had gone down to York Factory, my mother & I remained with the Masters

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

family. One Evening a canoe & Indians came up from York Factory asking the Gentleman in Charge of the Fort to send down four Boats, and to bring me & three other boys to send up to Red River to School. I was the first boy mentioned my name was James Nelson Smith. James was the name of the Officer who took care of me. James Hargrave Esqr. Nelson was my birth place. Smith was great [grand] father Captain Smith who passed the Winter at the mouth of [the] Nelson in the year 1767.”

Although it appears from Settee’s account that he was chosen beforehand to go down to York Factory, it is not clear how the other three boys came to be included. Perhaps they lived nearby, or their families were in for supplies at the time the canoe arrived from York Factory. There is also the possibility that they were related. If, for example, William Garrioch was a grandson of the Little Englishman, and the evidence suggests that he was, then the old man may have spoken to the boy’s mother. We will never know the precise details, but evidently the Little Englishman and others among the Nelson River Cree willingly sent their children away for schooling, in all likelihood because of their long trade and sometimes filial associations with the Hudson’s Bay Company.

For the families of James Settee and William Garrioch, those associations went back at least two generations to a “Captain Smith,”

who Settee claimed "passed the Winter at the mouth of [the] Nelson in the year 1767." Certainly that is what he recorded in his retrospective account of his early life, which was based in part on oral reports passed down by earlier generations." Such stories are difficult to prove, but they often contain kernels of truth that can lead to a harvest of information. In this instance, they provide clues vital to establishing a plausible candidate for "Captain Smith" among the several Smiths who worked at York Factory in the 1750s and 1760s.

The title "Captain" was used in two quite different ways at York Factory during this time period. It could identify the commander of any sailing ship from overseas that sailed into port, or it could designate the leader of an inland trading party, whose responsibility it was to ensure that the men with him traded their furs at York Factory each year. A careful reading of existing records in the first instance provides little evidence that Settee's "Captain Smith" was in command of a ship. No sea captain, Smith or otherwise,

wintered at the mouth of the Nelson in 1767 or at any other time in the 1750s and 1760s. In the winter of 1746-1747, some twenty years earlier than the time specified in Settee's account, Captain Francis Smith did remain in Hudson Bay with his men, but for a number of reasons he is unlikely to have been an ancestor to the Settee and Garrioch families.

Part of a two ship expedition in search of the North West Passage, Smith and his men along with Captain Moor and crew of the other ship wintered not at the mouth of the Nelson River, but at Ten Shilling Creek on the Hayes River.⁴⁵ They did so over the objections of James Isham, the officer in charge of York Factory, who took immediate action to prevent illicit trade between them and the local Native hunters. After reminding both captains of the regulations governing trade, and receiving their assurance to abide by the rules, Isham kept an eye on them throughout the winter using Native and English informants.⁴⁶ The strategy worked and contact with the local people was reduced

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Smith was in command of the *California*, and William Moor the commander of the *Dobbs Galley*. The expedition had been financed in England by Arthur Dobbs and associates, who were interested in finding the fabled North West Passage around North America that would provide England with a short trade route to Asia.

⁴⁶ On 2 September 1746, Isham wrote Smith and Moor concerning a 1744 Act of Parliament regarding the rights and obligations of ships in Hudson Bay. "& the said act Specifies y^e No person or persons, belonging to such Discovery Ships are not to traffick or trade wth Any natives or any other persons or persons, within y^e Limits of y^e Said Companies Charter." PAM, HBCA, B.239/a/29, fo. 4-4d, York Factory Post Journal, 1746-1747, mf. 1M156. In their reply on September 5, Moor and Smith wrote, "tis our intent to carry on no illicit traffick, with y^e Or any Commerce: but for the Common Necessitys of Life: & those only when we can not or shall not be Supply^d with y^e from You." *Ibid.*, fo. 5d. For evidence of Isham's surveillance, see entries for 1 December 1746 and 14 March 1747 *Ibid.*, fo. 14 and 32.

to a minimum.” In such circumstances, it is unlikely that either of the captains would have established intimate relationships with any local inhabitant. Moreover, Smith was a married man, who had brought his wife Kitty along with him on the voyage.⁴¹

There were no other sea captains named Smith at York Factory. Thomas Smith, who appears to have been known locally as “Mr. Smith,” was sloop master at York Factory from 1748 to the fall of 1753, when he was sent back to England on the *Prince Rupert* for bad behaviour.⁴² There is no evidence that he ever wintered at the mouth of the Nelson.⁴³ In 1749, a sailor and surveyor named Christopher Smith was listed in the York Factory account book, but there were no entries, undoubtedly because he

“went to Richmond fort” on the other side of Hudson Bay.⁴⁴ Richard and John Smith, labourers on short-term contracts in the 1740s and 1750s, were neither connected with the sea nor with the trade away from the post.⁴⁵ Two other Smiths, both at York Factory in the winter of 1766-1767, were also unlikely captains. James Smith, a tailor, was kept busy indoors throughout the year, while William Smith, a shipwright, was generally working on a boat nearby.⁴⁶ He returned to England on 5 September 1767.⁴⁷

Indeed, of all the Smiths at York Factory in the 1750s and 1760s, only one could properly be designated by the title “Captain” and that was Joseph Smith, who made five journeys inland with trading

⁴¹ A breach in the trade regulations was reported in the middle of March. Apparently, a “Gang of Ind^s” had been at the men’s tents up Ten Shilling Creek for four days and “went away drunk” having “traffickt or trad’d 2 pairs of snow shoes,” so that they were “unable to gett up to their family’s.” In his response, Moor protested that “tis well known I had always chief or second Mate, besides other officers constantly residing at the tents to prevent disorders of any sorts.” *Ibid.*, fo. 32-32d.

⁴² For references to Smith’s wife, see *Ibid.*, fo. 8, 9, 24d, 25d, 26, 31d. Moor quarrelled with Smith throughout the winter, but although he had many complaints about him, he never publicly accused Smith of infidelity to his wife.

⁴³ For references to “Mr. Smith,” see PAM, HBCA, B.239/a/30, fo. 33, York Factory Post Journal, 1747-1748, B.239/a/32, fo. 2d, 1748-1749, B.239/a/35, fo. 34, 1751-1752, mf. 1M156. Smith’s careless and insubordinate conduct was recorded both in the ship’s log and in the journal. See PAM, HBCA, C.1/871, fo. 20d, Ship’s Log, *Prince Rupert* (I) 1753, mf. 2M90 and B.239/a/36, fo. 40, 1752-1753, mf. 1M156. Thomas Smith’s service record can be found in A.16/31, fo. 60d-61 and 82d-83, York Factory Officers and Servants’ Ledger, 1738-1760, mf. 306.

⁴⁴ He did, however, take the whale sloop up the Nelson River with men and supplies for hunting and salting geese and deer. See B.239/a/30, fo. 2d and 33, 1747-1748. The sloop was moored for the winter at Flamborough House in 1750-1751 and 1751-1752, but Smith wintered at York Factory. See B.239/a/34, fo. 39d, 1750-1751; B.239/a/35, fo. 34, 1752-1753.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, fo. 67. Fort Richmond was located directly east of Severn on the east side of Hudson Bay. It was surveyed in 1749, built in 1750, and abandoned in 1758. See PAM, HBCA, Fort Richmond Past History.

⁴⁶ A.16/31, fo. 59 and 102; B.239/d/46, fo. 11; B.239/d/47, fo. 11, York Factory Account Book, 1756-1757, mf. 1M689.

⁴⁷ The tailors and the shipwright were often mentioned in the York Factory post journal during the winter of 1766 and 1767, but seldom by name. See PAM, HBCA, B.239/a/55, York Factory Post Journal 1766-1767, mf. 1M157. There are ledger entries for William Smith, Shipwright, between 1764 and 1775 and James Smith, tailor, from 1763 to 1769. See A.16/32, fo. 74 and 78, York Factory Officers and Servants’ Ledger, 1760-1781, mf. 306.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, fo. 49.



HBC fleet (Prince Rupert, Sea Horse
and King George) leaving Gravesend, 1769
Wash drawing by John Hood
(courtesy Hudson's Bay Company Archives, N8185)

Indians during these years to promote the interests of the Hudson's Bay Company.²⁶ Hired in England in 1753, Joseph arrived at York Factory via the Company ship *Prince Rupert* on August 27 and worked there as a labourer for the next three years before he made his first trip inland. Evidently his talents had been noticed by James Isham, the officer in charge of York Factory, who instituted a policy of sending adventurous young men inland to persuade the Indians there to avoid the French traders and come down instead to trade at York Factory.

Accompanied by Joseph Waggoner, Smith set off on 23 August 1756 with Washcabitt, a captain of the Sturgeon Cree, who was returning home with his followers after

trading their furs at York Factory. They followed the Hayes and Fox Rivers to the Nelson, then travelled upriver through Playgreen Lake to Lake Winnipeg and Cedar Lake.²⁷ After a few days rest at deserted Fort Bourbon, they went overland to Swan River, then travelled across the Manitoba Escarpment to the upper Assiniboine River where they shot their first buffalo. They probably went no further than present-day Yorkton, Saskatchewan on this trip.²⁸ In March 1757 they returned to the Swan River area, the home grounds of the Indians with whom they were travelling, and built their canoes. As soon as the water was open, they set out for York Factory via Little Playgreen Lake, the Echimamish River, Oxford and Knee

²⁶ Proof that the term "captain" was applied to Smith can be found in the York Factory Journal. On 30 June 1760, James Isham, chief factor at York, wrote that he had received "a few fish from Captains [Anthony] Hendey and [Joseph] Smith whom I sent a fishing two days ago." Hendey and Smith had just returned to York Factory "at the head of 61 canoes" on June 22, after being inland for nearly a year. See PAM, HBCA, B.239/a/47, fo. 30 and 31, York Factory Post Journal 1759-1760, mf. 1M157.

²⁷ George E. Thoman, "Joseph Smith," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Vol. 3, 1741 to 1770, gen. ed. Frances G. Halpenny (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 594-595.

²⁸ Dale R. Russell, *Eighteenth-Century Western Cree and Their Neighbours* (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization 1991), 111

Lakes, the first Englishmen to do so.⁹ On 24 June 1757, they arrived at York Factory accompanied by twenty-three canoes bringing "nothing but wolves."¹⁰

After a brief rest at York Factory, Smith and Waggoner set out again on 30 June 1757 accompanied by the same traders with whom they had travelled the previous year. On July 25 they joined the families of their Cree companions at Mossy Portage, which connects Cedar Lake with Lake Winnipegosis. Once across the portage, they paddled to the Red Deer River, then abandoned their canoes and walked south-west to Good Spirit Lake, arriving there some time in October. They did not stay at this spot but went sixteen days further south-west on the plains to either the Beaver or Touchwood Hills. It was while they were on this journey that they came upon twenty tents of Assiniboin hunters and witnessed a buffalo pound for the first time. Here is how Joseph Smith described it in his rough, but readable English.

And ther was a pownd a the maed to kill boffler in and that day wandey [Wednesday] ther was 67 cam in at onese...the kileaded tham with ther boes and arears.¹¹

After spending some time with the



Cree Buffalo Pound near
Fort Carlton, Saskatchewan, 1820
Artist: Lieutenant George Back
(courtesy Glenbow Museum Archives, 62.109.12)

Assiniboins, the Cree broke up into small groups for the winter in order to trap wolves. In March they again returned to the north-east and built their canoes on the "Sickteacor" [Saketagaw or modern Woody] River before starting out on the long journey north to York Factory. On 30 June 1758, they arrived at York Factory "from Inland att the head of 57 Canues."¹² James Isham was well pleased with his policy of sending in these young men. As he recorded in his journal, "I now by Experience find a great advance in trade by so doing; It is plain to be seen 3 years ago had but 13 Canoes of these Sturgeon Inds. &c. Last year 39, and this year 57, a wide difference and doubt not but a further Increase in future."¹³

⁹ Thorman 594.

¹⁰ PAM, HBCA, B 239/a/42, fo. 35, York Factory Journal, 1756-1757, mf. 1M157.

¹¹ "And there was a pound that they made to kill buffalo in and that day Wednesday there was sixty-seven came in at once....[a week later, when eighty-six buffalo were killed, Smith added that] they killed them with their bows and arrows." PAM, HBCA, B 239/a/45, fo. 3d-4, York Factory Journal, 1757-1758, mf. 1M157.

¹² PAM, HBCA, B.239/a/44, fo. 32d, York Factory Post Journal, 1757-1758, mf. 1M157.

¹³ *Ibid.*, fo. 34.

At the beginning of July 1758, Isham sent Isaac Batt and George Potts inland with the Sturgeon Cree, while the "two Josephs" remained at York Factory.⁶⁵ Humphrey Marten, who was in charge of the fort that winter, made few references to his men by name, but it is possible that Smith spent time at Flamborough House, a small outpost on the Lower Nelson, which was used as a provisioning depot for the goose and deer hunts.⁶⁶ He certainly spent time away from the post, as he was fishing at Ten Shilling Creek in June 1759.⁶⁷

On the 28 June 1759, Smith was again sent inland "into the Earchithinue [Assiniboin] Country," this time accompanied by Anthony Henday.⁶⁸ No journal has survived for this third journey, but Smith and Henday returned a year later on 22 June 1760 "at the head of 61 canues" of "Pegogome" and "Keskachewan" Indians, suggesting that they had been in the same country Henday visited in 1754-1755.⁶⁹ Since the Pegogamaw Cree

lived in the region between the North and South Saskatchewan Rivers and the Keskachewan Cree lived there or further west, it is likely that this expedition took Smith as far away as Central Alberta.⁷⁰

For the next two years, Joseph did not travel inland. There are no references to him by name in journal entries and correspondence at York Factory during the winter of 1760-1761, but he was listed in the men's accounts.⁷¹ However, on 6 December 1761 the following winter, Marten mentioned him in a letter to Andrew Graham at Severn.

As you had no Person at Severn fit to be Trusted with the Care of the House at your departure, have kept Anthony Henday, and sent you Joseph Smith, the formers time being out at Shiptime, and the later you know is a worthy Creature and much fitter for the Trust than any other Person that can be spared.⁷²

Smith arrived at Severn on 22 December 1761 and remained there for the balance of the winter.⁷³ On 29 July 1762, Graham

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ PAM, HBCA, B.239/a/46, fo. 2d, York Factory Post Journal 1758-1759, mf. 1M157.

⁶⁷ Ibid., fo. 36.

⁶⁸ Ibid., fo. 37.

⁶⁹ PAM, HBCA, B.239/a/47, fo. 30 and 36, York Factory Post Journal 1759-1760, mf. 1M157.

⁷⁰ Russell, 94-96.

⁷¹ PAM, HBCA, B.239/d/51, fo. 11, York Factory Account Book, 1760-1761, mf. 1M670.

⁷² PAM, HBCA, B.239/b/23, fo. 5d, York Factory Correspondence, 1761-1762, mf. 1M255. Evidently Graham had no fit person to take charge of Severn, when he went up on the sloop to York Factory during the summer of 1761 to pick up the supplies for the upcoming winter's trade. Sending Smith to Severn for the summer of 1762 was Marten's solution to this problem.

⁷³ PAM, HBCA, B.196/a/3, fo. 12d, Severn Post Journal, 1761-1762, mf. 1M132.

"took farewell of Joseph Smith and his 4 Men and then dropt to the beach below" Severn House and "sett out for York Fort." He noted in his journal on the same day that "120 Severn In^{ns} Pitcht away up the river, a great many natives to be managed with 5 Men, but thank God very quiet and good natured."⁷⁷ Graham was not disappointed in the trust he had given Smith. When he returned on 18 September 1762, he "found all well, a great many Indians waiting for debt. Joseph Smith had done Severall necessary Jobbs since my departure, and he Informs me there had been severall canoes of Lake Indians with Furr's."⁷⁸ His duty fulfilled at Severn, Joseph went back to York Factory on 23 September 1762 accompanied by "an Indian man...brought in the sloop for that purpose."⁷⁹ He returned briefly to Severn in February 1763 with the packet, but otherwise remained at York Factory for the duration of the year.⁸⁰

On 3 July 1763, Joseph Smith went inland on his fourth journey, this time accompanied by Isaac Batt.⁸¹ The two

soon separated and Smith's party followed the Grass and Sturgeon Weir Rivers to Cumberland Lake and from there went up the Saskatchewan to the plains where they trapped and hunted buffalo all winter. Evidently they went upstream along the North Saskatchewan, then walked south and west onto the grasslands. On the return trip, they moved eastward to the South Saskatchewan and followed it downstream to the Birch Hills near the forks of the Saskatchewan River. There they built their canoes. On 14 May 1764, they set out for York Factory and arrived there a month later on June 16.⁸² On the day of their arrival, the Factor, Ferdinand Jacobs, wrote the following:

Here Came 17 more Cannoes of Indians to trade by Whom I am Informed there are upwards of 100 more Cannoes will be here very Soon, &c with whom Joseph Smith Came, I Saluted them with 5 Guns & Gave their Leaders & their followers the Usual Presents."

Evidently, additional traders had joined those Smith had accompanied to

⁷⁷ Ibid., fo. 40d-41.

⁷⁸ PAM, HBCA, B.198/a/4, fo. 7, Severn Post Journal, 1762-1763, mf. 1M132

⁷⁹ Ibid., fo. 7d. He arrived 2 October 1762. See PAM, HBCA, B.239/b/24 fo. 3, York Factory Correspondance 1762-1763, mf. 1M255.

⁸⁰ Smith left York Factory on January 24 and arrived at Severn on February 4; he left Severn on February 9 and arrived at York Factory on February 19. See B.239/a/50, fo. 19 and 22, York Factory Post Journal, 1758-1759, mf. 1M157, B.198/a/4, fo. 24-25, mf. 1M582.

⁸¹ B.239/a/50, fo. 39d

⁸² Russell, 97-98, PAM, HBCA, B.239/a/51, fo. 39d, York Factory Post Journal 1763-1764 1M157

⁸³ Ibid

Saskatchewan, and within a few days there were even more. Jacobs recorded on 22 June 1764:

here came 73 Cannoes of Indians to Trade Isaac Batt Came with them, Saluted them with 13 Guns & gave the Leaders & their Followers the Usual Presents, I have Now 200 Cannoes of Indians On the Plantation whose Support is Oatmeal Bread & Prunes the time they Stay at the Factory.⁷⁹

The policy of sending men inland to bring Cree traders to Hudson Bay appeared successful, but in fact this was an illusion. Increased trade was largely due to the disruption in the fur trade out of Montreal that occurred when New France fell to the British in 1763. That trade was to resume even more vigorously in the 1760s and 1770s, so that the HBC was forced to establish inland posts to meet the new threat. However, there was no hint of that at York Factory on 27 June 1764, when Jacobs "Sent Joseph Smith inland with a leading Indian Called, Miss'sin'k'es'ick'... with Every thing Necessary & Proper Instructions to Promote Your Honrs. Trade."⁸⁰

This was to be Smith's fifth and final trip. No journal has survived, but since he was travelling with Missinakeeshick, they

probably followed the Grass River route that had been used the year previously. A year later, on 9 June 1765, a party of traders brought news that Joseph Smith had died, and the following day, Jacobs wrote:

I Received from Miss'sin'nay'kee'shick the Furrs which he Says belongs to Joseph Smith...this day [June 12] I Recd. 35 Whole Parchment Beaver, 1 Beavr Coat 7 Skins, 5 Quicohatches, 12 Wolves, 2 Catts, 4 red. Fox, 2 Grizled. Fox, 51 martins & 6 Otter, w^{ch}. You will find Packt up & Sent Home in Joseph Smiths Name, I allso Received 83 Half Beaver as belonging to the Said Joseph Smith, which I Delivered back to the Woman who was his Cannoe Mate & Tent Mate for to Trade for Necessarys for the Support of her Self & his Child.⁸¹

This is a significant piece of information, because it proves that Joseph Smith had at least one descendant in Hudson Bay, and that the Company did make some provision for his welfare. Certainly Ferdinand Jacobs was vigilant in winding up Smith's affairs, no doubt an expression of his esteem for a loyal and valued servant of the Company. On July 4, for instance, he "Sold the Personal Effects of Joseph Smith by Publick Auction to the People of the Factory" and bills were drawn on 6 July 1765 by the various purchasers payable

⁷⁹ Ibid., fo. 40.

⁸⁰ Ibid., fo. 41.

⁸¹ PAM, HBCA, B 239/a/53, fo. 41-41d, York Factory Post Journal, 1764-1765, 1M157. We know Smith died on the trip to York Factory because his account reads: "By Wages from 12: Septemb: 1764 to 26 May 1765/on or about which day he died in land/ is 256 days at £20 a year." PAM, HBCA, A.16/32, fo. 32d, Officers' and Servants' Ledger, York Factory District, 1760-1781, mf. 306.

to "Ye Next heir of Joseph Smith."⁴¹ That heir was probably "Lawrence Smith His Brother...of Coton near Nuneaton Warwickshire" in England, who received the bulk of Smith's estate.⁴² Although Jacobs was unable to transfer any of that estate to Smith's widow and child, beyond the few furs he set aside for her, there is an intriguing entry in his journal that suggests he may have gone beyond the ordinary to guarantee their future.

On July 6, the same day he recorded the sale of Smith's personal property, Jacobs "bought an Indian boy of about 10 or 11 Years of Age from the Trading Indians after w^{ch} They all Left the Factory."⁴³ Although we have no proof that this was Smith's son, it is the kind of act one might expect of Ferdinand Jacobs, who had close family ties himself with the Cree.⁴⁴ The "purchase" would have given Jacobs the authority to act as the boy's guardian and prevented his removal from the fort if Smith's widow remarried. It would have raised no eyebrows in London because it was customary for the Company to take care of "helpless widows and orphans," who were clothed and fed in time of need and expected to do odd jobs

about the post in return for this assistance. Undoubtedly, many families of retired labourers and officers benefited from this arrangement. The Company also gained something because the boys among these unfortunates generally became loyal hunters and sometimes labourers for the fur trade establishment.

Assuming that the above is correct, the Little Englishman would have been born in 1754 or 1755, a year or so after Joseph Smith arrived at York Factory. Such early involvement with the local people would explain Smith's acquisition of the Cree language and apparent ease with the local culture, two factors that helped qualify him for the promotion of the inland trade. It would also explain a couple of things about his son, the Little Englishman. Living near the fort would have reinforced the habits and manners the boy had picked up from his father and possibly explain the name by which he was known among the Cree. It would also explain the close relationship that he and his descendants had with the Hudson's Bay Company in subsequent years.

⁴¹ PAM, HBCA, B.239/a/53, fo. 45, York Factory Post Journal, 1764-1765, mf. 1M157; PAM, HBCA, B.239/d/55, York Factory Account Book, 1764-1765, mf. 1M670. Purchases totalling £18.14.0 were made by Thomas Luitl, John Taylor, John Garson, Peter Kinnard, George Cursiter, William Flett, Matthew Shead, and Edward Luitl.

⁴² PAM, HBCA, A.44/1, Register Book of Wills and Administrations of Proprietors, 1717-1819, ml. 470.

⁴³ PAM, HBCA, B.239/a/53, fo. 45, York Factory Post Journal, 1764-1765, mf. 1M157. Since the HBC was not in the business of buying and selling people, Jacob's use of the word 'bought' may have been his attempt to explain the transfer of the boy to his care in exchange for suitable gifts to his former caregivers. Unfortunately, he did not record how the boy's mother viewed the "transaction."

⁴⁴ Jacobs' wife was the English-Cree daughter of Richard Norton of Churchill. Their daughter Thucotch became a leading member of the Cree Home Guard at Churchill and York Factory.

Nevertheless, even though his name reflected that relationship, The Little Englishman was also deeply rooted in the Swampy Cree culture into which he had been born. James Settee, his grandson, gave a glimpse of that other world in an account he wrote years later. It was the "latter end of September" in the year 1823, when the Little Englishman would have been about sixty-eight or sixty-nine years of age. According to Settee, his grandfather wished to go to the spot at the mouth of the Nelson River where he had been born.

*We was at Split Lake where my grand Father had settled and made a home [for] his old age....My father got leave to take grandfather down to the sea. We embarked in a Bark Canoe & followed the stream.**

When they arrived at the mouth of the Nelson, they saw a large encampment. It was full of "lodges of dear [sic] skins" which Settee described as "white [as] white cloth." There were "hundreds of Indians" assembled, from Churchill, York Factory, Severn, Moose Factory and other points on James Bay. Evidently, the Little Englishman was well known to them.

All the Head men came & greeted my grand Father and took him to a large Tent prepared for us. My grand Father had been elected as the Chief of all tribes living on the seacoast.

He was called the Little Englishman. The Union Jack floated in the breeze alongside the big tent."

That night the young men had a pow-wow and preparations were completed for the commencement of the feast.

A long tent had been made I cannot say how long and size the tent was...In the middle tent there were three rotation of Kettles of all sizes full of the best meat, moose, deer, beaver, the bear, geese, wavey, grease, a large quantity."

At the appropriate moment, an invitation was made for the people to gather inside and eat. As Settee recalled, the floor of the tent was carpeted with fur robes – deer, bear, beaver, wolf, and polar bear skins. The tent poles were decorated with "whole piece[s] of print of different colours," as well as "handkerchiefs" and "gartering." Every man brought his dish with him. The head men, "with the skins of all sorts on their shoulders," were assigned a place of honour, while the young men and women, their "faces...all painted with vermilion" sat apart. In the meantime, the stewards were "loading the dishes by the waggon load." The Little Englishman "was called to invoke the Gods of the aire to come and take a part of the food prepared by their children," and the feast began.

* Ontario Archives, Egerton R. Young Collection, James Settee, "An Indian camp at the mouth of Nelson River, Hudsons Bay."

** Ibid.

** Ibid.

The feast continued "for some days perhaps a week," and there was dancing each night to the "tom, tom, tom." Light was provided by flames from iron pots, which had been filled with whale blubber, into which cotton wicks of some kind had been placed and set on fire. The flames rose so high, that the camp could be seen for miles, and "some Sloops and [the] Whale Boat ran in to see the great doings at the camps and see how the Indians were amusing themselves."

Some nights they had conjuring tents to converse with their gods as they called. I never saw my grand Father to go see them, in those conjuring every thing had a voice the wind spoke, the beasts and the birds spoke the stone the tree the different animals in the waters also. the departed dead they also spoke, the Indians living far away also at the Camps.'

After the feast was over, a general meeting was called, and the head men called for "some one to relate an old tradition to be remembered by all the Band" till they met again. A large crowd listened at the big tent as an old man told a story he had heard when he was fourteen or fifteen winters

old. Settee did not remember the details at the time, but his father later explained the story to him, and when he was an old man he put it down on paper along with other details about his early life. We can be grateful that he did.

Certainly the glimpse Settee gave us of life among the Swampy Cree in the early years of the nineteenth century reveals a culture in transition, a unique blend of aboriginal and European that defies easy definition. For the Garriochs and Settees, that cross-cultural exchange had been going on for four generations, and perhaps longer, when James Settee and William Garrioch set out in 1824 for the mission school at Red River. It continues today among their descendants; indeed, one might say that the family represents Canada in microcosm. From its multicultural beginnings, the Garrioch family has become a new people, one that is firmly planted on this continent, but with roots stretching out across the seas. When all is said and done, what could be more Canadian than that?

¹¹ Ibid. Settee was describing the shaking tent, which was used in traditional Cree religion to make contact with spiritual forces at work in the world.

Bibliography

PRIMARY SOURCES: ARCHIVAL

Archives of Ontario, Toronto

Settee, James. "An Indian Camp at the mouth of Nelson River, Hudsons Bay." Egerton R. Young Collection.

British Columbia Archives (BCA), Victoria

AE R73-R736 Donald Ross Papers, Donald Ross to George Simpson, 6 August 1845.

Indian and Northern Affairs Departmental Library, Ottawa

Indian Affairs Annual Reports, 1864-1990. CD-ROM, October 1997.

Hudson's Bay Company Archives (HBCA), Winnipeg

A.16	York Factory Officers and Servants' Ledgers
A.44/1	Register Book of Wills and Administrations of Proprietors
A.74	Annual Reports from District Officers
B.66/a/1	Fairford House Post Journal
B.139/a/132	York Factory Post Journal
B.154/a/71-87	Norway House Post Journals
B.154/d/15	Island Lake Servants Advances at York Factory
B.156/a/10-16	Oxford House Post Journals
B.156/d/83	Oxford House Indian Ledger
B.156/d/86	Island Lake Indian Debt Book
B.198/a/3-4	Severn Post Journals
B.207/a/1-2	Split Lake Post Journals
B.207/d/1	North River Account Book
B.207/d/2-4	Split Lake House Account Books
B.228/a/1	Wegg's House Post Journal
B.239/a/29-97	York Factory Post Journals
B.239/b/23-57	York Factory Correspondence
B.239/d/46-55	York Factory Account Books
B.239/g/1-4	York Factory Abstracts of Servants Accounts
B.239/z/10	York Factory Miscellaneous
B.268/d/13-14	Cross Lake - Miscellaneous Accounts
C.1/871	Ship's Log, Prince Rupert (I), 1753
E.8/5	Private Records, Papers Relating to Disturbances, 1815-1819
G.7/5	HBC Canada Fur Trade Post Plans. Setting Lake, 1924-1925
Post History	Fort Richmond
Search File	William Sinclair

National Archives of Canada (NAC), Ottawa

- MG29, B15 James Settee, "Settee's life," Robert Bell Collection.
- RG 10 Department of the Interior, Treaty Annuity Pay Lists, Treaties 1, 2, 3, and 5, 1875-1887.
- RG 15 Department of the Interior, Manitoba and Northwest Territories Half-Breed Scrip Applications, 1886-1906.

Provincial Archives of Manitoba (PAM), Winnipeg

Census of Manitoba, 1870.

Church Missionary Society Archives, Class "C". C.1/M.1. North West America Mission, Rupert's Land, Mission Books. Incoming Letters 1822-1833.

Legislative Library:

- Le Pas Herald*, on microfilm.
- The Hudson's Bay Herald*, on microfilm.
- The Pas Herald*, on microfilm.
- The Pas Herald and Mining News*, on microfilm.
- The Prospector and Northern Manitoban*, on microfilm.

MG7. B-1. St. John's Baptisms, 1813-1828.

R145. GR 1212. Item 10, Norway House Wesleyan Methodist Mission, Register of Baptisms, 1840-1889.

PRIMARY SOURCES: PUBLISHED

Canada: Indian Treaties and Surrenders. From 1680 to 1890 – in Two Volumes, Vol. II. Ottawa: Brown Chamberlin, 1891.

Hems, David. *Test Excavations at the Setting Lake Chimney Site - GpLp-1.* Winnipeg: Historic Resources Branch, Culture, Heritage and Recreation, 1990.

Morris, Alexander. *The Treaties of Canada with The Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories including the Negotiations on which they were based.* Toronto: Belfords, Clark & Co., 1880. Reprint. Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1991.

Smith, Brian J. *Archaeological Interpretations: The Setting Lake Chimney Site, Gg Lp-1. Setting Lake, Manitoba.* Edmonton, 1988.

Smith, Brian J. and Kathleen Neary. *Archaeological Investigations: The Setting Lake Chimney Site, GgLp-1.* Edmonton, 1991.

PRIMARY SOURCES: INTERVIEWS AND PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS

Barnell, Bryan. E-mails to R. Shirritt-Beaumont, December 2002 and letter, 2 January 2003.

Benson, Leon. Letter to Catherine McLeod, 10 March 2002.

Braun, Peter. Taped interview with Catherine McLeod, February 2002.

Brouillette, Rosezella. Interview with Catherine McLeod, January 2002.

Carter, Edward H. Interview with R. Shirritt-Beaumont, 8 April 2002.

Colombe, Joseph. Taped interview with Catherine McLeod, January 2002.

Colombe, Joseph and Henry Garrick. Transcribed interview with Catherine McLeod, January 2002.

Delaronde-Colombe, Diana. Interview with Catherine McLeod, March 2002 and faxed correspondence to R. Shirritt-Beaumont, 5 and 7 November 2003

Dram, Helen and Bonnie Monias. Interview with Catherine McLeod, 17 June 2002 and faxed correspondence to R. Shirritt-Beaumont, 31 October and 3 November 2003.

Fitznor, Laara. Email to R. Shirritt-Beaumont 14 November 2003.

Fleming, Vicki. Letter to R. Shirritt-Beaumont, 22 October 2003.

Garrick, Henry. Taped interview with Catherine McLeod, January 2002.

Hall, Frances. Taped interview with Catherine McLeod, March 2002.

Hamilton, Florence. Transcribed interview with Catherine McLeod, January 2002.

Harman, Ken. Faxed correspondence to R. Shirritt-Beaumont, 20 October 2003.

Harpe, F. Henry. Telephone interview with R. Shirritt-Beaumont, March 2002.

Holm, Gerald. Telephone interview with R. Shirritt-Beaumont, 6 June 2001.

Jonasson, Alex. Transcribed interview with Catherine McLeod, January 2002.

McLeod, Catherine. Telephone interview with R. Shirritt-Beaumont, March 2002, 30 October 2003, and faxed correspondence to R. Shirritt-Beaumont October 2003.

Monias, Bella. Taped interview with Catherine McLeod, Fall 2001.

Ohryn, Rose. Interview with Catherine McLeod, January 2002.

OmniTRAX. Telephone interview with R. Shirritt-Beaumont, 5 December 2001.

Peterson, Hal. Telephone interview with R. Shirritt-Beaumont, 28 April 2002.

Shinnie, Robert D. Telephone interview with R. Shirritt-Beaumont, March 2002.

Turner, Aileen. Correspondence to R. Shirritt-Beaumont, 28 October 2003.

SECONDARY SOURCES: PUBLISHED/UNPUBLISHED

Avis, Walter S. et al., ed., *Gage Canadian Dictionary*. Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing Co., 1983.

Bickle, Ian. *Turmoil and Triumph: The Controversial Railway to Hudson Bay*. Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1995.

Buhler, Cheryl Ann. "Wabowden," 1988.

Christianson, Laurie. "History of Wabowden," 1984.

Cummings, S.J.C. "H.B.C. Posts, Keewatin District, No. 6 – Setting Lake Post." *The Beaver* (December 1927):121

Explore Northern Manitoba's Grass River Corridor, 2002-2003 Visitor's Guide. Flin Flon: Grass River Corridor Tourism Association, 2002.

Fairies R., ed. *A Dictionary of the Cree Language*. Toronto: The Anglican Book Centre, 1938.

Fleming, Howard A. *Canada's Arctic Outlet: A History of the Hudson Bay Railway*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957.

Friesen, Gerald. *The Canadian Prairies: A History*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984.

Frontier College website. www.frontiercollege.ca. On-line, Internet, Available September 2003.

Glover, R. "La Perouse on Hudson Bay." *The Beaver* (March 1951): 46.

"Governor Samuel Wegg: 'The Winds of Change'" *The Beaver* (Autumn 1976): 10-20.

"John Gislason - 'Jack-Of-All' Trades." *The Selkirk Enterprise*, 9 April 1969.

Herring, D. Ann. "There Were Young People and Old People and Babies Dying Every Week": The 1918-19 Influenza Pandemic at Norway House." In *Ethnohistory* 41, no. 1 (1994): 73-105.

Jones, Renee Fossett and David Kirkby Riddle. *Trader, Tripper, Trapper: The Life of a Bay Man*. Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer, 1989.

Mandelbaum, David G. *The Plains Cree*. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1979.

Manitoba. *Geographical Place Names of Manitoba*. Edited by Anthony P. Buchner. Winnipeg: Manitoba Conservation, 2000.

Margeurita Fowler and the Order of St. Faith's. <http://collections.ic.gc.ca/cree/pioneer/Relig/10.htm>. Canada: Canada's Digital Collections. On-line. Internet. Available September 2003.

Russell, Dale R. *Eighteenth-Century Western Cree and their Neighbours*. Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1991.

Thorman, George E. "Joseph Smith." In *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, ed. Frances G. Halpenny, Vol. 3. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974: 594-595.

Index

- Abel Hall Memorial Sled Dog Races, 98
Adams, C., 35
Agriculture
 Agricultural Society (The Pas), 59
 at Mile 137, 57-60
 See also poultry farming
 Federal Department of, 59, 88
 See also Gardens
Aissaysaipeau (Cree Chief at Oxford House), 101-
 106 *passim*
 family, 105
Allan Chu Enterprises, 85
Amery (Mile 356), 22 *n.* 7
 See also Mile 356 (Amery)
Anderson, Harold, 53 *illus.*
Anderson, Mr. (HBC), 74
Andrews, Tom (trapper), 64 *illus.*
Andrews, V., 74
Anglican Church, 86
Antimony at Oxford Lake, 66
Armstrong, Baptiste, 109 *n.* 13
Armstrong Trading Company, 43, 45
 See also Booth Fisheries Company
Army, American
 patrols Hudson Bay Railway, 85
Arnold, Garry, 84 *n.* 1
- Bailey, Alex, 87
Ballasting, 23 *n.* 9
Barnell, Bryan, 53 *n.* 50
Bartleman, J. (HBC), 54
Bassett, A. (HBC), 45-46
Batt, Isaac (HBC), 124, 125
Bayer, Clarence, 95 *n.* 32
Bayer, Dawny, 95 *n.* 32
Bayley & Johnson (traders), 68
Bayley, Karl, 68
Beaver Lake
 influenza epidemic, 40-41
Becker, Rudy, 92
Becker, Walter, 95 *n.* 31
Beebe, Frederick, 52 *illus.*, 67-68, 75
Beebe, Martha, 85 *n.* 6
 residence, 94 *illus.*
Beebe, Mary Garrioch. See Garrioch, Mary (Mrs.
 Frederick Beebe)
Bell, Fred, 28
Benson, Leon, 95 *n.* 31
Bird (Mile 349). See Limestone River (Bird): Mile
 349 (Bird)
Bishop's Messengers, 86
- Bisson, Art, 84
Bjarnason, V.W., 89
Black, George, 85
"Blind pigger," 29-30, 30 *n.* 35
Bohay, Mrs R., 87 *illus.*
Bohay, Ray, 87, 87 *illus.*
"Bohunk," 31, 31 *n.* 42
Booth Fisheries Company, 43, 55, 84 *n.* 3
 See also Armstrong Trading Company
Bowden, W.A., 20 *n.* 27
Bowden (Manitoba), 20 *n.* 27, 71-72
Bowman, Mr (trapper), 65
Brandon Experimental Farm, 59, 88-89
Braun, Peter, 86 *n.* 8, 89, 92
Bridge(s)
 Armstrong Lake, 36
 Kettle Rapids (Mile 332), 36, 37 *illus.*
 Manitou Rapids, 22, 25
 Saskatchewan River, 21-22, 70
Brinton, H.J., 68 *n.* 30
Brostrom, S., 68 *n.* 32
Brouillette, Rosezella, 87 *n.* 10
Brown, Reverend H.A., 74
Bryan, James, 48
Buck, Mary, 81 *illus.*
Busy Bees Club, 97
- Cameron, Mr (Hudson Bay Railway engineer), 30
Campbell, Albert, 32
Campbell, Frank N., 56
Canada Jay (bird), 42 *n.* 87
Canoe Club, 56-57
"Captain," meanings of, 120
Captain Smith, "an Englishman." See Smith, Captain
Carnival, End of Winter, 98
Carter, Edward H., 51 *n.* 39
Carter, Jack, 53 *illus.*
Carter, John, 51 *n.* 39
Carter, Mrs John, 48
Carter, Percy, 50, 51 *n.* 39
Cat Carrying Place (Pisew Falls), 4, 5 *illus.*, 11 *illus.*
Catholic Church, 86
Chanscatch Sagihagan (settlement at Setting Lake)
 18 *map.* 19
Charlebois, Bishop, 39 *n.* 74
Charles, J.L., 27
Cheemoutch, 103 *n.* 18
Chimney on Setting Lake. See Setting Lake
 Chimney Site
Chomohapâcoos, John, 16
 See also Chomohapâcoos, James Evans

- Chomohapācoos, Magnus, 16
 Chomohapācoos, James Evans, 109
 Christianson, Laurie, 17 *n.* 16, 84 *n.* 1
 Christopherson, W.W., 33
 Churches at Wabowden, 86, 97 *n.* 38
 Churchill, 68, 72-73, 83 *illus.*
 fur trade sphere of influence, 13
 HBC post, 83
 Churchill Forest Industries, 95
 Churchill River System, 3 *n.* 13, 12 *map.* 13, 64
 Clarke, Jillian, 84
 Clay, Charles, 4-5
 Clearwater, Kendi, 95 *n.* 32
 Clemons, Luke, cover *illus.*, 50-51
 Cochrane, James, 108 *n.* 3
 Cochrane, Mrs., 107 *illus.*
 residence, 94 *illus.*
 Colen, Joseph (HBC), 13, 106 *n.* 27
 Colen, Sophia, 106 *n.* 27
 Colombe, Emma. *See* Garrioch, Emma (Mrs. Colombe)
 Colombe, Henry, 107, 116
 Colombe, Joseph, 19, 20
 Cometicat (Cree man), 15
 Communications
 postal service, 72
 wireless, 26, 73, 81 *illus.*
 radio and television, 85 *illus.*, 92
 telephone service, 25, 92
 Community Connection Program, 98
 Community clubs, 97
 Copper
 prospecting and deposits, 75
 Cormorant Lake (Mile 42), 24, 26 *n.* 19, 50, 77
 Corrigan, John (HBC), 15 *n.* 1
 Corrigan, William (HBC), 8 *n.* 31, 15 *n.* 1
 Coustatag (Koostatak), Harry, 108 *n.* 3
 Cowan, George, 35, 50, 52, 53 *illus.*, 58
 garden at Mile 185, 78
 Crait, Catherine (Mrs Sandy), 20
 Crait, Douglas, 19 *n.* 24
 Crait, Sandy, 19 *n.* 24, 20
 Cran, Aileen. *See* Turner, Aileen Cran.
 Cran, James Clarkson, 86-88
 Cran, James Murray, 54, 55, 74, 85, 88
 residence, 80 *illus.*, 87 *illus.*
 weather station, 80 *illus.*, 85 *illus.*
 Cree
 alliance relations with HBC, 111
 location in 19th century, i
 Keskachewan, 124
 Pegogamaw, 124
 "seasonal round," 1 *n.* 1
 starvation among, 104, 111, 118
 Swampy, 128-129
 wife sharing, 103-104
 Cross Lake,
 fur trade, 15, 40 *illus.*, 44-46, 54, 63
 the Garriochs of, 116
 influenza epidemic, 38-39, 40
 measles and grippe, 110-111
 mining, 76
 Treaty Five, 108
 Wood Indians, 108-109
 Cross Lake Air, 90
 Cumberland House, 9, 10 *map*
 influenza epidemic, 40-41
 Curling Club, 88, 97
 Cutts, Elmer (Police Officer), 88
 Davidson, Richard (Dick), 47 *illus.*, 50, 56-57,
 90 *n.* 27
 garden, 58
 jail building, 88 *n.* 18
 school building, 74
 Davidson's Store, 46-47, 91 *n.* 29
 See also Lamont & Davidson (store)
 De Wilde (RCMP Constable), 29
 Demers, A.J., 66
 Deschenes, Don and Gladys, 89 *n.* 21, 91
 Diamond Queen, 58, 77-78
 garden, 58
 stopping place, 58, 78 *illus.*
 See also Ryan, Sophia; Sophie Mae (Diamond Queen)
 Disease(s)
 grippe, 111
 measles, 111
 small pox, 117 *n.* 37
 Spanish 'flu (influenza), 37-41
 Dobbs, Arthur, 120 *n.* 45
 Doughty, Mary, 85 *n.* 7, 87 *illus.*
 Doughty's Restaurant & Pool Hall, 85
 Dram, George, 90 *n.* 26
 Dram, Myrna, 91
 Drennan, Mr and Mrs, 34
 Duff, J., 59
 Dunning, Hon. C.A. (Minister of Railways), 72-73
 Dwyer's Store, 56 *n.* 61
 Dysart, Charles, 41
 Eastern Fish Company, 52
 Education
 for railway workers, 28, 70
 Manitoba Department of Education
 Board of Trustees, 74
 See also Frontier College; Reading Camp Association; Schools
 Election (1925), Canada, 62

- Electricity production, 37, 89-90
 End of Winter Carnival, 98
 See also Carnival, End of Winter
 Essissepow. See Assaysaiepu (Cree Chief at Oxford House)
 Ethiniskees, 106 *n. 27*
 Evans, D.L., 43
 Evans, Reverend James, 16 *n. 8*, 100-101
- Fairford House (HBC post), 3 *n. 13*
 Falconbridge Nickel Mines Ltd, 97
 Ferguson, George, 56
 Fire station, 96
 Fire(s)
 forest, 46, 66 *illus.*
 at Fort Churchill, 83
 at HBC in Wabowden, 46-47, 56 *n. 61*
 at Thicket Portage, 52
- Fish Lake
 mining, 75
- Fishing
 commercial, 37, 39, 42-43, 95
 subsistence, 69
- Filter, Fred, 48
- Fitzpatrick, Reverend Alfred, 28 *n. 28*
- Flamborough Head, 2 *n. 8*, 115 *map*
- Flett, Roderick, 20
 Flett, William, 20
- Folster, William, 111
- Forestry, 43, 95
 aerial forest patrol, 77
 forest ranger, 39 *n. 70*
- Forrest, Tom, 32
- Fort Richmond, 121 *n. 51*
- Fortney, Carl, 89,
 residence, 94 *illus.*
- Foure, Malinda, 95 *n. 32*
 Foure, Ross, 95 *n. 31*
- Fowler, Marguerita, 86 *n. 9*
- Franklin, Sir John, 35
- Fraser, H., 52 *illus.*
- Fraser, Mr., 57
- Freight
 bombardiers, 80 *illus.*, 85 *illus.*
 by air, 90
 by dog-team, 19, 46, 67
 by canoe, 19, 46
 by horse-drawn toboggan, 19, 44
 by rail, 42, 46, 76
 HBC, 45-46
 winter, 19, 27, 46, 68 *n. 33*
 See also Transportation
- Freighter(s), 51, 57 *n. 71*, 67, 92 *n. 30*
 Bayley & Johnson, 68
 Ross Navigation Company, 63
- Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation, 95
- Frontier College
 activities, 70
 labourers-teachers, 28
 See also Reading Camp Association
- Funk, Frank, 88
- Fur trade
 Hudson Bay Railway and, 45-46
 HBC inland policy, 122, 126
 influence on Cree, 119
 routes, *i*, *iii map*
 Grass River, 19 *n. 21*
 Lower Track, *iii map*, 14 *n. 39*
 Middle Track, *iii map*
 Upper Track, *i*, *iii map*, 13-14
 traders, 2 *n. 5*, 17, 44-45, 47, 50-51, 63, 68
- Furs, 1 *n. 2*, 15 *n. 2*, 44-45, 112, 126, 128
 price, 50, 52, 54, 67
- Galena deposits, 75
- Gardens, 58-59, 78
- Garrick. See also Garrioch
- Garrick, Mary. See Garrioch, Mary (Mrs Frederick Beebe)
- Garrick, Roderick "Roddy" (Garrioch), 16, 19, 67
- Garrick, T. (Garrioch), 52 *illus.*
- Garrioch, Annabella, 109, 116
- Garrioch, Baptiste, 17, 107, 109-112, 117
 family, 116
- Garrioch, Bella, 111 *n. 19*
 See also Annabella Garrioch
- Garrioch, Emma (Mrs Colombe), 19-20, 107, 116
- Garrioch, George, 107-110, 114, 116-117
- Garrioch, Jennie, 109
- Garrioch, John, 114, 116-117
- Garrioch, Margaret, 109
- Garrioch, Mary (Mrs Baptiste Garrioch), 17, 107, 109-110, 116
- Garrioch, Mary (Mrs Frederick Beebe), cover *illus.*, 19, 107, 116
- Garrioch, Robert, 15 *n. 1*
- Garrioch, Sally, 109-110, 116
- Garrioch, Sandy (Pah-Kwab), 108-110, 117
 family, 116
- Garrioch, Sarah (Mrs. John Linklater), 17, 19-20, 107, 116
- Garrioch, Thomas, 109 *n. 12*, 110, 116
- Garrioch, William, 113-114, 116-117, 119, 129
- Garrioch, William Rupert, 109, 116
- Garrioch, William (schoolmaster), 113
- Gillam (Mile 327), 22, 88
 divisional point, 81
 See also Mile 327 (Gillam)
- Gislason, Gilly, 53 *n. 50*
- Gislason, John, Jr, 53 *n. 50*

- Gislason, Jon [John Sr.], 53, 77 *n.* 68, 91 *n.* 28
 Gislason Restaurant, 53, 91
 Gold
 prospecting and discovery, 32, 34, 67, 75, 77 *illus.*
 Goose Lake(s), 44, 94 *illus.*
 economic development, 20, 25, 32
 mining, 75
 Gordon, C.H.M. (HBC), 39 *n.* 69, 52 *illus.*
 Gordon, Lily, 52 *illus.*
 Gordon, Walter, 52 *illus.*
 Gordon, William, 52 *illus.*
 Government, Canada
 views on Hudson Bay Railway, 62
 Graham, Andrew (HBC), 124-125
 Graham (RCMP Constable), 29
 Grant, Richard (HBC), 102-103
 Grass River, iii *map*, 3-4, 13-14, 19 *n.* 21, 115 *map*
 Grass River Logging, 95
 Great West Stores, 48, 54
 See also Riddoch's Great West Store(s)
 Grenon, Josie, 42
 Grimsley, Jack, 53 *illus.*
 Grippe, 111
- Halcrow, Alec, 50
 Halcrow, Alice, 85 *n.* 6
 Halcrow, Giddy [Gideon], 50
 Hall, A.G. (teacher), 74 *n.* 52
 Hall, Frances, 91 *n.* 28
 Hamilton, Florence, 85 *n.* 6, 91 *n.* 28
 Hanson, A.M., 33
 Hargrave, James, 113, 119
 Harman, Ken, 95 *n.* 31
 Harpe, Henry, 87-88
 Hassett, Bob, 29
 Hawkins, C., 50
 Hayes, Jack, 32
 Hayes River, iii *map*, 2, 14 *n.* 39, 115 *map*, 120, 122
 Hazelwood, R.A., 34
 Hearne, Samuel, 19 *n.* 21
 York Factory engraving, 3 *illus.*
 Hems, David (archaeologist)
 on location of Wegg's House, 9 *n.* 35, 10 *map*
 Henday, Anthony, 122 *n.* 55, 124
 Henderson, Henry, 19, 107, 116
 Henderson, Sarah Garrioch. *See* Garrioch, Sarah (Mrs Henry Henderson)
 Herb Lake (Mile 82), 32 *illus.*, 38 *illus.*, 77-78
 mining, 32, 58, 77
 Herb Lake Siding (Mile 86)
 fishing shacks, 32
 Hill, O.D., 61
 Holmes, John Pocock, 17, 111 *n.* 20
- Hone, Jack, 90
 Hubble, Bert, 54
 Hubble, Mrs. [Bert], 55
 Hubble residence, 78, 80 *illus.*
 Hubble's Imperial Cafe, 55, 64, 68
 Hudson Bay Railway
 accidents, 24
 as agent of change, 22-26
 construction, 21-22, 34, 43, 67, 68-72, 82
 construction headquarters, 33
 cost, 36
 divisional centres, i, 32, 44, 67, 71, 78, 81
 freight rates, 42
 hospital cars, 71
 northern terminus, 68, 72-73
 opposition to, 22 *n.* 4
 passenger service, 23-25, 30-31, 38 *illus.*, 76 *n.* 65
 purchase by OmniTRAX, 73 *n.* 47
 ticket prices, 23-24, 31
 perceived benefits of, 36-37, 45
 resource development and, 25-26, 31-32, 37, 77
 Wabowden Station, ix-x, 79-80 *illus.*, 82, 84 *illus.*
 workers, 26-28 *illus.*, 31, 44, 50, 63, 69-71
 working conditions, 22, 27-28, 71 *n.* 42
 World War I and, 22, 35-36, 50 *n.* 33
 Hudson's Bay Company
 relations with Cree, 111
 burned buildings, 46-47, 55, 83
 competition, 47-48, 50, 54, 110
 HBC fleet, 122 *illus.*
 inland movement, 126
 journals, 7- 9, 13-15, 102, 117, 118 *n.* 39, 127
 Made Beaver, 15 *n.* 2
 policy on employee marriage, 8
 posts
 Churchill, 83
 Fairford House, 3 *n.* 13
 Settling Lake, 78
 Wegg's House, i, 1-14, 15
 purchase of Riddoch's Mile 137 store, 54
 rail transport used by, 45-46
 250th anniversary, 52
 Hutton, W.H. "Bill", 56 *n.* 61, 74
- Island Lake, i
 Immigrants and immigration, 70
 railway jobs and, 27 *illus.*, 31
 restrictions on, 50 *n.* 33
 Imperial Cafe. *See* Hubble's Imperial Cafe
 Influenza, Spanish, 37-42
 Irvin, James, 15 *n.* 1
 Isakson, Olaf, 64

- Isbister, Charles Begg (HBC), 99
family, 105
- Isbister, Fanny Sinclair. *See* Sinclair, Fanny (Mrs. John Isbister)
- Isbister, John (HBC), 99, 100, 103
family, 105
- Isbister, William (HBC), 99
family, 105
- Isham, James (HBC), 120-121, 122 *n.* 55, 123
- Ivens, Bill (M.L.A.), 81 *illus.*
- Jacobs, Ferdinand (HBC), 126, 127
- Jail/prison, 70, 88
- James (Colonel), 61
- Jamieson, Randy, 73 *n.* 47
- Jeffries, A.H., 57 *n.* 71, 68, 78
- John Scot's Lake, 15-16
See also Setting Lake
- Johnson, Allan, 55 *n.* 58, 95 *n.* 32
- Johnson, Jean, 55 *n.* 58
- Johnson, S.H., 43 *n.* 91
- Johnson, W. (divisional superintendent), 72
- Jonasson family, 91
- Jonasson, Katherine, 87 *illus.*
- Jones, David, 113
- Jones, Reverend David, 112
- Kay quois chestum. *See* Sinclair, James (Jern)
- Keequanohotway. *See* Armstrong, Baptiste
- Ke-Na-Now Centre Recreation Complex, 95, 96-97, 98
- Kesiastāokanum, John Scott, 16
- Kesiastāokanum, Thomas, 16
- Keskachewan Cree, 124
- King, Mackenzie, 62
- Kobar, John, 77 *n.* 58
- Koostatak. *See* Coustatag, Harry
- Lacroix, Gilbert, 58
- Lafreniere, Adele, ix, x *illus.*
- Lakeside Grocerteria, 55 *n.* 58
- Lamb Air, 89 *n.* 20, 90
- Lamont & Davidson (store), 48, 54-55
- Lamont, Pat, 45, 47, 50, 52
See also Lamont & Davidson (store)
- Lamson and Hubbard (traders), 54
- Larose, Dr. A., 38
- Laubman, Carl, 50-51
- Lauder, Harry, 35
- Law enforcement, 56 *n.* 65, 63-65
against illegal alcohol, 29-30, 70
police forces, 88
- Le Pas Herald*, 23 *n.* 10
- Leask, Hugh (HBC), 8 *n.* 31, 15 *n.* 1
- Lesopoy, Wilhelm, 53 *n.* 50
- Levoie, Mr (commercial fisherman), 39
- Limestone River (Bird), 81
See also Mile 349 (Bird)
- Linklater, John, 19-20, 107, 116
- Linklater, Mary (Mrs John), 19, 20
- Linklater, Sarah Garrioch. *See* Garrioch, Sarah (Mrs John Linklater)
- Lions' Club, 97
- Liquor
among Nelson River Cree, 117-118
illegal production, 70
illegal sales, 29-30
outlet for, 91
See also Prohibition
- "Little Englishman," 117, 119, 128
family, 116
- Logging industry, 67, 95
- Long, Bob, 34-35, 50
restaurant and stopping place, 35 *illus.*, 64
- Low, John W. (prospector), 75 *illus.*
- Lu-Jack Enterprises, 55 *n.* 58
- MacKay, Angus, 110
- McArthur, J.D., 22, 42
- McArthur, Mr, 85
- McArthur, W.A., 78
- McArthur & Winterton, 34
- McBeath, James (HBC), 112
- McClachey brothers, 65-66
- McCormack, Jack, 29
- McCrae, Stan, 88
- McCuaig, H.S., 23-24
- McDonald, Dan, 39, 42, 48, 81-82
- McDonald, Mrs John Charles, 19 *n.* 24
- McIvor, Albert, 95
- McIvor, Albert B., 52 *illus.*
- McIvor, Catherine Beardy, 52 *illus.*
- McIvor, Don, 92
- McIvor, Frances, 87 *n.* 10, 95 *n.* 31
- McIvor, Jack, 92
- McIvor, Jim, 87 *n.* 10, 95
- McKay, Felix, 44
- McKay, Henry, 43 *n.* 91
- McKay, Hon. James, 108 *n.* 2
- McKay, Proud, 108 *n.* 3
- McKenzie, Roderick (HBC), 112
- McLachlan, Mr (railroad engineer), 63
- McLeod, Catherine Bishop, ix, x *illus.*, 105
- McLeod, Charles Henry Otter, 105
- McLeod, Charles, 99, 106
family, 105
- McLeod, Ethel Grace Isbister, 99
family, 105
- McMillan, Mrs Alex, 24
- McMillan Brothers Ltd, 24, 36
- McNaughton, A., 33

- McNaughton, F.P., 34
 Made Beaver, 15 *n. 2*
 Malko, Stanley, 69
 Mallett, T., 52 *illus.*
 Manfor (logging operation), 95
 Manibridge Mine, 96-97
 Manitoba
 extended boundaries, 23
 Manitoba Hydro, 90
 Manitoba Marble Inc., 77 *n. 68*
 Manitoba Provincial Police, 63-65, 70
 Manitou Rapids (Mile 239), 46
 bridge, 22, 25
 See also Mile 239 (Manitou Rapids)
- Maps
 analyzing for historical evidence, 9-14
 Marble quarrying, 77
- Marriage(s)
 in Cree society, 16 *n. 7*, 103-104, 109-110
 of HBC employees, 8, 100-101
- Marten, Humphrey (HBC), 124
 Martin, Bill, 89
 Martin, Isaac, 16-17
 Martin, Margaret (teacher), 81
 Martin, Reverend S.A., 81
 May, A.E., 50
 Meade, Inspector (RCMP), 63
 Meade, Reg (Mayor), 95 *n. 31*
 Measles, 111
 Meighen, Arthur, 62.
 Mel Johnson School, 97 *n. 37*, 97 *illus.*
 Mercer, Arthur, 44-46
 Messeegomawethow (Cree man), 15
 Mile 17 (Clearwater Lake), 76-77
 Mile 39
 mining, 77
 Mile 42 (Cormorant Lake), 77
 See also Cormorant Lake (Mile 42)
 Mile 82 (Herb Lake), 38 *illus.*, 77-78
 gardens, 58
 influenza epidemic, 38
 Mile 86 (Herb Lake siding), 32
 Mile 137 (Wabowden), i
 agriculture, 57-60
 commercial development, 53-56, 68, 76
 HBC, 46-47, 52, 54, 56 *illus.*, 80 *illus.*
 influenza, 39
 name change, 20, 25, 72
 railroad as an agent of change, 22-23
 railroad divisional centre, 25, 32-33, 44, 67, 68, 71, 78
 settlement, 19-20
 social life, 56-57
 transportation centre, 63
 See also Wabowden, Manitoba
- Mile 185 (Thicket Portage, Wintering Lake)
 fire, 52-53
 gardens, 59, 78
 See also Thicket Portage (Mile 185)
- Mile 214 (Pikwitonei), 35 *illus.*, 81
 condition of the railway line, 53
 Great West Store, 50
 trapper, 64 *illus.*
 See also Pikwitonei (Mile 214)
- Mile 239 (Manitou Rapids), 42, 66
 cost of rail ticket from The Pas, 31
 trader, 50
 See also Manitou Rapids (Mile 239)
- Mile 327 (Gillam)
 divisional point, 81
 See also Gillam (Mile 327)
- Mile 336, 76
 Mile 349 (Bird), 74-75
 Mile 356 (Amery), 81-82
 See also Amery (Mile 356)
- Miles, Robert (HBC), 104
 Milligan, "Stim," 76
- Mining and miners
 at Mile 39, 77
 at Mile 86 (Herb Lake Siding), 32
 at Setting Lake, 26
 at Soab Creek, 96
 at Wabowden, 91
 marble quarrying, 77
 mineral exploration, 43
 mines, 77 *illus.*, 95-97
 mining fever, 65-67, 75-76
 speculative nature of, 54 *n. 52*
 See also Antimony; Copper; Gold;
 Prospector(s); Silver
- Missinakeeshick (Cree trading captain), 126
 Moar, Billy, 103 *n. 18*
 Monias, Bella, 19
 Monias, Joe, 87
 Monias, Matilda, 19
 Monkey Town, 18 *map*, 19-20
 Moor, Captain William, 120, 121 *n. 47 & 48*
 Moore, Bill, 67
 Moose Factory, 128
 Moose, Nathan, 20
 Moose Lake, 26 *n. 19*, 41, 52
 Moose o coot. *See* Sinclair, Ben (Moose o coot)
 Morris, Alexander, 108
 Morrison, Jim (prospector), 65
 Mosiondz, Garry, 95
 Mosiondz, H. and Son (logging operation), 95
 Motherwell, W.R. (Minister of Agriculture), 59
 Mud Lake Logging, 95
 Mulligan, Leslie, 63-64
 Munk, Jens, 83

- Muskeg, The (construction train), 29-31, 42-43, 45
freight rates, 42
- My's filling station, 92 *n. 30*
- Nahoway (wife of William Sinclair), 8 *n. 34*, 100-101, 105
- Nee pen wees cum. *See* Sinclair, John (Nee pen wees cum)
- Nelson, August, 68 *n. 32*
- Nelson House
fire, 52
winter road, 18 *map*, 19
- Nelson River, iii *map*, 37 *illus.*, 112, 115 *map*
Indian camp at its mouth, 128-129
Manitoba Hydro development, 90
- Nelson River Cree, 117-119
- Nelson River Logging, 95
- "New Manitoba," 23 *n. 8*, 31-32
- Newspapers
role of in community life, 48-50
- Nickel prospecting, 90, 95-96
- Nordland, Lori
and map identification, 9-14
- North West Company, 2 *n. 5*
- Northern Affairs, Provincial Department of, 92
- Northern Fish Company, 46
- Northern Navigation Company, 65
- Norway House
Treaty Five representatives, 108 *n. 3*
"Christian Indians," 108
Methodist Mission, 100, 101
Treaty Five, 107-108
- Novikoff, John ("John by Gosh"), 75
- Nursing station, 96
- Ohryn, Paul, 84 *n. 3*, 91
- Ohryn, Rose, 84
- Olson, Ole, 39
- OmniTRAX, 73 *n. 47*
- Opasquai Hotel, 30
- Orok, Dr, 33 *n. 49*
- O'Sullivan, J. Burton, 65-67
See also Sullivan, J. Burton
- Oxford House, i,
Chiefs, 101, 102 *n. 14*
- Oxford Lake
mining, 76
race to stake claims, 65-67
winter road, 76
- Pah-Kwab. *See* Garrioch, Sandy (Pah-Kwab)
- Palmer, Frederick, 68, 72-73
- Pazkowski, Mike, 87
- Pegogamaw Cree, 124
- Pelican Narrows
influenza epidemic, 40-41
- Peters, Mr (Pikwitonei resident), 34
- Peterson, Hal, 14 *n. 39*
- Pemootaicapo. *See* Sinclair, George (Peemootaicapo)
- Pikwitonei (Mile 214), 34 *illus.*
agriculture, 58
construction headquarters, 33
daily life, 33-35
decline, 81
See also Mile 214 (Pikwitonei)
- Piquitona. *See* Pikwitonei (Mile 214)
- "Piquitona Pickings", 34-35
- Piquitonay. *See* Pikwitonei (Mile 214)
- "Piquitonay Pickings," 34
- Pisequinip, Charles (Papasekwanape), 108 *n. 3*
- Pisew Falls, 4, 5 *illus.*, 11 *map*, 97
- Planischek, Charles, 64
- Pollog, John, 87
- Port Nelson, 31, 68, 69 *illus.*, 72-73
- Porter, J.W., 22 *n. 5*
- Post office, 72
- Potts, George (HBC), 124
- Poultry farming, 57 *n. 71*, 89
- Pow-wow, 128-129
- Prohibition, 29, 49
- Prospector and Northern Manitoba. The, 74 *n. 50*
- Prospector(s), 75
find silver, 34
race to stake claims, 65-67
See also mining and miners
- Quinsey, F.W., 68 *n. 30*
- Rabbit, Donald, 111
- Radio, wireless, 26, 73, 81 *illus.*
See also communications
- Railways
Canadian National Railway (CNR), 42, 50
n. 35, 53
and Port Churchill, 73 *n. 47*
Canadian Northern Railway Company, 21
- Railways and Canals, Federal Department of, 21-22
- Reading Camp Association, 28, 70
See also Frontier College
- Recreation
at Mile 137 (Wabowden), 56-57, 97-98
facilities, x, 88, 94 *illus.*, 96-97, 99 *illus.*
summer cottages at Mile 17, 76-77
See also Ke-Na-Now Centre
- Red Earth
influenza epidemic, 40-41
- Reed-Lewis, Mrs. W.J.D., 33 *n. 49*
- Reed-Lewis, W.J.D., 32
- Renick, J., 70

- Repap (logging operation), 95
- Riddoch, Tom, 50, 52
stores, 74-75, 51 *n.* 39
stopping place, 48
- Riddoch's Great West Store(s), 48, 51 *n.* 39
HBC buys, 54
fire destroys, 52-53
- Robertson, Colin (HBC), 102-104 *passim*
- Rock Island Farm (poultry), 89 *n.* 21
- Rock Island Lake, 94 *illus.*
- Rock Island Power Limited, 89-90
- Rose, Gerald, 64 *illus.*
- Rose, Kenneth, 64 *illus.*, 66 *illus.*
- Rose, Sergeant Percy (Manitoba Provincial Police), 63, 64 *illus.*, 65
- Rose, W.F., 45
- Ross, Donald (HBC), 100
- Ross, Donald William Sinclair. *See* Tapastanum (Donald William Sinclair Ross)
- Ross, Malchom (HBC), 1-5, 13, 14 *n.* 39
- Ross Navigation Company, 63
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), 88
and prohibition, 29-30
- Rundle, Chief David, 108 *n.* 3
- Russians. *See* Ukrainians (Russians)
- Ruttan, Reverend John H., 15, 109
- Ryan, Dennis, 49
- Ryan, Mrs., 49
- Ryan, Sophia (Diamond Queen), 58 *illus.*
See also Diamond Queen; Sophie Mae (Diamond Queen)
- Sabbeston, John, 15 *n.* 1
- St. Faith's, Order of, 86 *n.* 9
- Sasagiu Rapids, 11 *map*, 97, 98 *illus.*
- Scatch (man from Cross Lake), 19
- School(s)
Church-operated, 86
closure of during influenza epidemic, 41 *n.* 81
Government Indian School at Cross Lake, 110
John West's Mission School, 112-114
at Mile 42 (Cormorant Lake), 77
at Mile 137 (Wabowden), 74, 86, 87, 96, 97
at Mile 214 (Piwitonei), 34 *n.* 53, 81 *illus.*
at Mile 327 (Gillam), 81
provincial, 77, 86-87
See also Mel Johnson School; Education
- Scott, James, 16
- Scott, John (grandson of Kesiastāokanum), 16
- Scott, John (HBC), 16-17, 112 *n.* 25
- Scott, John (Kesiastāokanum).
See Kesiastāokanum, John Scott
- Scott, Margaret, 16
- Scott, Mary (Mrs John)
baptism, 16
- Scott, Mr., 26 *n.* 19
- Scott, Old John (grandfather) 16
- Scrip, 102 *n.* 9, 114, 117
- Scurvy, 27
- "Seasonal round," 1
- Services, municipal, 96
- Settee, James, 118 *illus.*
description of Indian encampment, 128-129
journey to John West's Mission School, 113, 115
- Setting Lake, i, 17 *illus.*, 18 *map*, 78
influence of railroad, 22-23, 25-26, 45
alternate names, 15, 19-20, 25, 72
families, 15-16, 17-20, 107
HBC post, i
mining speculation, 75
post office, 72
See also John Scot's Lake
- Setting Lake Chimney Site
archaeological evidence, 4-8,
identified location, 14
Charles McLeod and, 99, 106
See also Wegg's House
- Setting Lake Park, 17 *illus.*, 97
- Sewer and water services, 96
- Shinnie, Robert, 89
residence, 94 *illus.*
- Shlachetka, Brian, 95
- Silver, prospecting and deposits, 34, 75
- Silver Leaf Hotel, 80 *illus.*, 85, 88, 94 *illus.*
- Simpson, George (HBC Governor), 100
- Sinclair, Albert, 39
- Sinclair, Ben (Moose o cool), 101, 106 *n.* 27
- Sinclair, Betsy (Mrs Robert Miles), 104 *n.* 24, 106
- Sinclair, Catherine, 8 *n.* 34
- Sinclair, Fanny (Mrs John Isbister), 99, 103, 104
family, 105
- Sinclair, George (Peemootaicapo), 101-102, 105,
106 *n.* 26
- Sinclair, George (son of "Jem" Sinclair), 101 *n.* 6
- Sinclair, James (Jem, Kay quois chestum), 101,
105, 106 *n.* 27
- Sinclair, James (son of "Jem" Sinclair), 101 *n.* 6
- Sinclair, James (son of Nahoway and William Sinclair), 100, 101
- Sinclair, Jane (daughter of "Jem" Sinclair), 101 *n.* 6
- Sinclair, Janey "Jenny" (wife of James "Jem" Sinclair), 101 *n.* 6
- Sinclair, John (Nee pen wees cum), 101, 105, 106
n. 27
- Sinclair, Kitty (daughter of James and Janey Sinclair), 101 *n.* 6
- Sinclair, Margaret (wife of Ben Sinclair), 101 *n.* 5
- Sinclair, Margaret (wife of William Sinclair), 102,
106

- Sinclair, Mary (daughter of "Jem" Sinclair), 101 *n. 6*
- Sinclair, Peggy (daughter of "Jem" Sinclair), 101 *n. 6*
- Sinclair, Phoebe, 8 *n. 34*
- Sinclair, Robert (son of James "Jem" and "Jenny" Sinclair), 101 *n. 6*
- Sinclair, William, Jr, 8 *n. 34*
- Sinclair, William (c1766-1818), 2, 8-9, 15
family, 105
tracing descendants of, 99-106
- Small pox epidemic, 117 *n. 37*
- Smith, Brian J. (archaeologist)
identification of Wegg's House by, 10
- Smith, Captain, 117, 119-120
See also Smith, Captain Joseph
- Smith, Cecil, 88
- Smith, Christopher (HBC), 121
- Smith, Captain Francis, 120-121
- Smith, James (HBC tailor), 121
- Smith, James Neison. *See* Settee, Reverend James
- Smith, John (HBC labourer), 121
- Smith, Captain Joseph, 122-127
family, 116
See also Smith, Captain
- Smith, Kitty (Mrs Francis Smith), 121
- Smith, Lawrence, 127
- Smith, Richard (HBC labourer), 121
- Smith, Thomas (HBC sloop master), 121
- Smith, William (HBC shipwright), 121
- Soab Creek Mine, 92 *n. 30*, 96
- Sophie Mae (Diamond Queen), 58 *n. 73*
See also Diamond Queen; Ryan, Sophia
- Spanish flu. *See* Influenza, Spanish
- Spence, Betsy (Mrs Roderick Garrick), 19
- Spence, Jimmy, 20
- Spence, John, 113
- Split Lake (Ta task we ah Sakahagan), iii *map*, 2, 112, 115 *map*
fire, 52
- St. Anthony's Hospital, 25 *illus.*
- St. Godard, J.U., 75
- Stanger, Thomas (HBC), 15 *n. 1*
- Starlite Cafe, 91
- Starvation, 69, 104, 111, 118
- Stephansson, Dr (The Pas medical officer), 41 *n. 81*
- Stephenson, Art, 91
- Stephenson, Jack, 55 *n. 58*, 90
- Stewart, Mr (postmaster), 57
- Stranger, Henry, 107
- Street, P.B., 43
- Sudbury Basin Mines, 76
- Sullivan, J. Burton, 65-67
- Survey(s) and surveying (Hudson Bay Railway), 21, 43
labourers' wages, 43, 50 *n. 33*
survey parties, 23, 24 *illus.*, 49-50
- Sutherland, Mr, 57 *n. 71*
- Swampy Cree, 128-129
- Tait, Joseph, 19, 44
- "The Tamarack," 43 *n. 90*
- Tapastanum (Donald William Sinclair Ross), 108 *n. 3*, 109
conversion and baptism, 15-16
- Tate, James (HBC), 3, 4 *n. 16*
- Tax, income, 49, 86
- Taylor, Eric, 90-91
- Taylor, Percy, 50
- Taylor Air, 90
- Teal Air, 89 *n. 20*, 90
- Teatom (Oxford House Cree man), 102 *n. 14*
- Telegraph. *See* Communications, Radio, Wireless
- The Pas, Manitoba, 21 *illus.*, 26, 31,
Agricultural Society in, 59-60
Armstrong Trading Company, 43
Booth Fisheries Company, 43
construction office, 33, 42
divisional centre, 32, 33
HBR construction, 70-71
influenza epidemic, 37-38, 40 *n. 77*, 41
Opasquai Hotel, 30
St. Anthony's Hospital, 25 *illus.*
- The Pas Board of Trade
lobbies for Hudson Bay Railway, 53
- The Pas Canoe Company, 55
- The Pas Herald (and Mining News)*
description of Setting Lake, 55
on daily life in communities, 33-35
on dismantling of the railway, 42
on land development, 25-26
on the fall fur sale, 52
on HBR employment, 69
on influenza, 38 *n. 62*
on northern terminus, 68, 72-73
on rail travel, 30-31, 76
on resumption of railway construction, 62-63
on the race to Oxford Lake, 65-67
on positive influence of railroad, 31-32, 45
role of the local newspaper, 48-50
- The Pas Reserve
influenza epidemic, 41
- Thicket Portage (Mile 185), 35, 53 *illus.*, 67 *illus.*
influenza, 39
See also Mile 185 (Thicket Portage)
- Thomas, Jack, 50
- Thomas, Sergeant (RCMP), 29

- Thompson, David, 1-3, 13, 19 *n. 21*
- Thompson, Manitoba,
medi-vac, 96 *n. 34*
- Thompson mine, 88
- Thorsteinson, Oscar, 91
coffee shop, 94 *illus.*
- Threepoint Lake (Three Points Lake), 13
- Tobacco, Jacob, 41-42
- Tolko (logging operation), 95
- "Tracking," 2
- Trans-Air, 90
- Transportation, 19, 27
by air, 89 *n. 22*, 90
by canoe, 44
by rail, 63
cost, 42, 54 *n. 52*
horse toboggans, 44
HBC freight system, 45-46
rail line improvements, 73 *n. 47*, 76
grading and ballasting, 23, 31, 70-71, 72
illus.
routes, i, ix, 19, 21, 46
winter, 68
See also Freight; Freighter(s)
- Trapping, 19
fur prices, 67
trappers, 39, 45, 53 *illus.*, 64-65, 68 *n. 32*, 84
n. 4
- Travel, 63, 76
by canoe, 2-4, 5, 76, 115 *map*
by rail, 23-24, 30-31, 65-66, 76
road conditions, 84, 91-92
- Treaty
days, 56
Indians, 86
annuity pay lists, 107, 109-110, 117 *n. 36*
- Treaty Five, 107-108
factor in Christianization, 110
signatories, 107-108, 116
- Treaty Three, 109
- Tront, William "Bill," 53 *illus.*
- Trudeau, Mr. (school teacher), 74 *n. 52*
- Turner, Aileen Cran, 84 *n. 2*, 85, 90 *n. 27*
- Turnor, Philip, 19 *n. 21*
- Twain, Mark, 51 *n. 39*
- Tyrrell, J.B., 57-58
- Ukrainians (Russians), 27 *illus.*, 31 *n. 43*
railway jobs and, 31, 50 *n. 33*
- Ventures Limited, 76
- Vickers, Hugh, 64
- Wabman Trucking, 95
- Wabowden, Manitoba
bomb shelter, 86
churches, 74, 86
Community Club, 87
Community Council, 92, 95
description, ix-x
Development Corporation, 98
economic development, 68 *n. 33*, 76, 95-98
fire station, 96
Ice Cream Parlour, 91
Jamboree, 98
local government, 92, 95
name, 20, 25, 72
population, 1, 91, 96, 97
schools, 74, 86, 87, 96
Mel Johnson School, 97
weather station and bomb shelter, 80 *illus.*, 85-86
See also Mile 137 (Wabowden)
- Wachell, William, 92
residence, 94
- Waggoner, Joseph, 122-124
- Wallace, Frank, 70
- Wapasagy (Cree man), 111-112, 118
family, 116
- Washcabbitt (Sturgeon Cree trading captain), 122
- Wass, T., 63
- Weather station and bomb shelter, 80 *illus.*, 85-86
- Wegg, Samuel (HBC Governor), 1 *n. 3*
- Wegg's House (HBC post), i, 1, 4-14, 15
See also Setting Lake Chimney Site
- Wells, Constable (Manitoba Provincial Police), 64
- Wescana Hotel chain, 85
- West, Reverend John, 112
- Whiskey-jack, 42 *n. 87*
- Williamson, Jimmy, 32
- Wilson, Cyrilla (teacher), 74
- Wintering Lake. *See* Mile 185 (Thicket Portage, Wintering Lake)
- Wireless. *See* Communications
- Witicoguaw the Mud's Son (Cree man), 15
- Wolverine (Lake Winnipeg steamer), 46
- Wood, S., 34 *n. 53*
- World War I
effect of on Hudson Bay Railway construction,
22, 35-37
- World War II
American army patrols Hudson Bay Railway, 85
- Wynn, Art, 53 *illus.*
- Yakubec, W., 87 *illus.*