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BORDERLAND INTERACTION IN THE INTERNATIONAL REGION OF THE GREAT PLAINS: AN HISTORIC-GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract. *Canada as an historically contingent society, developing within the context of its own internal evolution, has always framed its becoming in its changing political, economic, and cultural relationships with the United States. The border takes on special significance for Canadians as it serves as the basic reference point for historical, literal, symbolic, and psychological interpretations of identity. Yet the meanings assigned to the border vary regionally because of different historic-geographical experiences.*

This paper examines different types of population, economic, political, and cultural interactions taking place across the border within what can be called the international region of the Great Plains. It attempts to identify and elucidate those forces which served to integrate and differentiate those societies developing on both sides of the forty-ninth parallel. To this end, the paper makes some judgement as to the relevance of the Borderlands thesis in understanding Canadian-American relationships in this part of North America.

Canada as an historically contingent society, developing within the context of its own internal evolution, has always framed its becoming in its changing political, economic, and cultural relationships with the United States. That this relationship with the United States functions as a barometer by which Canadians, particularly Anglophone Canadians, measure their evolving identity is not surprising given the complex and varied nature of the ties linking various trans-border regions. The border takes on special significance for Canadians as it serves as the basic reference point for historical, literal, symbolic, and psychological interpretations of identity. Yet the meanings assigned to the border vary regionally because of different historic-geographical experiences. As is evident in the borderlands anthology edited by Robert Lecker (1991), understanding of the concept, and its manifestation in a United States-Canada context, is informed by historical, geographical, and other social science and humanities vantage points.

This paper examines different types of population, economic, political, and cultural interactions taking place across the border within what can be called the international region of the Great Plains. It attempts to identify and elucidate those forces which served to integrate and differentiate those societies developing on both sides of the forty-ninth parallel. To this end, the paper makes some judgement as to the relevance of the Borderlands thesis in understanding Canadian-American relationships in this part of North America.

The Borderlands Concept

It is the nature of these linkages that is the focus of the Borderlands Project, an interdisciplinary research and compiling effort whose directors, despite claims to ideological neutrality (McKinsey and Konrad 1989), take an ideologically-full position that "North America runs more naturally north and south than east and west . . ." (Konrad 1990:127). The borderlands concept serves as a worthwhile albeit polemic framework in which to view the complexity of the Canadian-American relationship and thus merits attention in this context.

An important symbol of this country, I have argued, is the border (Widdis 1992b). Yet the border as symbol should not blind us to the importance of place. In this context, we can distinguish between borders as lines symbolizing differentiation and as places or zones of mediation. It is the latter view in which the concept of borderland is included. While borders separate, borderlands are regions of interaction where functional relationships are established that are acceptable for intercourse. Borderlands are created by various economic, social and family networks, which serve to integrate communities on both sides of the boundary. While borderlands proponents concentrate on similarities occurring within this transborder region, selecting those features which are evident of "resistance to an artificial division imposed by a political border" (McKinsey and Konrad 1989:2), others focus on expressions of difference. Borderlands are regions of both similarity and difference; what is emphasized often reflects underlying ideology.

I believe the most important contribution of the borderlands concept to an understanding of the historical geography of Canadian-American relations is that **it returns the symbol of border to the fact of place**. Our propensity in Canada to discern the border as a shield should not blind us to the powerful and sometimes overwhelming forces that bridge us with the

United States. Yet at the same time, the Canadian-American border/borderland is a complex line/place. Borderland communities certainly are "spatially proximate" as Victor Konrad (1992:199), a major proponent of the Borderlands thesis states, but the degree of economic and social integration varies both spatially and temporally. Borderlands are organic; they evolve over time to become different kinds of places. Examination of historical interactions within and interpretations of Canadian-American borderland regions reveals such differences.

An Historic-Geographical Perspective

The configuration of borderland regions can only be fully comprehended with reference to particular historical and geographical contexts. In this respect, the Great Plains-Prairie borderland region extending from an indefinite line of transition roughly paralleling the 98th meridian in the east to the Rocky Mountains in the west and from the Kansas-Nebraska border in the south to the parkland belt of the Prairie Provinces in the north differs markedly from other borderland regions. From a geographical perspective, this appears to be the most homogeneous of all the transborder regions. Physical uniformity is ensured by a grassland ecosystem and an extreme continental temperate climate although there are widely divergent soil types, vegetation, and surface features on the local scale. The borderland economy is predominantly rural and agrarian and is dominated by grain production. The region is also characterized by low population density and geographical isolation from markets. Unlike some other transborder regions, there is little continuous settlement along the boundary in the Great Plains-Prairies region. Such patterns reflect the peripherality of the region located in the interior of the continent.

Interactions and Convergence. The kinds of interactions taking place over time as well as similar geographical conditions have resulted in a considerable degree of borderland convergence. North-south intermingling occurred well before European settlement in this region as the American and Canadian fur trading systems converged along the upper Missouri River at the villages of the Mandan and Hidatsu Indians in what is now west-central North Dakota (Wood and Thiessen 1985:3). In the early 1800s, the Hudson Bay Company began purchasing oxen in the St. Paul market. The oxen were used to pull carts loaded with provisions purchased in the United States. The Red River colony established by Lord Selkirk in 1820 was supplied with

livestock from south of the border until 1833. After that date, the colonists in turn supplied livestock to farms and urban centers in Minnesota (Kaye 1981:163). Western Canada, or Ruperts Land as it was then known, was further integrated into a north-south economy when steamboats first descended the Red River to Fort Garry in 1859 and the railroad reached St. Paul just a short time thereafter. The Hudson Bay Company began to import its goods by way of the United States resulting in the decline of York Factory as a principal port of entry into Ruperts Land (Morton 1973:853).

The Red River-St. Paul ox-cart trade grew considerably by the 1840s and expanded to include the carrying of mails. A more reliable courier service was organized in 1853 and two years later a monthly service was established between Red River and Pembina right across the border. Attempts to develop a Canadian route through northern Ontario proved unsuccessful and so the colony depended entirely upon the U.S. Post Office at Pembina. Outgoing mail had to be paid in U.S. stamps sold in Fort Garry. In 1870 an agreement was signed with the U.S. Post Office for transmission of closed mails between Winnipeg and Windsor by way of Pembina, St. Paul, and Chicago (Whiteley 1993).

Settlement in western Canada was discouraged in part by the reports of various surveys which described the prairies in unfavorable terms. In particular, the report of the John Palliser expedition (1857-60) did much to bring about an interaction of British and American ideas about the plains. British explorers who were part of this expedition were influenced greatly by the American perception of the region as a desert (Warkentin 1975:157). Yet eventually, perceptions would change and the region was described in a more favorable light but settlement continued to be retarded because of the lack of a railway connection and the magnetic attraction of the American West.

Before the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), St. Paul, Minnesota, served as the gateway to the northwest and so it was only logical that Minnesota capitalists wanted to extend their empires into Canada with the development of railway networks and settlement schemes. Both St. Paul and Chicago competed for control of the northern plains and many politicians and businessmen in these centers saw the Hudson Bay Company monopoly as a barrier to realizing their dreams. Some, including the following editorialist in the *New York Tribune*, believed that rail transportation was the key to tapping the resources of the northwest and ensuring American control of the region:

The great northern thoroughfare across the American continent must be upon our own soil. Nothing else can so assure our political and commercial dominance, and hasten the assimilating process through which British America will ultimately drop into our hand like a ripe pear (as quoted in Sharp 1952:68).

Others, particularly eastern interests, believed that "commercial dominion could be achieved without the risks of annexation" (Sharp 1952:69).

Railroads beyond Chicago began bridging the Mississippi River in the 1850s and served to direct rather than follow settlement. Canadians moving west to Manitoba and the North West Territories had to pass through American territory before the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). Most traveled via the Grand Trunk Railway which was extended from Sarnia to Chicago in the 1860s. There they transferred on to trains traveling to St. Paul at which point they boarded stage coaches that carried them to Red River settlements. Settlers then traveled by land or steamboat to Fort Garry. This movement was greatly expedited when railroads were extended from St. Paul to the Dakotas.

Benton, Montana, located at the head of navigation on the Missouri River and functioning as the gateway to the Whoop-Up Trail reaching Fort Macleod and Calgary, dominated the commerce of the Canadian plains for about twenty years. Canadians complained about the monopoly of the company, believing that much of their money was financing the building of Benton. The monopoly of Benton and the grand schemes of the St. Paul capitalists were ended with the building of the CPR. Control of the region passed into Canadian hands and Winnipeg came to replace Benton, Chicago, and St. Paul as the key metropolis of the Canadian west (Sharp 1952:71).

As was the case in the Great Lakes region, transportation played a key role in development of both east-west intra-national and north-south international linkages. American penetration into the grasslands region by navigable waterways and then by railroad combined with occasional utterances of Manifest Destiny to provoke Canadians to create the province of Manitoba in 1870 and complete the CPR in 1886. The first railway infiltrating the Canadian prairies, the St. Paul, Minnesota, and Manitoba, later named the Great Northern, was built by a transplanted Canadian, James J. Hill. The CPR itself was modeled upon earlier American examples of government subsidized, land grant railways. In 1876, the Northern Pacific Railroad reached Winnipeg. In order to prevent local traffic from being drawn off to the United States, the CPR diverted its originally planned route through the

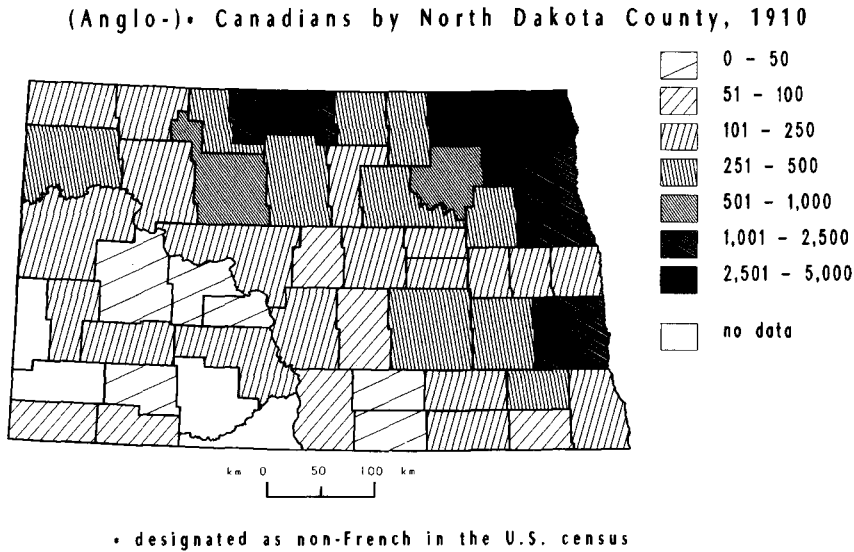


Figure 1. Anglo-Canadians by North Dakota County, 1910.

parkland belt southwards. A branch of Hill's Great Northern Railroad reached Portage La Prairie in 1888 (McIlwraith 1991:76). In response, the CPR built the Soo Line connecting its main line near Moose Jaw with St. Paul and Duluth. In addition, the CPR constructed and purchased other affiliate routes through the United States including the Duluth, South Shore and Atlantic Railway and the Minneapolis, St. Paul and S.S. Marie Railway (McIlwraith 1991:76). The irony of these developments as noted by McIlwraith (1991:73) is that "... the Canadian Pacific, supposed to be the staunch axis of nation building, was displaying its true continental business stripes." Yet it must be noted that several of the small branches of the major railroads crossing the border quickly failed.

Before the Canadian West experienced its settlement boom in the late 1890s, population movement within the borderland region was predominantly north-south as expensive goods produced in central Canada, depressed wheat prices, excessive transport and credit costs, and high mortgages drove Manitobans out of the province (Wilkins and Wilkins 1977:38). Yet unlike other borderland regions, the majority of emigrating Canadians came from other parts of North America, specifically Ontario, and to a lesser

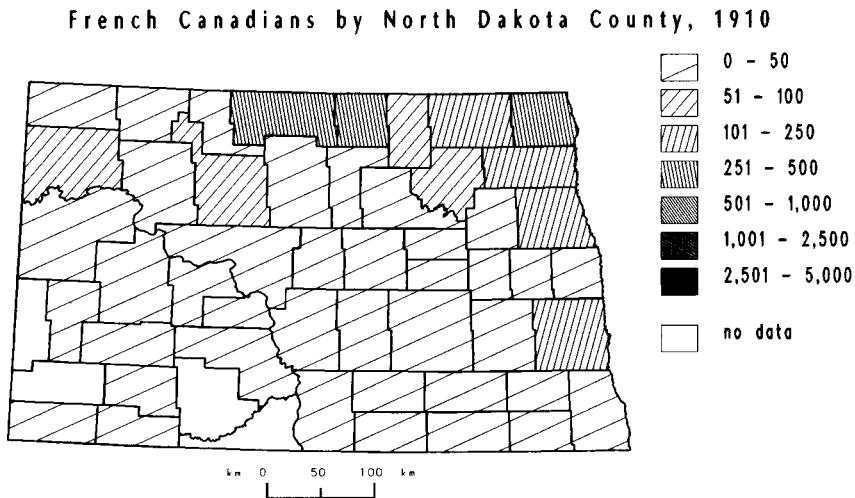


Figure 2. French Canadians by North Dakota County, 1910.

extent, Quebec. Canadians emigrating to North Dakota, both French- and English-speaking and primarily from Quebec and Ontario respectively, settled predominantly in the northern counties and along the border west of the Red River (Figs. 1 and 2). They were the most numerous among the foreign-born in Pembina and Walsh counties and ranked second in Grand Forks, Cass, and Traill counties in 1890.

French Canadians were more apt to locate in forested areas while their English-speaking counterparts were both more urban- and open prairie-oriented in their settlement. Many of the first settlers in the northern towns and townships were Ontarians who often chose the names of settlements based on the Ontario communities from which they originated. For example, Drayton in Pembina County was founded by a group of settlers from Drayton, Ontario, in 1878 (Wilkins 1988:44). Similarly, St. Thomas in Pembina County was named after St. Thomas, Ontario, by a former resident of that Canadian city, Thomas Lennon (St. Thomas Historical Book Committee 1980:10).

A deeper insight into Canadian migrants to the Red River valley is afforded by the same Historical Data Project files used by Hudson (1976) in his study of migration to North Dakota. Examination of the files for the most

populous Canadian counties—Pembina, Walsh, Grand Forks, and Cass—supports Hudson's claims that the overwhelming majority of Canadians came from Ontario and that most moved directly to North Dakota from their home province. They were generally young, some coming as children, with the majority being single and either traveling alone or with friends or accompanying their family. A relatively high rate of endogamy characterized this group, even among those marrying in North Dakota.

The Historical Data Project files are selective but reveal much about the motives and modes of migration and the importance of social associations in this movement, as evidenced in the following examples. Silas Fletcher Bateman, born in 1856 at East Oakwood, Victoria County, Ontario, came to Minto, Walsh County via the Great Northern in 1883. He accompanied his brother Martin who had made the trip the year before and had come back to Ontario to fetch his household goods. Martin followed his Uncle David who settled in Dakota in 1878. Silas and Martin formed a partnership with the two McCabe brothers from Lindsay, Ontario, who were coming to Dakota and all four shipped their goods in the same rail car.

Henry Warnington, born on August 12, 1864, near Fergus, Ontario, was inspired to go to Dakota by the success of another local, James J. Hill, who:

... had gone to St. Paul, Minnesota, and had become prominent as a railroad builder, who was now developing the prairies of Dakota Territory into grain fields. Stories of Mr. Hill's success in the States came back to his native Wellington County, Ontario. These impelled young Warnington, not yet nineteen years old, to go to Dakota Territory to seek his fortune.

In 1883 Henry and his cousin, John Keys, who paid his rail fare, left for Fargo. Immediately upon their arrival, Henry began working on the farm of his cousin, David Keys, for \$18 a month for eight months and \$10 a month for four months. Eventually, Wilmington bought two different quarter sections, sold them, and moved into Fargo where he got into the apartment renting business.

Philip Donahue was born in Carleton Place, Ontario, on July 17, 1854. Upon finishing school, Philip farmed with his father and worked in a lumber camp during the winter. In 1879, Philip, his parents, his brothers and sisters, and over fifty other farm families from the area boarded an immigrant train traveling to Fishers Landing, Minnesota, where they disembarked and traveled by horse and wagon to Grand Forks. Philip and a number

of others from this party filed for homestead in Lakeville Township in Grand Forks County.

These examples reflect a predominantly rural-rural migration with individuals for the most part moving directly from their place of birth to Dakota. The barrier presented by the Canadian Shield and the lack of rail transportation to the Canadian West until the late 1880s combined with the availability of homestead land south of the border to deflect large numbers of Canadians toward the American Middle West/ Plains region. The primary motive for migration among this young group was the desire to acquire cheap land. Older migrants viewed Dakota as presenting an opportunity for them and their children to acquire land and live close together. Geographical proximity would, they believed, ensure the continuity of the family unit. Many immigrants followed family members or friends west and many came with a number of other families from their Canadian homes. The transplantation of Ontario community names is reflective of the transplantation to a considerable extent of communities made possible by the processes of chain and cluster migration. This no doubt had a significant impact on their settlement experience in their new Dakota homes.

Yet unlike other transborder regions, movement in this trans-border region was predominantly south to north, reflecting the closely related closing of the Great Plains frontier and the opening of the western Canadian frontier. This reversal of migration that took place after 1896 was the direct result of Canadian economic expansion and American land hunger (Troper 1972:86-87). Department of Immigration propaganda made use of American mythology such as the agrarian ideal and the Horatio Alger stereotype in their attempt to lure American farmers. Yet at the same time, they focused on those differences between the two societies which were deemed to be most attractive, contrasting in particular the law and order image of Canada with the wild and lawless reputation of the American West (Troper 1972:87).

By the turn of the century, Canadian- and American-born had an impact on western Canadian settlement that was "completely out of proportion to the documentation of their movement and settlement on the prairies" (McCormick 1977:236). Researchers have focused primarily on the more obvious European settlement of the prairies, ignoring the numerically superior but largely invisible Canadian and American migrants. Harvest excursions first organized by the railways in 1890 and continuing until 1929 brought thousands of young men from eastern Canada to the west. While many of these young men returned home, others stayed using their earnings to support their homestead efforts. Canadian-born comprised well over fifty

TABLE 1
U.S. AND CANADIAN-BORN BY CENSUS DISTRICT, 1911

<i>Province & District</i>	<i>No. of U.S.-born</i>	<i>% of total population</i>	<i>No. of Can.-born</i>	<i>% of total population</i>	<i>Total Population</i>
<i>Manitoba</i>	<i>16326</i>	<i>3.6</i>	<i>264828</i>	<i>58.1</i>	<i>455614</i>
Brandon	983	2.5	24625	62.0	39734
Dauphin	1735	3.9	26905	61.1	44000
Lisgar	527	2.2	17381	74.0	23501
Macdonald	1920	5.4	23392	65.3	35841
Marquette	1016	3.0	20766	61.8	33598
Portage la Prairie	784	2.8	19643	70.3	27950
Provencher	1863	4.6	27076	66.5	40693
Selkirk	1111	2.1	27206	51.2	53091
Souris	751	2.6	20845	71.8	29049
Winnipeg	5636	4.4	56989	44.5	128157
<i>Saskatchewan</i>	<i>69628</i>	<i>14.1</i>	<i>248751</i>	<i>50.5</i>	<i>492432</i>
Assiniboia	7049	16.6	24336	57.2	42556
Battleford	7284	15.5	24588	52.2	47075
Humboldt	9679	18.5	22100	42.3	52195
Mackenzie	2861	7.0	16764	41.3	40588
Moose Jaw	18712	21.3	41886	47.7	87725
Prince Albert	3939	10.8	21191	58.3	36319
Qu'Appelle	1842	5.2	21747	61.1	35608
Regina	9232	13.0	35011	49.6	70556
Saltcoats	1492	5.2	14708	51.3	28695
Saskatoon	7538	14.7	26420	51.7	51145
<i>Alberta</i>	<i>81357</i>	<i>21.7</i>	<i>162237</i>	<i>43.3</i>	<i>374663</i>
Calgary	7657	12.6	26115	43.1	60502
Edmonton	8126	14.2	29173	51.1	57045
Macleod	7625	22.1	15900	46.1	34504
Medicine Hat	23615	33.4	23492	33.3	70606
Red Deer	18725	30.5	24346	39.7	61372
Strathcona	11788	23.8	21098	42.6	49473
Victoria	3821	9.3	22113	53.7	41161

Source: *Fifth Census of Canada, 1911, Vol. II (Ottawa: 1913) Table XVI, pp. 376, 377, 379-381, 422-424*

percent of all four census districts of the North West Territories in 1901, and 58.1 percent, 50.5 percent, and 43.3 percent of the populations of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta respectively in 1911 (Table 1). Alberta was by far the most common destination among the census districts for American-born, with 54 percent of these migrants, including a significant number of Mormons from Utah, acquiring Canadian citizenship in 1901. Similarly, over

half the American-born in Saskatchewan were Canadian citizens in that same year.

Early in the pioneer period, Ontarians tended to settle in wooded areas as they associated well developed woodland with good soil and depended on the wood for fuel. Yet by the late 1880s, they followed the American example and moved onto the open prairie where barbed wire for fencing, tools for deep well drilling and dryland farming techniques made it possible to break land quickly and get a wheat crop in right away (Rees 1988:45-46). In Saskatchewan, Canadians tended to settle close to existing railway lines, particularly along the main CPR line near Moosomin, Indian Head, Regina, Moose Jaw, and Maple Creek; along the Souris branch line of the CPR; and the CNR main line near Yorkton. There was also a considerable number of them south and east of Prince Albert. Yet even though the majority of Canadians by this date had settled on the open prairie, a greater proportion of them were located in the parkbelt than the Americans.

As mentioned, immigration to Canada increased dramatically after 1896. Table 2 shows immigration and homestead figures for the 1900-1910 decade. The British were the largest immigrant group during the period although the numbers of Americans (including American-born and naturalized Americans) and, to a lesser extent, continental Europeans increased dramatically at the end of the decade. While many of the British were attracted to the developing industrial heartland of Ontario and Quebec, Americans and continental Europeans were more responsive to the opportunities presented by settlement in the West. Between 1897 and 1910, 42 percent of arrivals from the United States and 32% of arrivals from continental Europe made homestead entry in western Canada. By contrast, only 22% of the English, 22% of the Scots and 26% of the Irish filed for homesteads. In the last five years of the decade, Americans and continental Europeans comprised 28.5% and 16.3% of the homestead entries respectively while the English, Scots, and Irish made up only 14.2%, 3.5%, and 1.3% of the total respectively.

Yet it was the Canadian-born that made the most homestead entries during this period, 35.6% of the total, although the statistics do not differentiate between Canadian internal migrants and returning Canadians. For the year ending June 30, 1906, two-thirds of all Canadian homestead entries were in Saskatchewan (Widdis 1992a:257, 259). It remains unclear as to the actual numbers of American-born and returning Canadian-born that made their way across the border during this period although there are a number of different estimates for individual years and periods. The 1906 Census of

TABLE 2
IMMIGRATION TO CANADA AND HOMESTEAD ENTRIES,
1900-1910

Immigration to Canada							
Year	British		Continental		U.S.		Totals
1900-01	11810		19352		17987		49149
1901-02	17259		23732		26388		67379
1902-03	41792		37099		49473		128364
1903-04	50374		34728		45229		133331
1904-05	65359		37255		43652		146266
1905-06	86796		44349		57919		189064
1906-07	55791		34217		34659		124667
1907-08	120182		83975		58312		262469
1908-09	52901		34175		59832		146908
1909-10	59790		45206		103798		208794
Totals (#s)	562054		394088		497249		1456391
Totals (%s)	38.7		27.1		34.2		100

Homestead Entries							
Year	English	Scots	Irish	U.S.	Continental Europe	Canada	Totals
1900-01	659	182	99	2026	1866	3335	8167
1901-02	1096	300	184	4761	2653	5679	14673
1902-03	2816	724	336	10942	7260	9305	13183
1903-04	3486	911	267	7730	4909	8770	26073
1904-05	4284	1225	421	8532	4999	11358	10819
1905-06	5897	1657	543	12485	5955	15332	41869
1906-07	3032	807	252	6059	2951	8546	21647
1907-08	4840	1026	339	7818	5373	11028	30424
1908-09	5649	1310	506	9829	7265	14522	39081
1909-10	5459	1326	546	13566	6896	13775	41568
Totals (#s)	37218	9468	3493	83748	50127	101650	285704
Totals (%s)	13.0	3.3	1.2	29.3	17.5	35.7	100

¹fiscal year starting July 1

²fiscal period of 9 months

Source: Minister of the Interior, *Immigration Facts & Figures*, Ottawa, 1910.

Population for the prairie provinces reveals that more than 233,000 immigrants arrived in the region between 1901 and June 24th of 1906, with the greatest number settling in Saskatchewan, followed by Manitoba and Alberta (Table 3). American-born dominated in Alberta and to a lesser extent in Saskatchewan while British-born were the most significant immigrant group

TABLE 3
IMMIGRANTS BY BIRTHPLACE AND NUMBERS ARRIVING FOR
PERIOD 1901 TO JUNE 24, 1906

Birthplace	ARRIVALS							
	N.W. Provinces		Manitoba		Saskatchewan		Alberta	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
United States	74846	31.8	7350	9.1	32449	36.8	35047	52.8
British Isles	82332	35	43877	54.6	23316	26.4	15139	22.8
Austria-Hungary	34233	14.6	13945	17.3	14579	16.5	5709	8.6
Russia	14564	6.2	5403	6.7	5935	6.7	3226	4.9
Norway/Sweden	12387	5.3	2690	3.3	5635	6.4	4062	6.1
Germany	9261	3.9	2864	3.6	4411	5	1986	3
France	2694	1.1	1149	1.4	931	1.1	614	0.9
Iceland	2100	0.9	1551	1.9	421	0.5	128	0.2
Belgium	1401	0.6	763	0.9	372	0.4	266	0.4
Poland	1256	0.5	824	1	226	0.3	206	0.3
All Countries	235074	-	80416	-	88275	-	66383	-

Source: Census of Population and Agriculture of the Northwest Provinces, 1906; Sessional Paper No.170 (Ottawa,1907) Table VII, 96-98

in Manitoba. A boom in wheat prices resulted in an increased influx of Americans into the region between 1906 and 1911. The two major border crossing points for Americans and returning Canadians entering the prairies were at Emerson, Manitoba and North Portal, Saskatchewan, with the Canadian National (CN), Soo Line, and Burlington Northern railways meeting at the former and the Soo Line crossing the latter in 1894 and joining the CPR main line near Moose Jaw. Prior to the railway, settlers for the most part entered Canada by wagon and horse.

The peak years of migration from the United States into Canada were 1910 and 1911 when 93,798 and 121,451 immigrants respectively registered with border officials (Widdis 1989). Harvey (1991:203) shows that U.S.-born comprised 31.8 percent of all immigrants and 47.2 percent of all immigrant farmers in Canada for the period 1908 to 1915. Bicha (1962) estimates that close to one million American residents, primarily from North and South Dakota, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska and Michigan, crossed the border between 1898 and 1914. Closely related to this figure is the estimate of a million and a quarter American immigrants tendered by Sharp (1947:67). Prairie census districts with the highest numbers of American-born were primarily rural in 1911, the crest of the land boom (Table 1).

Few Americans chose the longer settled Manitoba, instead locating along the railway lines in Saskatchewan and Alberta. While many of this

TABLE 4
 HOMESTEAD ENTRIES BY AMERICANS AND LAST STATE OF
 RESIDENCE BY YEAR OF ENTRY
 TOP TEN STATES OF ORIGIN, 1893-1921

State	Total
North Dakota(1)	43,814
Minnesota	29,439
Iowa	8,023
Wisconsin	7,297
Michigan	7,103
Washington	6,090
South Dakota	5,949
Illinois	4,881
Nebraska	4,347
Montana	3,452

(1) North and South Dakota totals appear to have been combined until 1905

Sources: Arrival Reports, Department of the Interior, 1894-1922

group chose open prairie, those originally born in Europe often preferred regions more closely resembling European landscapes (McCormick 1977). In 1916, U.S.-born comprised 35.9%, 29.8% and 8.2% of the foreign-born populations of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba respectively (Harvey 1991:207). Manitoba, developing earlier than Saskatchewan and Alberta, was largely colonized by Ontarians and was less valued as an agricultural destination by American-resident migrants. Most American homesteaders came from northern border states, particularly those in the Great Plains and upper Midwest regions (Table 4). North Dakota was by far the most important state of origin during the 1893-1921 period with Minnesota a distant second.

For most of the 1880-1930 period, it is unclear what percentage of the American migration were returning Canadians. Using the annual reports of the U.S. Commissioner General of Immigration, Gold (1933:170) estimates that between 1910 and 1914, 108,064 Canadian-born returned home (1910 - 15,203, 1911 - 17,078, 1912 - 38,086, 1913 - 19,279, 1914 - 18,418).

Bicha(1962:299) contends that a large percentage of the estimated 120,000 North Dakotans moving to western Canada between 1898 and 1914 were ex-Canadians and their children. Canadian officials made a conscious effort to attract their former countrymen by concentrating:

. . . their attention in areas where former Canadians were numerous, and the difficulty of their task was lessened by the fact that many of the ex-Canadians were a "border people" who were easily persuaded to return to the Dominion. These Canadian repatriots came principally from Pembina, Cavalier, Walsh, and Grand Fork Counties, the Canadian-born population of which varied from 14.5% (Grand Forks) to 38.2% (Pembina) (Bicha 1962:299).

Shepard (1994:92) believes that such numbers were exaggerated by Canadian officials wishing to promulgate the "myth of the returning Canadian." This group, he contends, comprised just a small fraction of what he estimates to be a movement of approximately 750,000 people from the United States to Canada during the period 1900 to 1930. Shepard (1994:94) also reasons that because Canadians living in the United States were essentially an urban population, it is unlikely that they were a large part of the movement north into Canada. While his opinion that returning Canadians constituted a small percentage of this migration is most likely true, the urban proclivity as revealed in the decennial census does not necessarily mean that Canadian-born in the United States were overwhelmingly urban. Evidence (Widdis 1998) indicates that for a significant minority urban residence was just a temporary stage whereby they could find employment and make enough money to allow them to move to newly opened agricultural regions further west.

After 1910, an increasing number of Americans were attracted to the job opportunities present in the growing cities of Ontario. Yet a very large percentage of this group did not stay and returned to the United States. Bicha (1962) suggests that nearly two-thirds of Americans eventually returned home. Rees (1988:67) contends that because the number of patents never exceeded one-third the number of entries made three years earlier, Bicha's hypothesis is valid. After the First World War began, immigration of Americans into Canada declined considerably.

A useful source for reconstructing the patterns of Americans and Canadians (internal and return migrants) coming to western Canada is the local history (Widdis 1992a). Birthplaces and last places of residence were mapped

for all (N=1265) migrants born in Canada and the United States before 1900 and settling before 1920 in seven rural municipalities (RMs) of Saskatchewan chosen for study (Fig. 3). These municipalities were selected on the basis of their not being dominated by ethno-religious bloc or land company settlement. Over 54% of the migrants were born in Ontario and they comprised over 91% of the entire Canadian-born group. Ontario-born migrants settling in these seven RMs came from all over the province, with the greatest percentage coming from Bruce and Grey counties, a major source region for Hudson's (1976) Ontario-born migrants in North Dakota. Rapid population growth in these counties between 1850 and 1880 created an unfavorable population/land ratio, making them "likely source areas for subsequent frontiers" (Hudson 1976:246). The St. Lawrence Valley and eastern townships of Quebec comprised a secondary Canadian source region but the majority of Québécois who left these areas moved to New England. Only 6.2% of the sample migrants were born in the United States, the majority in Iowa and Minnesota.

More important, perhaps, for many migrants was last place of residence before settling because it was in this place that strong kin and kith relations shaping their future migration experiences in western Canada may have developed. Over thirty percent of the migrants moved more than once before settling in Saskatchewan but for the sake of simplicity only the last places of residence are mapped (Fig. 4). This map includes the last North American places of residence for European-born as well as for Canadians and Americans. Many Ontarians moved directly from their rural Ontario homes to Saskatchewan although there was some internal movement in their native province, primarily to urban centers by the young and to newer agricultural regions by those born earlier in the century. A considerable number had also moved to Manitoba before settling in Saskatchewan. While Ontario continued to be most important as a source region (46.7%), Manitoba in particular (19.3%), Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota formed important secondary source regions. Many of the Scandinavian, German and other eastern European groups settling in Saskatchewan previously resided in Manitoba, the Dakotas, Minnesota or other states in the Midwest region. Many of the English-, Scottish-, and Irish-born last resided in Ontario, Manitoba, or the upper Midwest.

Canadian birthplaces and American last places of residence were mapped for Canadian-born migrants (N=174) returning to 27 Saskatchewan RMs (Fig. 5). As was the case for the seven RM sample, the majority of Canadian-born came from Ontario with a significant number hailing from

the eastern townships and the St. Lawrence Valley of Quebec. Again as Hudson (1976) found in his study, two important Ontario source areas were the Huron Tract north of London and Bruce and Grey counties.

Most of the returning Canadians last resided in North Dakota, clustering very close to the international border (Fig. 6). About half of this group moved directly from their Ontario homes to North Dakota while the other half moved westward in either one of two general patterns, i.e., a succession of usually blue-collar, nonfarm occupations in or near Midwestern cities (Detroit, Duluth, Minneapolis-St. Paul), or movement from one or two farms located elsewhere throughout the Midwest and the Great Plains states. Few returning Canadians last resided in states not approximate to Saskatchewan although some, primarily Québécois-born, came from industrial centers in New England.

Both through a series of stage and direct moves, Americans came by the thousands to the Prairie Provinces. How were they regarded by the host population? Attitudes held by native-born towards American migrants are difficult to discern, although newspapers do serve as communicators of public opinion. The views expressed by Canadians towards American immigrants in Saskatchewan newspapers were certainly mixed. While the American was generally perceived in favorable terms, less enthusiastic opinions were directed towards American society and government.

Like their Anglo-Canadian counterparts in the United States, Anglo-Americans in Western Canada were generally inconspicuous, even in areas of relatively high concentration such as southeastern and southwestern Saskatchewan. Yet despite their low-profile, Americans made a significant impression in the Canadian West, a contribution embellished somewhat by Arthur Morton (1938:170-71) in the following statement:

As a large proportion of the American settlers were dry farmers, and many settled in the semi-arid areas, egs. between Estevan and Regina, between Regina and Saskatoon, and in southwestern Saskatchewan and southern Alberta, and in most cases made those areas blossom as the rose, they may be said to have contributed more than any other nationality to increase the productivity of the Canadian northwest.

While having a major impact on the development of the region, Americans, just as the British, were not lumped with other "foreign" groups. Hansen and Brebner (1940) picture the American migration to the Canadian West as part

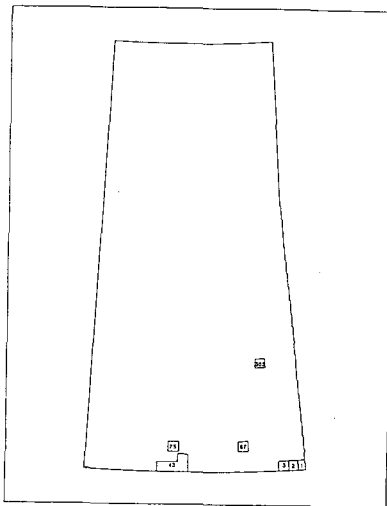
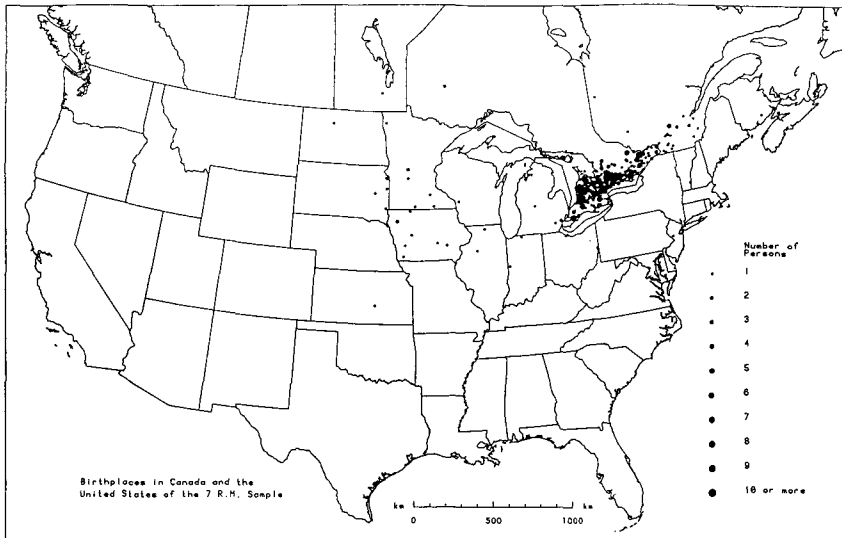


Figure 3. Birthplaces in Canada and the United States of the seven RM. Sample

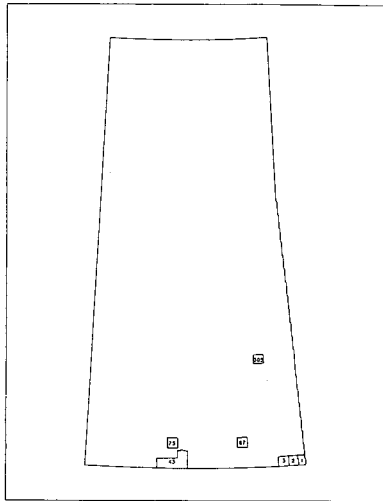
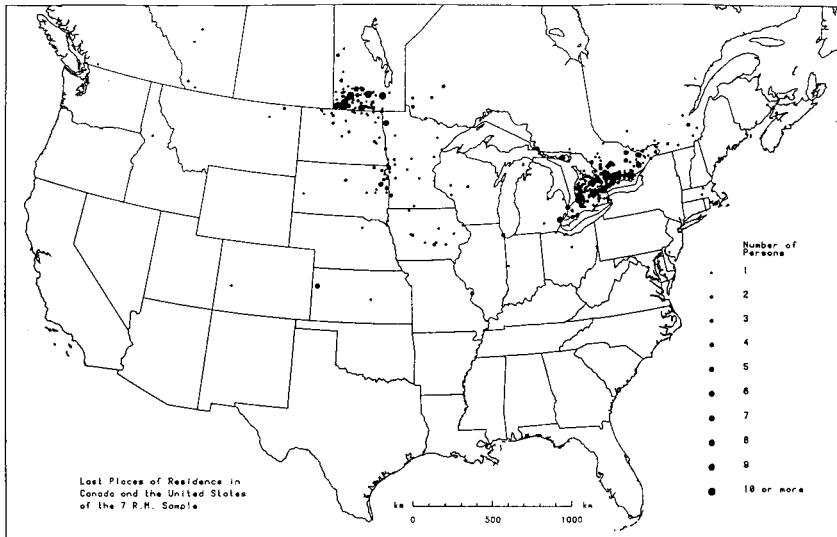


Figure 4. Last places of residence in Canada and the United States of the seven RM. Sample

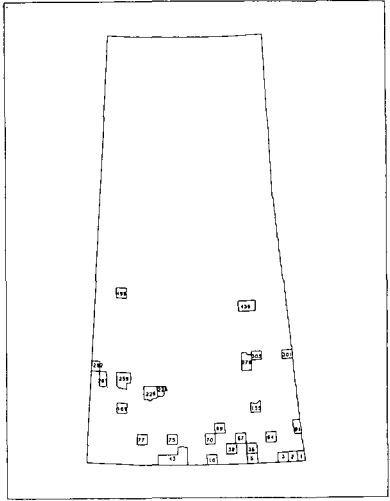
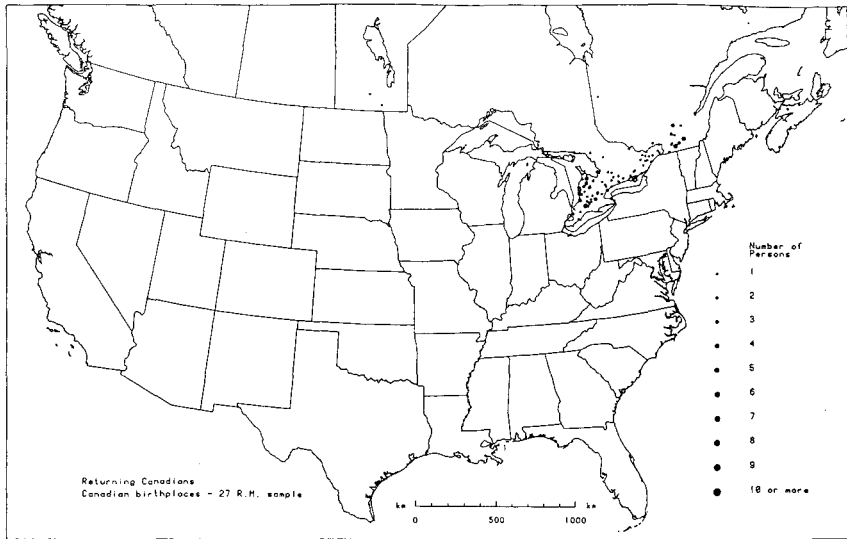


Figure 5. Returning Canadians, Canadian Birthplaces: twenty-seven RM. Sample

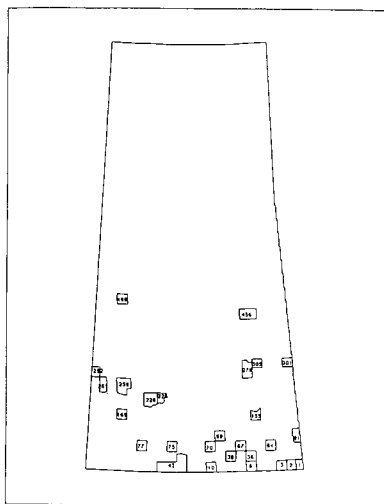
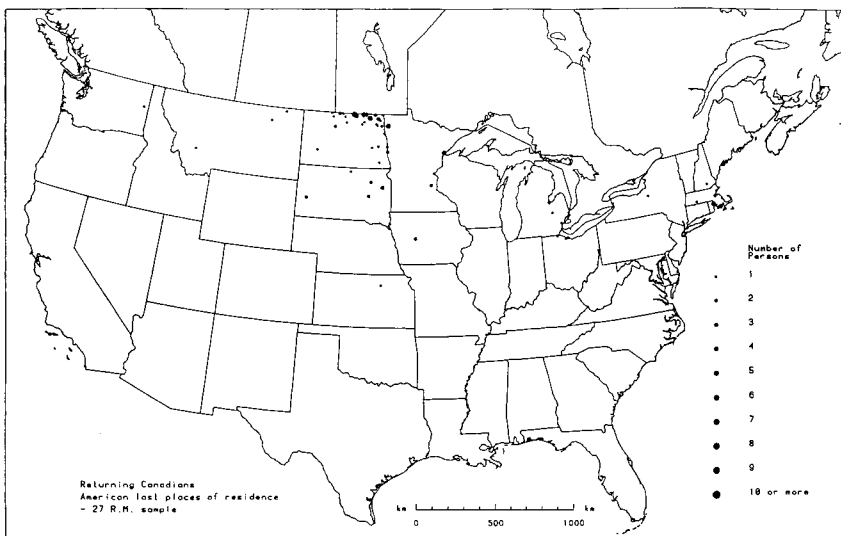


Figure 6. Returning Canadians, American last places of residence: twenty-seven RM. Sample

of a continental westward movement, apolitical but individualistically motivated, and representing a shared sense of participation in a larger frontier dynamic among Anglophones on both sides of a relatively meaningless border.

The newspapers valued American immigrants for their wealth and experience. An analysis of farming operations of 70,703 individuals presented in a 1906 census bulletin entitled *Immigrants of the Agricultural Class in the Northwest* pictured Americans as having a wealth of farming experience and exceeding their proportion of the total sample of immigrants (N=205,774) in terms of possession of occupied acreage, acres in crops, and livestock owned (Harvey 1991:219). They were described in a March 31, 1893, edition of the *Moose Jaw Times* as:

. . . a more than valuable class, because; in addition to the equipment for the pursuit of agriculture which so many of them bring into the country with them—that is their cattle, horses and implements—and which enable them at once to commence the cultivation of their lands, they bring also an experience of the climate and soil characteristic of the great prairie regions of the west, of the most approved methods of agriculture . . . which it takes the immigrant from Britain or continental Europe some years to acquire.

Mention was also made, although often secondarily, of the bonds of unity fostered by immigration and family ties. An editorial appearing in the April 2, 1910, edition of the Swift Current *Sun* welcoming North Dakota settlers to Saskatchewan stresses the close relationship between Canadians and Americans:

We welcome them, help them, and wish them God speed in the work they are doing for the upholding of this, their new country and home. . . . This feeling is natural to people of the same blood and we ought to find on either side of the line a reciprocal kindly spirit.

While generally positive about the individual American immigrant, Saskatchewan papers were often critical about American society. The perceived ethnocentrism and vanity of America grated on editors' nerves, as reflected in the following excerpt from the February 7, 1888, editorial appearing in the *Regina Leader*:

Montesquieu remarks in his *L'Esprit des Lois* that it is impossible to satisfy the vain nature of the citizen of the United States. . . . The grave and biting Montesquieu . . . tells us how when you grant to an American that his country is free, he insists on your agreeing it is the largest among nations in point of territory, and when you have conceded this he demands whether any other country has such rivers and so on. This vanity lends its character to their greed, and the most boastful is the least dignified and honorable of nations, the most grasping.

American Manifest Destiny and the threat of political annexation generated the most passion among Saskatchewan commentators. The December 4, 1891, edition of the *Moose Jaw Times* offered the following remarks regarding the threat of annexation:

Annexation with the American republic finds no place in the political belief of the people of Canada. . . . We do not think that the people of any part of the Dominion take any stock in the theory that annexation is the manifest and ultimate destiny of Canada. On the contrary, an increasing faith in the development of the unlimited resources of the country, a desire to fashion our institutions after the pattern of those grand old British institutions from which we draw our best inspirations is the characteristic of the Canadian people at present. . . . Politically, we could lose our identity . . .

To partly allay fears about annexation, the *Qu'Appelle Vidette* published a number of excerpts from articles noting a growing sense of Canadian unity. The March 13th, 1900, edition printed an excerpt of an article written by Charles Dudley Warner, an American, published in the March 1899 edition of *Harper's Magazine*:

In Canada today there is a growing sense of independence; very little, taking the whole mass, for annexation. . . . Among the minor causes of reluctance to a union are distrust of the Government of the United States; . . . dislike of our quadrennial elections; the want of a system of civil service; . . . [and] dislike of our sensational and irresponsible journalism. . . . The railway development, the Canadian Pacific alone, has . . . given a new impulse to the sentiment of

nationality. It has produced a sort of unity which no Act of Parliament could ever create.

While appreciating American capital and labor, Saskatchewan papers also expressed some regret about the weakening of the British connection, in economic as well as social terms. A July 1910 article appearing in the *Regina Leader* entitled "Wake Up England" argued that Britain must be more aggressive in marketing British products in Canada:

Regret is often expressed in Old Country quarters that Canadians do not seem imbued with the Imperial sentiment sufficiently strongly to lead them to give British made manufacturers a preference. They admit that the Laurier government has done its share in giving British products preferential treatment in the Canadian tariff schedules but despite this fact British manufacturing articles do not make the desired headway with the Canadian people. . . . If British manufacturers are to secure a fair trade in Canada they must take heed to the warning addressed to them by His Majesty, King George V, when, as Prince of Wales, on his return from his famous trip around the world during which he traveled across Canada, uttered . . . "the Old Country must wake up, if she intends to maintain her old position of pre-eminence in her colonial trade against foreign competitors".

What effects any unfavorable opinions held by western Canadians regarding American society and government had in terms of attitudes directed toward American immigrants are largely unknown but there is little evidence, at least in the Saskatchewan newspapers, of a significant anti-Americanism among native Canadians or European migrants. The sheer number of Americans by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century ensured that they would play a major role in developing the province. After 1911, American immigrants were more likely to go to other regions of Canada, responding to changing economic conditions (Harvey 1991:204).

Indeed, strong forces linked people living on both sides of the international boundary within this borderland region. Many prairie communities are named after both famous and ordinary Americans. Similar problems such as land use in an area of recurring drought, similarity in farmers' organizations, persistent agrarian radicalism, relations with eastern centers, transportation, investment in a frontier environment, and even, Sharp (1952) reasons,

a Plains culture, gave unity to this part of North America. Americans brought with them experience and capital needed to develop Western Canada. Yet although this group generally had more money than European immigrants, Hansen and Brebner (1940) argue that American homesteaders were those unable to purchase property at home and thus were poorer than their fellow countrymen who chose not to move. But in a land where capital was in shortage, the relative wealth of Americans compared to other immigrants was immediately noted.

American capital, technology, and settlers made significant contributions to the development of the Canadian West although there is considerable debate as to the nature and degree of their impact. American technology, including the steel plough, barbed wire and the self-binding reaper, along with dryland farming techniques, facilitated the move into drier regions and the development of wheat monoculture. American farm implement companies such as International Harvester would eventually follow American settlers into western Canada (Shepard 1994:147). Everitt (1991) traces the introduction and diffusion of grain elevators from the United States, and demonstrates that after an early Canadian dominance, Americans came to control the grain trade in western Canada, only to be replaced again by Canadian dominance after 1921, largely because Americans became Canadians.

Much debate centers on the impact of American influences on the development of the ranching industry in southwestern Saskatchewan and southern Alberta. Revisionists challenge the traditional assumption that the Canadian ranching industry was primarily a product of American capital and technology and instead argue that government support, British capital and the presence of the Northwest Mounted Police created a conservative community devoted to Victorian ideals and produced an environment much different than the American-style frontier (Breen 1983). This position in turn has been challenged by those who, while not denying eastern Canadian and British institutions and values, maintain that in order to cope with a challenging environment, found it necessary to adopt American practices and employ American labor. In this context, Elofson (1992) shows how American immigrants from Montana and other western states found it easier to adjust to the range than did Britons and eastern Canadians. The latter groups in fact hired American cowboys who introduced ropemanship and horsemanship. While acknowledging that both the Canadian and American cattle industries owed a debt to British capital (Evans 1979), Evans (1987, 1995) argues that the 1891 and 1901 censuses reveal that one out of every five

cattlemen working on the Alberta range were Americans and that experienced American foremen were essential to the Canadian industry in terms of their abilities in handling workers and monitoring markets and prices.

Some suggest that the peripheral position of this borderland region within North America has produced a uniformity of attitude among its residents. Mildred Schwartz (1991:39) claims that farmers on both sides of the border as well as being sensitive to world markets were dependent almost entirely on "railroads for transporting their products, on grain companies for storage and sale, and on banks and shopkeepers for credit." It was from this shared experience, she believes, that collective interests, a hinterland mentality, and a common consciousness developed. Grievances in western Canada were directed towards central Canada while in the northern plains, North Dakotans directed their anger towards Minnesota, "a state with which North Dakota had a quasi-colonial relationship" (Schwartz 1991:42). Farmers on both sides of the border were angry with their common dependency status but political action on the Canadian side, Sharp maintains, was stimulated greatly by the ideas and associations that accompanied American migrants. Organizations such as "the American Society of Equity, the Non-Partisan League, and the Ku Klux Klan . . . gave strong support to the demands for prohibition, direct legislation, the single tax, the recall of public officials, direct primaries, woman suffrage, free trade, and proportional representation" (Sharp 1947:74).

In the most recent round of this debate, Shepard (1994:337) responds to what he pictures as an attack on Sharp by Canadians with a biased nationalist perspective. He even goes so far to say that "while Canada retained political control of the region, the technological and social foundation of the Canadian Plains was decidedly American" (Shepard 1994:15). Importation of dry farming techniques, farm machinery, college faculty, and agrarian movements such as the Patrons of Industry and the Farmers' Alliance resulted in what Shepard (1994:341) describes as an "American imperialism by invitation." Schwartz also emphasizes the important role that American ideas espoused by political theorists and radical writers and carried by immigrants played in the development of populist organizations in western Canada, such as the Nonpartisan League and the United Farmers of Alberta. "A transnational environment" prevailed, where farmers on both sides of the border "represented one side of the social cleavage dividing primary producers from secondary producers and, given their location, one side of the regional cleavage dividing peripheral areas from core areas" (Schwartz 1991:46-47).

Differences and Divergence. While integration within this region has occurred because of a common hinterland syndrome, migration and capitalist forces, it is also a region where, in Frances Kaye's (1989:1) words, "contrasts are most precise simply because the two cultures, the two nations, meet face to face on a territory differentiated only by that political abstraction, the border." The contrasts that do exist can be attributed to different settlement histories, different political cultures, different urban systems, and different core-periphery relations.

Not all agree with Shepard (1994) as to the degree of American influence on the Canadian West. Breen (1983), for instance, challenges Sharp's (1952) assumption that land use and conditions were similar on both sides of the border and plays down the American impact on the Canadian ranching industry. Palmer (1982:223) argues that American immigrants played little part in the development of nativism in Alberta. While acknowledging that Americans were influential in the development of agrarian populism on the prairies, W. L. Morton (1970:290) emphasizes that "... immigrant groups ... never endeavored to change the basic institutions of the country and, in the main, left politics to the Canadian-born ... old Canada was extraordinarily successful in making the Prairie West Canadian."

While Lipset in his original version of *Agrarian Socialism* (1950) attributes the success of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan to the isolation produced by the organization of the province into rural and urban municipalities, he later (1968) places more emphasis on the impact of political structures, in particular arguing that the Canadian federal system and the parliamentary form of government provided the opportunity for the emergence of third parties in Canada in ways that were not possible in the United States. In response, Schwartz (1991:46) argues that farmers' movements were just as significant in the United States as in Canada and points to the fact that third parties in Canada have only had success at the regional level. This is certainly true, but the fact remains that this particular third party was successful at a large enough scale to capture power in the province of Saskatchewan. Lipset (1968:xvi-xvii) also stresses the differential impact of a revolutionary versus counterrevolutionary tradition at the national scale. Schwartz (1991:46) concedes the value of this thesis, arguing that "when there were borrowed elements, these were transformed in directions affected by both national and local conditions." This points to the importance of considering the effects of culture in interpretation of the borderland region.

In this context, attention must be placed on Canadian policies which fostered a degree of ethnic cohesiveness in the face of Anglo-conformity. European immigrants and eastern Canadian migrants, particularly from urban-industrial working-class backgrounds, carried values and ideas that would prove to be supportive of socialist movements on the prairies. Social and ecological conditions may also have bolstered agrarian movements. The isolation produced by government support of ethnic bloc settlement combined with low population densities and a dispersed settlement pattern may have, as Lipset argues, played some role in the evolution of rural class consciousness.

Historical and geographical factors including isolation from large markets and an extreme environment have hindered urban development on both sides of the border but not to the same extent. While the image of the desert eventually was abandoned in favor of a more acceptable view of a farming frontier, the northern American Plains was never regarded as the "Promised Land." That was the symbol attached to California and the Pacific Northwest or, in the case of Mormons, Utah. But for many Europeans and North Americans, the Canadian Prairies held the promise of a "New Eden" and "The Last Best West." The east-west flow of trade and migration into the west paralleling the transcontinental railway was viewed by Canadians as an important, if not the key, ingredient in the development of the nation. The Far West, British Columbia, was too remote and unknown to have much impact on the Canadian consciousness but more was known of the potential of the more accessible prairies.

In this context, a regional approach to urbanization reveals that urban development reached a greater level of intensity on the Canadian side of the 49th parallel. Winnipeg emerged as the regional metropolis with the rest of Manitoba and the North West Territories as its hinterland. Parallel urban development in Alberta was ensured somewhat by the great distance separating this part of the prairies from Winnipeg but the latter would continue to have considerable hold over Saskatchewan well after the province was established in 1905. Geographically, Winnipeg was ideally situated as to assume the role as the gateway city for the Canadian West. Indeed, natives of that city viewed the prairies as their hinterland just as central Canadians did (Burghardt 1971).

Accessibility also favored links between border communities on the American side and Winnipeg. Even though a dependency relationship developed between the prairies and central Canada, whereby prairie centers were dependent to a significant degree on the fortunes of eastern metropolises to

which they were subordinate, a regional urban system based on the railway evolved, but no comparable system would develop on the American side. There, urban centers functioned primarily as commercial outposts for Minneapolis-St. Paul and other large cities encircling the region. And so while other Canadian borderlands served in varying degrees as hinterlands for cities in corresponding American borderlands, the same was not the case in the Great Plains-Prairies region. Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta were more subordinate to the metropolitan cores of eastern Canada than any adjacent American region even though they were integrated into the Canadian and world economies to a significant part through the efforts of American entrepreneurs and as a result of diffusion of innovations from south of the border.

While Shepard (1994) quite rightly scolds the attack on Sharp by "nationalist" historians who criticize the latter for over-emphasizing similarities and under-emphasizing differences, he downplays the significant distinctions between the Canadian and American plains as noted by the very person he is defending. In his very balanced article entitled "The Northern Great Plains: A Study in Canadian-American Regionalism," Sharp (1952:63) argues that "similarity does not imply identity" and notes the following differences which distinguished the two societies within this trans-border region:

Many extraregional relationships and many heritages from older societies were far too powerful to be affected by environment. Nationalism, the most pervasive influence in modern society, was unaffected by its movement into a plains environment and created Canadian plainsmen to the north and American plainsmen to the south. Each possessed loyalties outside the region that prevented a complete identification of common problems. . . . The rush of settlement into the Canadian West never outran organized government as it so frequently did in the American West. . . . Constitutional differences places far greater powers in the hands of the central government under the Canadian confederation than in the American system. Litigation over water rights in the semiarid West was avoided in Canada by the denial of riparian rights, the rejection of the doctrine of appropriation, and the acceptance of the legal principle that water was the property of the Crown. Stronger ties with Europe through the Imperial relationship and a continuing in-migration from the mother country provided a further source of difference. A

conscious emphasis upon English culture reflected the recency of the transition and the immaturity of Canadian culture. On top of this, the frontier experience was too brief to have more than an ephemeral influence, and civilization in western Canada sprang up nearly full-grown, possessing a twentieth century sophistication. Yet it was true that society on the northern plains, American and Canadian, was the heir of many cultures, the copy of none (Sharp 1952:65, 75-76).

And so while Sharp emphasizes the strong connections between the West and both the rest of Canada and Britain, Shepard (1994:342) offers the somewhat immoderate conclusion that “ultimately though the Canadian Plains did not become part of the United States, despite the tremendous American influence upon the region’s evolution, *because the settlers who moved north did not demand it*” (my italics).

Conclusions: Historical Geography and the Great Plains Borderland

My review of Canadian-American borderland interactions and interpretations supports many of the arguments made by proponents of the Borderlands Thesis. Peoples, ideas, and institutions rarely have clear, precise identities. These elements of identity are mobile; they begin from somewhere else and move across borders. To assess national and regional identities in Canada, we must identify those historic-geographical forces operating both from within and outside these units. Besides describing similarities that occur on both sides within the borderland region, the borderlands concept focuses on those shaping forces extending from and into the United States. Economic, social and family relationships across the border served to integrate regions, cultures, and communities.

Yet borderland regions were and are integrated at different levels and in different ways. The variance in borderland experiences emphasizes that borderlands are zones of difference and divergence as well as similarity and convergence. The Canadian-American borderland is a **parallax**; the ideological position from which it is viewed certainly influences the ways in which it has been addressed. Proponents of the Borderlands Thesis view integration as being determined largely by geographical proximity, migration, and capitalist forces. As the frontierists did in the past, they look for those north-south linkages that resulted in a synthesis within border regions. To a considerable extent this argument is valid; geography and capitalism

has produced linkages that have resulted in considerable synthesis. Yet this in no way implies that the border is either “meaningless” or “undesirable” (Buckner 1989:156).

Even though the core-periphery model is useful because it describes the development of a relationship that has characterized all borderlands, the nature of north-south linkages have varied over time and among borderland regions. It seems to me that many, but not all, Borderlands supporters show little regard for characteristics and events which differentiate people on both sides of the border. Critics of the Borderlands Project see geography shaping a country very different from its southern neighbor. Following the arguments of Innis and Creighton, Harris (1990a:127) maintains that the emergence of Canadian regions, regional identities and even a national consciousness had more to do with the east-west transcontinental expansion of trade and settlement than proximity to American regions. Regional borders in Canada, he insists, are more the result of distinctive European encounters with different Canadian settings than simply being peripheries of American core regions (Harris 1990b:1).

It appears that the debate rests in part upon two dialectically opposed visions of the core-periphery paradigm: the neoclassical perspective that views core-periphery exchanges as mutually beneficial because of the trickle-down mechanisms of the marketplace, in this case a continental marketplace; and the neo-Marxian view that sees core-periphery relations as unequal and exploitative because of the unequal exchange mechanisms inherent in capitalist markets. Both sides would deny any adherence to such polar ideological positions but the rhetoric of the debate demonstrates that, in spite of their attempt for objectivity, it is nearly impossible for Canadian scholars to consider the symbolism of the border and the question of Canadian-American relations without being political.

I think that both Harris and the Borderlands proponents overstate their case; the truth lies somewhere in the middle of this dialectic. Harris and others cannot deny the importance of integrative forces taking place within trans-border regions. The fact that borderlands, zones of interaction, mediation, and some degree of integration, exists is obvious. At the same time, while Borderlands supporters are justified in emphasizing the importance of cross-border interactions and synthesis, they must also recognize that over time, Canada developed a national economy and political institutions which transcended regional boundaries. Confederation served to formalize the differences between Canada and the United States and, accordingly the border acquired a greater symbolic significance to Canadians. To ignore this

significance, Buckner (1989:158) argues, unwittingly promotes continentalism and supports "a variant of an even older American concept—Manifest Destiny."

In this context, it is worthwhile to consider the words of Andrew Clark (1975:xii), a Canadian-born historical geographer teaching at the University of Wisconsin, who states:

The continental biophysical regionalizations have predominantly north-south orientation. In contrast, the political-cultural ones, of which the 49th parallel is the major symbol in our area, have markedly east-west trends . . . instead of ignoring physical and cultural similarities between the national segments of a supranational biophysical region, we may have overemphasized them.

Acknowledgments

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