

NODAL AREA EVOLUTION IN
THE FUR TRADE: 1768-1821

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By

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Abstract

The fur trade has a long and complex history in which several different fur trade companies have participated. Initially, concentrations of fur trade posts developed in certain areas throughout western Canada. Subsequently the locations of these posts were shifted around within these areas. The formation of these fur trade post concentrations and the later movement of posts is examined in four specific areas in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

A comparative analysis using geographical, historical and archaeological data is employed to determine why concentrations of posts developed where they did. Factors that contributed to the movement of posts within these areas are discussed.

Competition was the main influencing factor in the formation of areas where concentrations of fur trade posts developed. Subsequently posts were moved within these areas due to competition and other factors that contributed to competition. These factors are discussed in relation to their relevance for future historical and archaeological investigations.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

When studying the fur trade, a broad range of time and area must be considered. The fur trade spanned the whole expanse of North America and incorporated over 200 years of history. As such, any study of this topic must be extensive in its background research and objectives. However, to study the whole subject would be excessive and too large in scope for the purposes of a thesis. Consequently, I have limited this thesis to examining four specific areas that I have a particular interest in. The nature of the fur trade and the way it is structured in these areas is fascinating as it is the backdrop for an important period in Canada's history.

The nature of the fur trade refers to the events and character of the people involved. Little is taught in secondary school of the events that happened during the fur trade and the bitter rivalries that existed between trading companies. This is a period of history that saw many bloody conflicts and the extensive use of blackmail and coercion. Murder, horse thieving, attacks, brawls and tenuous alliances all occurred within the areas and time period studied by this thesis. The period also shows the inventiveness and perseverance of the native peoples in exploiting the European traders for their own benefit.

Traders were sent out into the wilds of the Canadian Northwest to establish trading posts (most of them little more than shacks) amongst populations of aboriginal

peoples whom they could never fully trust. Their only contact with the outside world came with the once-a-year supplies from England or the occasional news from an employee with a rival company. They had to leave friends and family behind in England, often not knowing when they would see them again. The work was physically demanding and the hours were long. Discomfort and hardship were often the orders of the day. The periodic celebration or party were some of the only things to look forward to. Disease, violence and accidents claimed many lives.

One might ask why the traders subjected themselves to such torments. Part of the answer is that there was little opportunity elsewhere. For some it was a sense of adventure or a new beginning. For others it was a way to earn a small fortune in order to return to England and retire in style. However, for all there was a certain draw to the fur trade of North America.

The competitiveness of the fur trade led to the development of concentrations of fur trade posts in certain areas. These concentrations occurred in locations that are termed nodal areas, of which four are examined in this thesis. Understanding why these nodal areas occurred is the primary reason behind the development of this thesis.

The other aspect that initiated an interest in studying this material comes from a local history perspective. Having grown up close to several of the areas under examination, one has a certain curiosity about what happened in those localities. Familiarity with the geography of the sites also enables one to visualize where events were occurring and imagine what the fur traders may have been seeing in their surrounding environment. Learning the details of this rich history also highlights the need for more development of the sites located in these nodal areas. I believe that many

people are interested in fur trade history and would be willing to visit some of these sites to find out more about Canada's past. Only by drawing attention to the areas can awareness be raised.

The areas that are considered for this analysis range geographically from central Saskatchewan, to southeastern Saskatchewan and into southwestern Manitoba. The areas are limited to two river systems: the Saskatchewan River and the Assiniboine River (Figure 1.1). However, most of the areas are located near to where other rivers or streams flow into the main ones. The first area of consideration is termed the Saskatchewan Forks nodal area and occurs where the two branches of the Saskatchewan River meet. The second area is the Upper Assiniboine River nodal area and occurs on the upper end of the Assiniboine River in eastern Saskatchewan. The third area is the Qu'Appelle River Mouth nodal area and is located near the border of Manitoba and Saskatchewan where the Qu'Appelle River flows into the Assiniboine River. The fourth and final area is located in southwestern Manitoba and is called the Souris River Mouth nodal area. This is where the Souris River flows into the Assiniboine River.

Temporal limitations are an important factor to be considered in this thesis. One could not possibly hope to examine the whole scope and scale of the fur trade within a Master's thesis. As a result only the period of competition amongst the various English companies is considered here. In this case, the time span begins after the French leave the interior fur trade and their positions are taken over by merchants from Montreal. This occurs around the year 1768. The time span of the study continues until the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and the North West Company (NWC) amalgamate in 1821. This time period is termed the competitive period throughout this thesis.

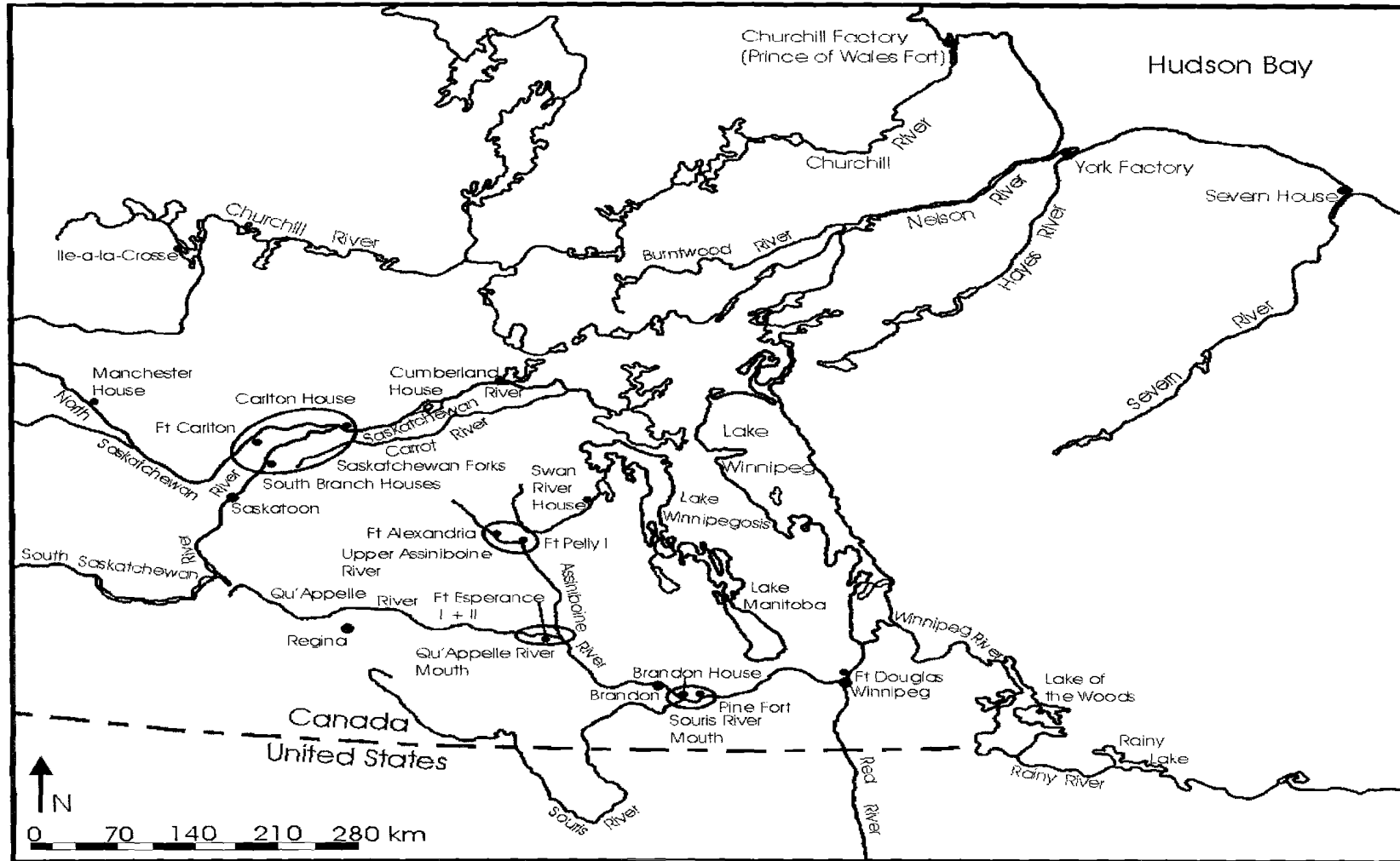


Figure 1.1. Map of the overall study region with the locations of nodal areas circled.

Overall the intention of the thesis is not to introduce a new theory or model, but to shine new light on areas that have been somewhat ignored for the last few years and could benefit greatly from archaeological work. While archaeological studies have been done in many of these areas, little of the work has been published in easily accessible sources and many other sites have never been excavated. One goal of the thesis is to synthesize a good portion of the work that has been done and to highlight places where more work could be done.

While no archaeological excavation was conducted during the research phase of my project, many of the archaeological reports from previous projects in these areas are used. These reports provide the basis for the archaeological side of the thesis and also enable the research to bring more focus to some of the work that has already been done.

One could have a skewed view of the fur trade as a boring, relatively uninteresting part of Canada's past. The violent and competitive aspect to the trade proves that the fur trade was indeed exciting and interesting. By using the combination of history and archaeology a deeper understanding of this subject is possible. These events were instrumental in the formation of Canada as a country. The next section of this chapter outlines the objectives for the thesis, which are then followed by brief introductions to all the chapters.

1.1 Research Questions and Objectives

In any thesis it is important to outline what the objectives of the study are going to be and how one determines to address the research questions. This section of the

chapter provides those objectives and some of the methodology that is used to achieve them.

Answers or explanations to several important questions or observations are the foci of this study. Two major goals are to define what exactly a nodal area is and to determine the reasons behind the formation of nodal areas. Another goal that arises is to ascertain why certain nodal areas are more heavily utilized than other areas where only one or two fur trade posts are established.

The above questions are answered by examining the geographical locations of nodal areas. This examination is then coupled with relationships that occur in these nodal areas between the fur traders and native peoples as well as those among fur trading companies. Finally, available resources are also taken into account to determine what the causal linkages are behind the development of a nodal area. The results of this analysis are discussed in a later chapter of the thesis.

After determining a plausible explanation for the formation of nodal areas, another important objective is to examine why the locations of fur trade posts are shifted around within the nodal areas. What are the factors that cause a post to be moved? Can certain causal factors be used for predictive modelling? The idea is to see if the effects of one set of data influence changes in another set of data. The results of this part of the analysis are important to archaeology for determining post locations and the development of a model that uses historical research to assist archaeological investigations. The aim is to ascertain whether factors that cause posts to move also affect the size or location of posts.

The main question, then, for the above data is, what factors cause post locations to change within a nodal area? The difficulty is in understanding which factors outweigh others as causal elements. It is difficult to decide which factors to give more credence as being the causes behind different occurrences. As a result, a major portion of the analysis chapter is devoted to the above research objective and it is perhaps the most important goal of this thesis.

Another important research goal is related to competition in the fur trade. Competition is one of the main factors that is considered throughout the study and is important in determining movements within the nodal areas. Although it is easy to assume that competition between two or more companies in an area may cause changes in location, it is unclear what the underlying factors are. Is the move due to a desire to maintain a certain distance between competitors or is resource depletion the motivating factor? The other aspect of competition is changes through time. There are different competitors involved in the time period under examination and one goal is to determine if the nature of competition varies through time. If the competition does vary, then one has to determine if differences in the nature of competition produce differential effects in the movement of posts.

The other important issue when dealing with competition in the fur trade is consumer choice. In the case of this thesis consumer choice refers to the decisions made by aboriginal peoples as to which post they visit. While strategic locations were sought for post locations in order to intercept native groups coming in, there is some uncertainty over whether location is the main deciding factor in visiting a post or whether the nature of the company and its servants is more influential. The question

then becomes, what role does consumer choice play in the success or failure of a particular location? Instances are discussed later, in which the native customers at posts play a very influential role in whether a post is moved to a new location or not. Consumer choice, then, is another factor that must be weighed in terms of its importance as a causal factor in fur trade post movements.

In dealing with native influence as a factor in fur trade post movements, one must consider political aspects as well. What is meant here is how the political aims of different native groups influenced the positioning of posts. This can be as simple as different aboriginal groups placing different demands on where a fur trade company should locate their posts or as complex as going to war with other groups. The effects of aboriginal people attacking posts are also considered under this heading as they had consequences for subsequent post movement. Native/trader relations is another set of factors that is considered in the movement of fur trade posts.

A continuing objective is to shine light on how important archaeology is to the study and analysis of the fur trade. Archaeology provides concrete data which, when supplemented with historical research, can achieve a great deal of in-depth knowledge on the subject and develop new ways of considering past events. To show the advantages of this field, archaeology is used throughout the analysis and discussion to provide examples for some of the points that are made. Through the use of reports written about archaeological investigations carried out in the nodal areas, certain ideas related to the formation of nodal areas can be supported. As well, archaeology is used to back up some of the discussion surrounding the movements of posts, especially where various rebuilding phases at a post are visible in the archaeological record.

The final goal of this thesis is to determine how all of these factors and concepts are important to the field of archaeology and, in particular, fur trade archaeology. One aspect that might be of particular use to archaeology is that by determining why a post was moved, one might be able to predict how far it was moved. A post that was closed because it was attacked might be moved farther away than one that was moved due to lack of resources. The above might be useful in helping the archaeologist find where these sites are located. Post type is another useful factor as it can tell the archaeologist what to look for in terms of material remains.

Thus, the objectives of this thesis are many. Several factors will be presented for consideration in this thesis and each of them is important in its own right. However, it is essential to understand that the main goal is to analyze and understand fur trade post movements within several nodal areas. The methodology of the main goal is to examine environmental, competitive, political and consumer choice factors that influence post movement and determine which is or are the most influential.

1.2 Thesis Structure

As Chapter 1 is the introduction, it introduces the layout of this thesis and the topics to be covered. However it also includes a discussion of the objectives and goals of the research and how the thesis attempts to answer these concerns. Basically this refers to the theoretical goals of the thesis and a discussion of some of the methodology used throughout the study.

Chapter 2 focuses on a historical background to the fur trade leading up to and including the competitive period. The idea is to provide the reader with a brief history of

the circumstances preceding the time period considered in the study. Discussion is centred upon certain key historical events that are mentioned throughout the paper as well as those that were significant to the formation of the various companies involved. This includes such things as: the struggle between the British and the French, the development of independent traders out of Montreal and the Massacre of Seven Oaks. Several of these events are mentioned throughout the thesis and others are important background to the material discussed.

Chapter 3 (Literature Review) also provides some discussion of theoretical concepts and models. However, the focus of this chapter is to examine those models that have been used to study the fur trade in the past. The chapter provides a synopsis of what other researchers have done and discussion of how some of their ideas are used in my thesis. As well, there is consideration of how their ideas can be improved upon or, at least, how they can be taken in a different direction. Some of the concepts discussed in chapter 3 have been applied to broad areas of study and there is a little discussion about how they can also be applied to more specific ones.

Chapter 3 also discusses much of the literature that is used throughout the thesis. When using any kind of literature, there must always be some limitations or considerations placed upon it. Certain biases of the author or societal trends at the time of writing must always be put into perspective. This Literature Review chapter points out some of these biases and discusses the appropriate use of these sources.

Chapter 4 (Environmental and Cultural Background) provides background information on both the physical and cultural setting of the subject matter dealt with in this thesis. As well, the chapter contains definitions of some of the more important or

well-used terms and concepts that form the basis for the ideas discussed. These definitions are intended to provide the reader with basic information on some of the ideas that are essential to this work. As well, the chapter discusses the areas that are to be examined and provides the reader with knowledge on the environmental conditions in these areas.

As mentioned above, Chapter 4 contains data on the geographical settings of each nodal area, including discussion of factors such as: flora and fauna, climate, soils and general environmental background. This information is provided to aid the reader in understanding the composition of these areas and how this structure relates to the study. In addition, it outlines the exact geographical extent of each of the areas.

The next chapter, Chapter 5 (Fur Trade Post Data), contains information on the fur trade posts that were present in each of the nodal areas during the time frame under study. The first section considers different types of fur trade posts. A description and some examples are given of each type, as knowing the function of a post is essential to understanding its importance.

The rest of the chapter is broken down into sections describing each of the nodal areas. Within each section, the information provided on each post includes the dates that the post operated, which company it was affiliated with, what type of post it was, any archaeological information that is available for that post and any significant events that occurred at that post. The fur trade post data is the basic information that is considered in the analysis section of the thesis. The interpretation of these data is a major part of the analysis. The discussion about each fur trade post is important because

the posts are often referred to throughout the analysis and must be kept in mind in order to understand the later discussion.

Chapter 6 (Understanding Nodal Area Development and Fur Trade Post Movements) is one of the most important chapters in the thesis. It is here that the data are analyzed and ideas formulated about what occurred in these nodal areas. Theories and evidence as to why they form are presented. This chapter relies heavily upon archaeological information as this type of data can tell a researcher what is in an area at present. Some historic data are also used to supplement the archaeology or to extrapolate the theory to those areas where there are very few archaeological data available.

The chapter also presents explanations for the movements of fur trade posts within the nodal areas. Different causal factors related to the movement or abandonment of each post are discussed. As well, there is a consideration of the settlement patterns that result from these post movements. The discussion is aimed at determining the most significant causal factor in the movement of a post. There is also a goal of relating the significance of the settlement patterns represented in each nodal area. This provides a basis for the final section of the chapter and allows the reader to understand the process leading up to the conclusions of the thesis.

The final section of Chapter 6 examines and summarizes how the factors involved in nodal area development and post movement contribute to competition. Nodal area aspects are revealed through the relationship of settlement patterns to causal factors in post movements. By examining this relationship, one can understand the development of nodal areas.

The final chapter of the thesis is Chapter 7 (Summary and Conclusions) and it is responsible for tying the thesis together. As suggested by the title, Chapter 7 sums up what is discussed throughout the thesis and how all the information relates to the overall statements that are made. Although Chapter 6 provides some conclusions about the data, Chapter 7 provides overall conclusions for the thesis and discusses its importance to the discipline of historical archaeology. Although other goals have been stated for the analysis of the data, one inevitable goal of any research is to further contribute to the discipline of which it is a part. As well, it considers further work that could be done on the material in this thesis, especially things that were not feasible within the scope of a Master of Arts research project.

Chapter 2

Historical Background

2.1 Introduction

A brief historical account of the fur trade in Western Canada is important to this thesis as it sets up the period of competition (1768-1821) that is the focus of my research. The development of the companies is somewhat important for understanding the different methods of trading used. Thus, the historical background will discuss briefly the development of each of the trading companies, the presence of the French traders before the competitive period and an overview of the regions represented by the nodal areas.

2.2 History of the Fur Trade

Most of the early fur trade in Western Canada centred on Hudson Bay and the forts located there. It was here that the English traders dominated under the HBC (Moodie 1987:360, 361). The HBC first became an official company in 1670 when it was granted a royal charter under the name of the Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson Bay (Innis 1999:119; Morton 1939:54-55). The charter granted the HBC monopoly of trade through Hudson Strait and possession of any territory that may be reached through said Strait (Morton 1939:55; Rich 1967:30). As a result, the HBC was granted almost the whole of western Canada, as the majority of the region could be

reached by the rivers flowing into Hudson Bay. The company was to be controlled by a Governor and Committee in London, which had control over both the Company in England and its colonies overseas (Morton 1939:56). This centralized control proved to be one of the defining characteristics of the HBC.

The initial HBC posts were located on the southeastern shore of Hudson Bay and James Bay (Innis 1999:119; Morton 1939:50). The first post established here was Charles Fort in 1668 on the Rupert River (Innis 1999:119; Morton 1939:50). However other posts soon followed and one such post, which is of importance to the areas studied in this thesis, was Fort Albany, later Albany Factory. Another post that was soon established was York Fort, which became York Factory. Both of these forts are essential to a great deal of the trade that was conducted in the nodal areas studied in this thesis.

Fort Albany was established in 1679 at the mouth of the Albany River where it flows into James Bay (Klimko 1994:39; Rich 1967:39). Fort Albany was to become, by 1683, the chief factory for the HBC (Innis 1999:119-120). However, it was soon overshadowed by forts located along the western shore of Hudson Bay. However, the post remained in existence for over 250 years until it was finally closed in 1930 (Klimko 1994:39). Throughout this time span, Fort Albany was one of the principal factories from which many of the posts responsible for the provisioning trade were established and supplied. This fort also sustained the English company through much of their trade wars with the French (Innis 1999:122).

York Fort, established in 1684 and known initially as Fort Nelson, soon became quite successful in terms of the amount of trade conducted at this post (Innis 1999:120,

122). While it did conduct more trade than Fort Albany, it was attacked and captured by the French in 1694 leaving the HBC only with its posts at the bottom of the bay (Innis 1999:122; Rich 1967:63). However, this capture was brief as the English recaptured the fort in 1696, thus securing access to the western shores of Hudson Bay (Innis 1999:122; Rich 1967:64). York Fort once again returned to French hands in 1697 and they held onto it until 1714 (Innis 1999:122; Rich 1967:67-68). The importance of this fort is related to its position at the mouths of the Nelson and Hayes Rivers, which allowed whoever controlled the post unprecedented access to the native people in the interior of Canada. As a result, the fort was of strategic importance and the fact that it changed hands many times highlights the extreme conflict between the English and the French over the control of Hudson Bay. Both knew that whoever controlled the Bay would control access to the vast fur riches of Canada.

What began with the establishment of York Fort and Fort Albany, then, was almost a century of dispute between the French and English, mostly represented by the HBC, over the furs and territory of what was to become Canada. After the initial conflict over the control of Hudson Bay, a new struggle erupted for control of the vast fur forests in the hinterland of the Bay (Morton 1939:126; Rich 1967:69-70). This period marks one in which the HBC was content to situate their forts on the coast of the Bay and allow native people to come to them, while occasionally sending out employees to investigate the hinterland (Rich 1967:69). While the initial inland penetration by the English through these explorations was successful, the main purpose of the inland travellers was to convince the aboriginal peoples to bring their furs down to the Bay to trade (Rich 1967:70). This practice was quite successful in saving the HBC the cost of

transporting goods to the Bay, but the strategy could not last forever and with new developments in the French trading practices, the policy had to change.

The Treaty of Utrecht forced the French to acknowledge English possession of Hudson Bay and subsequently they re-established their trade route through the St. Lawrence River and Great Lakes (Morton 1939:126; Rich 1967:79-82). The main system of trading for merchants operating out of Montreal was now developed and led to an alternate route into the prairies. These traders came to rely on a transportation system that ran from the St. Lawrence River, through Lake Superior and along Rainy River up to Lake of the Woods (Morse 1979:80). From Lake of the Woods, the traders would then travel along the Winnipeg River to Lake Winnipeg (Morse 1979:81). From Lake Winnipeg the traders could go north and west to the region of the Saskatchewan River or south and west along the Assiniboine River. The main driving force for the development of this route for the French was a person called La Verendrye (Morton 1939:126).

La Verendrye's influence began to be felt by the HBC in 1732 as his posts began to stretch towards Lake Winnipeg (Champagne 1968; Rich 1967:83, 85). By establishing a staging post at Kaministikwia (Grand Portage) on the western shore of Lake Superior, La Verendrye was able to overcome the difficulties of making it from Montreal to the Upper Country in the course of a summer (Champagne 1971; Rich 1967:86-87). Eventually La Verendrye, through his sons, was able to establish a successful fort at Lake Winnipeg and engage in friendly contact with the Assiniboine of the region (Morton 1939:182; Rich 1967:88). Despite several setbacks and because of much pressure from the French government, La Verendrye eventually expanded his

operations to the west along the Assiniboine River (Morton 1939:190; Rich 1967:91). From here efforts were made to contact the Mandans on the Missouri River and further explorations were made to the north and west (Rich 1967:92). La Verendrye, through his sons, pushed north of Lake Winnipeg and to the west, eventually reaching the Lower Saskatchewan River. La Verendrye, however, died in 1749 and his sons were not allowed to take over his position (Champagne 1971; Morton 1939:201; Rich 1967:93-94).

Following La Verendrye's death, other French traders were sent out who expanded the influence of the French. They followed the scheme La Verendrye had established and reached as far as the Forks of the Saskatchewan (Rich 1967:94). As these successors pushed further into the prairies, the HBC began to feel more of a squeeze as their profits dwindled due to the French expansion (Morton 1939:206-207). The French were pushing inland and taking furs that were normally brought down to the Bay, while at the same time, the English were confined to the shores of the Bay. To combat the effects of the French expansion, the HBC continued to send men inland to explore and convince more native peoples to come to the Bay with their furs (Rich 1967:97). However, because the French had such a grip on the inland trade routes, it was not easy to convince the aboriginal groups to come down to the Bay anymore (Rich 1967:126). As the English tried to stem the tide of French traders, forces in Europe made their own influence felt in the Northwest.

The Seven Years War (1756-1763) between France and England had an enormous impact on the French fur traders. As the war progressed, the French had much difficulty in obtaining trade goods and were forced to close many of their trading

posts for lack of anything to trade (Morton 1939:254; Rich 1967:128). This enabled the English to regain some of their lost trade. By continuing to send expeditions inland, the HBC was able to maintain and even increase some of its trade (Rich 1967:129). The Seven Years War eventually ended in 1763 and, by the Treaty of Paris, the French were forced to surrender to England their claims in Canada (Morton 1939:257; Rich 1960:5, 1967:130-131). While this treaty brought to an end the struggles that the HBC had with the French, it did not totally remove their problems. For a short period they enjoyed a relative monopoly control, but this was soon challenged by traders operating once again from Montreal, using the old French transportation routes.

After 1763, the trade from Montreal was in the hands of British subjects and a policy of free trade was developed for the fur trade (Rich 1960:5, 7, 1967:130; Wallace 1954:2). The result was the reestablishment of the old trading route from Lake Superior, through the various lakes and rivers of western Ontario and eastern Manitoba, to Lake Winnipeg and, from there, to the north and west. As well, the HBC was now faced with a whole new set of competitors. This new regime is essentially where the time period of this thesis begins and when the period of competition started that erupted into a fierce trading conflict for furs in Western Canada.

The “pedlars” (as they were called by the HBC) from Montreal had a large impact on the fur trade (Wallace 1954:2). Although these traders for the most part operated on their own, the sheer numbers of them caused much disturbance and ruin amongst one another and the native groups with whom they were trading (Campbell 1957:7-8; Davidson 1967:8-9). Despite this fierce competition these traders managed to make great inroads into the trade of the interior of North America. Although the HBC

continued to send men inland, their trade began to suffer greatly and something had to be done (Rich 1960:18). As a direct result of the large impact that the pedlars were having in the Saskatchewan River and Lake Winnipeg region, the HBC abandoned its policy of sitting by the Bay and built Cumberland House in 1774 (Campbell 1957:8; Morton 1939:300-303; Rich 1960:60-61). The construction of this post became a turning point in the fur trade and the HBC began to compete more effectively with the pedlars from Montreal.

However, by this time, the pedlars had begun to feel the effects of their own competition and were having difficulties sustaining the trade rivalries with one another. Consequently, a movement began amongst the Montreal pedlars to join together in a common concern and divide up the spoils of their trade at the end of the season (Campbell 1957:8; Davidson 1967:9-10; Morton 1939:311-312; Rich 1960:66-67). The result was a more beneficial arrangement for the pedlars that reduced some of their costs (Campbell 1957:8). In 1778, the pedlars on the Saskatchewan River made a coalition that proved to be immensely successful. It was in the summer of this year that seven pedlars combined what goods they had left over from the winter and sent Peter Pond to penetrate into the Athabaska country and remain there for the winter of 1778-9 (Rich 1960:76; Wallace 1954:15). It was a venture that proved so successful that Pond even had to trade the clothes off his back (Rich 1960:116-117; Wallace 1954:16). The expedition had shown the value of the pedlars joining together and the richness of furs in the Athabaska region. As a result, the fall of 1779 saw the formation of the first general partnership, which was referred to as the North West Company (NWC) (Davidson 1967:9-10; Rich 1960:117, 1967:172; Wallace 1954:18). A new era in the

trade of the interior of North America was inducted and the nature of the fur trade was forever altered.

This original NWC partnership only lasted for one year, but the relative success of the venture led to a similar contract the following year (Davidson 1967:10; Rich 1960:117-118, 1967:172-173). The latter coalition lasted for a couple of years, but 1781 saw smallpox spread amongst the native populations and little was traded. As well, clashes between traders of the NWC and those left out of it caused the disintegration of the partnership by 1782 (Davidson 1967:10; Rich 1960:118). However, the value of amalgamation was clearly recognized and in 1783-84 a new agreement was drawn up under the formal name of the North West Company and the arrangement was to last for five years (Davidson 1967:10-11; Rich 1960:118). The new agreement was much more official and provided the concern with more capital to conduct trading operations. However, even this new concern did not bring all the pedlars under one roof and some of the smaller groups were still left out of the partnership, which enabled continued competition amongst the traders from Montreal.

These smaller concerns continued to have bitter rivalries with the NWC and much violence followed (Rich 1960:121-122). In fact, the violence became so unmanageable and deadly that there was a general recognition that all the concerns should be amalgamated lest they destroy each other (Rich 1960:122). Thus, in 1787, the NWC incorporated almost all of the Canadian (i.e. Montreal) enterprises and began its formidable opposition to the HBC (Davidson 1967:15; Morton 1939:342-343; Rich 1960:122, 1967:175). This new company had all the clout it needed, and the skill in

trading it presented made the HBC compete more seriously in the interior. In a general sense the competitive era of the fur trade was into its full swing.

Consequently the expansion and competition along the river systems of the interior by these two companies led to the establishment of a multitude of posts which were concentrated at various areas along the rivers. The result was the development of strategic placements of posts and methods of trading that were designed to yield a better return of furs. Such planning resulted in the periodic movements and closures of posts as well as the utilization of violent acts against rival traders (Morton 1939, Rich 1960, 1967). Several posts would then be reopened in a slightly more favourable trading area that was designed to cut off the trade to the competitors. The NWC and the HBC developed several competitive strategies in order to put each other out of business. Soon these companies were about to be joined by another firm.

However, while this renewed rivalry was developing and expanding, the NWC began to face internal conflicts of its own. The result was the development of another company that was almost as competitive as the NWC. This development occurred shortly after a new agreement of the NWC was worked out in 1790 that was to take effect in 1792 and last until 1799 (Rich 1960:138, 1967:190-191). However, this new agreement was not able to satisfy all the traders and merchants in Montreal and one company of powerful merchants (Forsyth, Richardson and Company) began to organize the opposition in 1797 (Rich 1960:212, 1967:191). In 1798, a formal company was formed, which then became known as the New North West Company or simply, the XYC (Davidson 1967:77; Morrison 2001:23; Rich 1960:212, 1967:191; Wallace 1954:55).

One of the leaders of the opposition to the NWC was Alexander Mackenzie. However, by the agreement of 1790, Mackenzie could not leave the NWC until 1799 and as a result had to delay joining the XYC until 1800 (Morton 1939:344; Rich 1967:190-191). Mackenzie became such a driving force behind this new company that from 1800 onwards it was often referred to as Sir Alexander Mackenzie and Company (Davidson 1967:76; Rich 1967:191). The company was organized much the same way as the NWC and competed in many of the same areas as the NWC and HBC. A later chapter shows that the fur trade posts of the XYC were often located next door to those of the NWC. The nature of the competition between the NWC and XYC was almost more ferocious than the competition between the NWC and the HBC.

While this conflict was going on, the HBC had been expanding its operations. The HBC built several posts inland and exploited many of the same areas as the NWC, especially along the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan rivers. However, as a result of the policy of the central committee of the HBC to avoid incidents and violence, the Northwesters did not take them very seriously (Rich 1960:220). Consequently, the HBC was out-competed in almost every area and still had not formulated a plan to counter the threat from Montreal (Rich 1960:220). With the combined force of two companies operating out of Montreal, the fur trade in Western Canada was becoming grim.

However, the ruinous competition between the two Montreal firms was taking its toll. The violence and enmity was disastrous and the aboriginal people, who were tired of being bullied, often rebelled against both companies (Morrison 2001:28; Rich 1960:228-229). Consequently this level of trade competition could not be sustained and

in the fall of 1804, the NWC and XYC agreed to amalgamate for 20 years (Davidson 1967:83; Morrison 2001:28-30; Rich 1960:230, 1967:195). With this agreement the traders from Montreal were now prepared to form a united front in the competition with the HBC.

The HBC now found itself faced with one main competitor in the form of the reorganized NWC. By this time, the HBC had become much more proficient in the trade of the interior and had established many posts and contacts amongst the native groups of the prairies. However, new trouble was brewing on the horizon and came to a head in the 1810s.

Lord Selkirk wanted to further the claims in the HBC's charter and set up an agricultural colony in Rupert's Land (Rich 1967:205). The colony would provide a place for settlers from Scotland, where available farmland was at a premium. It would increase the HBC's claims to Rupert's Land and provide the company with a cheaper supply of provisions (Davidson 1967:144; Morton 1939:532). The site chosen for the colony was at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers where Winnipeg now stands (Morton 1939:544; Rich 1967:205). The NWC viewed this as a direct attack on their system of trading, as the area of southern Manitoba was highly important to them in obtaining provisions to supply the canoe brigades going to Athabaska (Davidson 1967:144; Rich 1967:205). As a result, the NWC heavily opposed the colony and the first two years of the colony were ones of much hardship and near failure (Rich 1967:211-214). However, the colony did become established and the NWC felt more threatened than ever before.

Further trouble came with Miles McDonnell's (Governor of the Selkirk Settlement) Pemmican Proclamation of 1814, in which it was stated that no provisions could be exported from the colony for one year except by special licenses (Davison 1967:146; Rich 1967:218). Following this proclamation a large supply of pemmican belonging to the NWC was seized, further hardening their resolve to destroy the colony. Several skirmishes and acts of violence occurred throughout 1815 and the colony was almost abandoned (Davidson 1967:147). However, it was re-established and was becoming strong again when tragedy struck in June of 1816.

By this time, the NWC was feeling so threatened by the colony that they felt something had to be done. In May of 1816, Métis, who had been stirred into frenzy by the NWC, raided Brandon House, which was just upstream from the mouth of the Souris River (Davidson 1967:148; Rich 1967:221). This group then proceeded down to the Red River and, at a place called Seven Oaks, they were met by the Governor of the Red River Colony (Rich 1967:221). Due to the accidental discharge of a gun, general shooting commenced and the Governor and 21 of the settlers with him were killed (Davidson 1967:148; Morrison 2001:88; Rich 1967:221-222). Much horror and shock accompanied news of this massacre and it became clear that matters between the two competing fur trade companies were getting out of hand.

The competition had become much too violent and the toll that it was extracting on the aboriginal people and resources of the west was becoming too high. The Massacre at Seven Oaks highlighted the animosity between the NWC and HBC and the realisation that such costly competition between the two companies could not be sustained. Consequently, the companies entered into negotiations with one another and

in 1821 united under the name of the HBC (Davidson 1967:176; Morton 1939:622-623). The agreement brought much relief to the fur trade, ending a period of competition and violence that had been sustained for more than thirty years. This union also brings to an end the period of time that is under consideration in this thesis.

2.3 Summary

The competitive era of the fur trade was one of much exploration and exploitation as well as one of much violence. The background presented here gives a brief overview of the fur trade in Western Canada from the granting of the HBC's Charter in 1670 to the union of the NWC and HBC in 1821. The fur trade changed extensively in this time period and the course of development of Canada also was heavily influenced. It is hoped that this section has provided brief background knowledge into the historical events that were occurring during the period of study in this thesis. The courses of change in the nodal areas were tied into these historical events and many of the posts played important roles in these events. These data become more significant during the analysis portion of the thesis, but it is important to understand them before they are analyzed and generally discussed.

Chapter 3

Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to provide background to the history of study in the fur trade applicable to my thesis objectives. This consists of a critical review of the various works that are related to locational patterning of fur trade posts and the effects of competition in the fur trade. Pros and cons of each approach are discussed as well as areas that can be improved with a more holistic examination. In discussing the basic theoretical approaches that have been used, I begin to develop the approach that will be used in this thesis.

The literature review also discusses the relative uses of each type of document. Within this discourse some discussion of the pitfalls and biases inherent in each work is provided as not every piece of writing can always be taken at face value. However, along with the downsides, the merits of each work are also discussed. The first theoretical approaches in the literature to be discussed are the economic ones as they are the most extensive.

3.2 Economic Theories and Models

These theories primarily see the fur trade as a business and view it in terms of cost effectiveness. This theoretical style can be quite effective in analyzing some

aspects of the fur trade, but not all. The majority of work in this area has been done by Harold Innis (1999) and Ann Carlos (1981, 1982, 1986; Carlos and Hoffman 1986).

Carlos has been particularly interested in a time period of the fur trade that saw increased rivalry between the two major companies: the NWC and the HBC. This occurred during the years 1804 through to 1821 and it is this period where the economic impacts on the fur trade system are most readily seen (Carlos 1981, 1982, 1986; Carlos and Hoffman 1986). Carlos specifically chose this time period because it occurs after the amalgamation of the NWC and XYC and therefore leaves only the HBC and the NWC as the two major competitors. Only having two companies to consider simplifies things and also enables the researcher to apply models such as spatial duopoly (Carlos 1986). Carlos (1981, 1982, 1986) also examines different types of behaviour exhibited by the two companies during this period of competition and different factors that may have caused the increased rivalry. However, I would argue that while her points are well made, she focuses on the Euro-Canadian aspects of the trade and how the markets were behaving. The missing factor here is how interpersonal relationships could cause many problems and how the native groups often played one company against the other in order to secure better prices for their goods, which can be seen in many of the fur trade post journals from the time period.

The first of Ann Carlos' work (1981) looks at how the North American fur trade rivalry originated and what the causes were behind it. While the early period in this rivalry was characterized as being passive, changes in the European markets were causal to later, more aggressive behaviour especially on the part of the HBC (Carlos 1981:778). The causal relationship here was due to a severe financial crisis faced by the HBC

during the years 1809-1810. This was due to a decline in the European markets and the Napoleonic Wars (Carlos 1981:781). These two factors, combined with an increase in the cost of goods due to the war, led to serious financial problems in the HBC and to a change in management and trading practices. This reorganization of the HBC policies and trading practices came to reflect a system much more similar to the organization of the NWC (Carlos 1981:793). The importance of the latter information is that the reorganization of the HBC may have had some effect on the location of posts. Through the reorganization process, headquarters forts could have been moved to other locations or some posts may have been closed for economic reasons. As well, more posts may have been opened in order to compete with the NWC.

As mentioned, one of the drawbacks of Carlos' work is that she seems to ignore the role that interpersonal relationships may have played in the fur trade. In certain specific regions of the fur trade, the various competitors could be on quite amicable terms. The following quote by Robert Goodwin in the Brandon House Post Journal for 1794-5 shows these relationships quite well, "... the Canadian Traders behaved to me very politely and were [sic] I wintered we lived on very good terms, which was not the case the Year before for Mr. Donald McKay fired his Gun at Mr. Augee as he pafsed his Houses in a Canoe, the Ball lighted very near him. We visit one another at times" (HBCA B.22/a/2). The year before Goodwin's arrival at Brandon House saw quite a strained relationship between the masters (Augee and McKay) of the two competing posts. Goodwin, as McKay's replacement, had a much friendlier relationship with the NWC master.

The quotation indicates that the state of competition in the fur trade cannot always be determined by broadly based perspectives or by strict economic models, but is often determined at a local level by one trader's relationship with another. Often the person writing the post journals was master of the post and their relationship with competing traders could influence how long a post remained in a particular location.

The next study undertaken by Carlos (1982) examines this period of predatory competition from 1810-1821. The author's conclusions are based on three main factors: the HBC's actions to resolve problems caused by the Napoleonic Wars and the financial crisis of 1809/1810, the issue of declining animal stocks, and the information available to the NWC and its perception of the actions taken by its rival (Carlos 1982:157). However, the analysis would have been more complete if more humanistic factors were included.

The study does have great merit for suggesting that the end to predatory competition came about due to financial and political reasons (Carlos 1982). The increased costs to the companies due to the competition insured that a resolution had to be reached lest both companies fall into bankruptcy. As well, the government in England was most concerned about the extent of violence that had occurred due to the intense competition (Carlos 1982:181).

The third examination undertaken by Carlos was done jointly with Elizabeth Hoffman and examines how the NWC and the HBC negotiated with each other from 1804-1821 to resolve their differences using incomplete information (Carlos and Hoffman 1986). The study raises some interesting points about why it took the NWC and the HBC so long to come to an agreement. Both companies were trying to bring

about a reasonable solution without having complete information in terms of what was happening at their own posts as well as their opposition's. Part of this was due to the long lines of communication between the HBC Committee in London and the interior of North America. Other events, such as the Napoleonic Wars, interrupted normal courses of business and disturbed the fur markets (Carlos and Hoffman 1986). As well, bitter rivalries developed over the Selkirk Settlement and movement into the Athabasca territory, which caused further breakdown in negotiations (Carlos and Hoffman 1986).

The final piece of work that will be considered from Carlos is based on her doctoral research, entitled The North American Fur Trade 1804-1821: A Study in the Life-Cycle of a Duopoly (Carlos 1986). This is a much more complete analysis of competition between the NWC and the HBC and discusses several different kinds of economic theories that could be applied to the fur trade. Some of the discussion is similar to Carlos' other work mentioned above (1981, 1982; Carlos and Hoffman 1986). However, she does bring in some additional ideas and also includes a review of the literature on the fur trade available at that time. Using models based on statistical equations, Carlos (1986) plugs in data for the two companies in order to predict their behaviour. Then, the models are compared to the actual events that occurred in the fur trade to see which model best describes the behavioural reality. The model is then used to show that predatory competition did not occur until after 1810 and that it was the HBC that initiated this type of competition, not the NWC as previous theories describe (Carlos 1986:212).

A model that is related to Carlos' work is spatial duopoly, which is discussed by Freeman and Dungey in their 1981 article, "A Spatial Duopoly: Competition in the

Western Canadian Fur Trade, 1770-1835.” The underlying concept of spatial duopoly is that two vendors (in this case fur trade posts) are located some distance from each other in a linear market (i.e. a river) (Freeman and Dungey 1981:255). Consumers are located roughly in the middle between the two posts and are indifferent as to which one they go to; however, one post may be achieving a greater profit than another. Because of this the other company will move closer to gain more of a market share and thus more profits. This leads to the first post leapfrogging its location back over the other one. This leapfrogging continues until the posts reach a state of equilibrium (Freeman and Dungey 1981:255, 256). The same process can occur with either one or both of the companies lowering prices so that the other company will respond by either moving its post or dropping prices until the market reaches a state of equilibrium (Freeman and Dungey 1981: 256).

This model is somewhat useful to this thesis as the spatial duopoly movement can be seen in the settlement patterns in most of the nodal areas. This model is especially visible once the independent traders and the XYZ are no longer separate entities in the fur trade. When it is just the HBC and the NWC, the model is especially applicable, although the XYZ did sometimes follow the duopoly pattern. This model is discussed further in Chapter 6 where the data from the nodal areas are analysed.

The next document that will be considered under the economic section is Harold A. Innis' The Fur Trade in Canada (1999). I will also be considering E.E. Rich's work in this section, especially his multi-volume set the, Hudson's Bay Company 1670-1870 (1960). Both of these studies focus on the fur trade from a more economic point of view, but they differ in their views from those of Ann Carlos.

Innis was interested in explaining the development of Canada's economy especially in regard to its geographical underpinnings. As subject matter he decided to settle on the fur trade as a staple economy that played such a large role in the development and exploration of Canada (Ray 1999). While Innis covers the complete history of the fur trade in Canada from its beginnings on the Atlantic Coast to its development and expansion all the way to the Pacific, I am primarily interested in his discussion of the inland trade and competition between the HBC and the NWC as well as some of the smaller companies.

While Innis does include analysis of the role that native groups played in the fur trade economy, his approach focuses more on how the trade influenced and changed these people and not on how they influenced the trade (Ray 1999). Innis also did not have access to the records held by the Hudson's Bay Company Archives (HBCA), which would have enabled him to see the larger role that aboriginal groups played in the trade.

Innis also adopted the position that aboriginal people quickly assumed European culture and technology (Ray 1999). However, this was not always the case and the records of the HBCA show that these groups maintained their cultures and sometimes adapted European materials to their technology. In fact, one could argue that the reverse process occurred in a lot of areas. Europeans became dependent on native groups for food, transportation and even shelter in some cases. Innis does consider the dependency of Europeans on aboriginal groups for food, especially with regard to the provisioning trade (Ray 1999). However, he does ignore how European traders relied on native canoe-builders to provide them with transportation and how when food was scarce or

not enough shelter available, men were often sent out to live on the land with different native bands (HBCA B.87/a/1-9).

Innis also makes some extremely valid points about the geography of the fur trade. He discusses the advantages that the HBC had over the NWC in terms of transportation and distances to many of the inland posts (Innis 1999:158-9). This point is relevant to the current study, as geography will play an important role in the analysis of post locations.

Like Innis, E. E. Rich takes a primarily economic approach and tends to agree with Innis on a number of points (Ray 1999). I am only concerned with Rich's second volume of his three volume set on the history of the HBC as this covers the time period with which this thesis is involved (Rich 1960). Due to the fact that Rich wrote a multi-volume set, he was able to cover the history of the trade more extensively as well as providing more detail on specific regions. Although Rich (1960) does approach the fur trade from an economic perspective, he is also able to include a much more historical aspect to his study. This provides for a greater scope on the fur trade as it allows for discussion of some of the native groups in more detail. That said, the major drawback to Rich's study is that he maintains most of his focus on the European traders and their actions.

The other aspect of Rich's book is that he discusses a great deal of politics in his analysis (Rich 1960). The political manoeuvring that occurred both in North America and in Europe is important to an overall analysis of the policies and decisions made in the fur trade, but on a local scale it is of less importance as individual posts are affected by several different factors, which are infrequently related to international politics.

Another problem with focusing on the international politics is that certain regions of North America are given more prominence. In particular, Athabasca, the Rocky Mountains and the areas immediately surrounding Hudson's Bay are given a lot of detailed discussion in overall studies of the fur trade. While these areas played an important role in determining the course of the trade, the prominence given to them overshadows the role that smaller areas played in the trade, especially at a more local level.

Rich may also be credited with giving more prominence to the NWC and XYC in many of these smaller areas. While he mostly discusses the rivalry between the HBC and the NWC he does devote a chapter to the XYC and their involvement in various areas (Rich 1960). Rich also provides more detailed descriptions of the operations of these other companies, which is useful for cross comparisons, but little detail on the movements of posts.

Rich (1960) discusses some of the tactics used by the traders to improve their business. In his analysis, though, Rich tends to focus more on numbers in terms of economics and less on the effect that various trading practices were having psychologically on the people involved. A company could operate at a loss financially, but still be gaining ground psychologically depending on the tactics they employ. The NWC did this to great effect in the Assiniboine River by keeping the HBC constantly worried about what might happen next (HBCA B.22/a/1-21). Even though the NWC was operating at a loss, they were still effective competitors by costing the HBC both in terms of profits and in terms of employee stress levels.

Rich provides a slightly more expansive and updated version of the history of the fur trade in his book, The Fur Trade and the Northwest to 1857 (Rich 1967). The focus of this book is again the history of the fur trade, but with less emphasis on the history of the HBC and more emphasis on the history of the territory that became Canada (Rich 1967). Again Rich (1967:70-75) provides a good account of the history of the trade, but tends to focus on the European point of view and on what individual Europeans were doing.

With that said, Rich (1967) does tackle a more regional scale in this book. He discusses individual areas in more detail than most historical overviews do. As a result, events transpiring along the Saskatchewan River are given much discussion, especially in relation to how they led to the formation of the NWC and the development of the classic rivalry between this company and the HBC (Rich 1967). He provides an adequate analysis of the early years of the NWC and the initial move inland by the HBC. However, perhaps because of space, he cuts his discussion of this important region short and leaves out some of the later history that occurred along the Saskatchewan River.

Additionally, Rich also provides a more detailed background to the trade coming from Montreal, and especially the NWC, in a somewhat smaller book entitled, Montreal and the Fur Trade (1966). In this work, Rich departs from discussing the fur trade as an economic and political entity by concentrating more on the geography of the trade and the important role that landscape played in the expansion of fur trade enterprises. As can be inferred from the title the subject of this book is the development of the French trade and later that of the NWC, which complements Rich's earlier work (1960) on the

HBC. Of primary concern to this thesis is the latter half of the book, which deals with the formation of the NWC and its activities in the trade out of Montreal. It is here where Rich (1966) discusses the people and events that led to the organization of the NWC and the amalgamation of pedlars out of Montreal.

The advantage of Rich's 1966 work is that he provides a general discussion of the various formations and agreements in the early history of the NWC. This is especially refreshing since most publications tend to give only slight recognition to these developments and launch right into a discussion of the NWC after 1787. Thus, we get a little more insight to the company itself and all its problems and accomplishments. This is very useful for doing background work on the NWC and to some extent the XYC, as Rich (1966:92-93) gives some attention to this company as well.

The last piece of literature that is considered under the economic history section of this chapter is Arthur J. Ray's book, Indians in the Fur Trade: Their Role as Hunters, Trappers and Middlemen in the Lands Southwest of Hudson Bay 1660-1870 (1974).

While there is a focus on economics in this book, it is less preoccupied with the numbers and is more concerned with the various activities and influences that were part of the fur trade. This book is particularly relevant to the current study as Ray (1974) chose to focus his attention on aboriginal groups of central and southern Saskatchewan and Manitoba, which covers the exact study areas of this thesis. Ray (1974) also discusses the various native groups in more roles than just as passive traders of furs. He extends his focus to the roles that these groups played as middlemen, trappers and active participants in the decisions affecting the fur trade in interior North America.

Ray (1974) illustrates the importance of the areas of southern and central Saskatchewan and Manitoba for the provisioning trade, which became the chief economic activity in the study area and soon bypassed the trade in furs. The native groups present in the area seized upon this opportunity as fur resources were becoming depleted. The situation is best summarized by the following:

The fur resources of the adjacent forests were giving out and the English Traders were bypassing the Cree and the Assiniboine middlemen. These groups were therefore forced to obtain other commodities, which could be bartered at the posts. Since they were initially encouraged to bring in dried meat and pemmican with their furs, the former produce constituted an increasing percentage of the total trade of these tribes. In this manner the fur trade favoured an increased exploitation of the grassland-parkland environment by many groups living in south-central Manitoba and Saskatchewan [Ray 1974:134].

Thus, Ray gives a good account of the changing situation of the native tribes living on the plains and how they adapted to it.

3.3 Narrative Accounts

This section is a discussion of various narratives that were written by people involved in the fur trade during the time period under consideration. Many of these are accounts that were published years after the events had occurred and were written from memory. Some of them are written from daily diaries that were kept at the time. Still others are official post records and correspondence from the HBCA. The most important information out of these records are accounts of relationships with native traders and other post masters (both friendly and competitive) as well as explanations of why posts were being moved. Although these accounts show the bias of the authors, they provide important information about post movements.

One of the premier figures during the time of great competition is David Thompson. As a surveyor and explorer, he did much to further the fur trade in his years of service. He was also influential in shaping the knowledge of the geography of Canada through his extensive surveying and mapping activities. As a result, his *Narrative* has been given much attention by historians and scholars over the years (Glover 1962; Hopwood 1971; Smith 1971). Most scholars have a lot of praise for Thompson's journal (Hopwood 1971; Smith 1971), but there are a few who call into question the accuracy of Thompson's information (Glover 1962; Morton 1939). Part of this problem stems from the fact that Thompson wrote some of the chapters without the assistance of his diaries and his memory could be quite errant when recalling things that had occurred twenty or thirty years ago (Glover 1962). In these circumstances, Thompson seems to have embellished his actions to quite a favourable extent. However, in those cases where Thompson relied on his diaries, his account seems to be quite accurate (Glover 1962). In any case, the survey work that Thompson did seems to have been of the highest calibre.

Of the *Narrative* itself, the information is quite good and, while Thompson doesn't give as much attention to detail as Peter Fidler, he does provide a good story of the land and its people as he passes through. The descriptions of his voyages also give the reader a sense of the distances between various posts and the hardships one could encounter when travelling and trying to survive in the country at this period in time. Thompson also provides a description of the native groups he met and some of the activities that they were engaged in during this particular period in history.

Overall Thompson's *Narrative* is a useful background for geographical and travel knowledge, but Thompson was more concerned with exploration and surveying than he was with trading. Thus, his account gives the reader little knowledge of the trading practices of aboriginal peoples and the European traders. The main advantage of reviewing Thompson's work is that he worked for both the HBC and the NWC and consequently the reader is given an insider's view of the two major sides in the trade rivalry.

The writings of Peter Fidler also provide an essential amount of information about the historical backdrop against which the fur trade competition is set. This information comes from both his biography (MacGregor 1998) and from the records he left to the HBC (HBCA B.22/a/19-21; B.22/e/1). As a surveyor and trader, Fidler supplies exceptionally good maps of the areas he was in and extensively records his dealings with native people and European traders alike in his journals. In his District Report for Brandon House in 1819, he gives as much detail about the region and its people as he possibly can, which is of enormous benefit to the historian and archaeologist alike (HBCA B.22/e/1). The most useful of Fidler's writings are his post journals. It is in these that he describes the character of the trade and the native people that come to visit him. These records also provide a good deal of information on the daily activities that were taking place in the Souris Mouth area.

Another trader and explorer whose legacy of work is important to this study is Daniel Harmon. His publication of his recollections of being in the fur trading country for almost twenty years has given an increased depth of knowledge and discussion for many scholars (Harmon 1911; Lamb 1957). The journal provides us with knowledge of

the inner workings of the NWC and tells of events from their point of view. This is extremely advantageous as very few of the NWC journals survive and most of the knowledge of the company's forts can only be gleaned from the HBC records, which are understandably biased. Harmon (1911) provides excellent descriptions in his journals of the country he travels through, the forts he sees, the people, the vegetation and the trading practices. He also discusses incidents and other events that occur around him and provides a rich texture of life in the wilderness that is the North West at this time.

As Harmon's journal starts in April of 1800 (Lamb 1957), we also get the benefit of some descriptions of the XYC posts in addition to those of the other two companies. At this time, the XYC was already in operation for two or three years and was quite well established in most places where the other two companies were (Harmon 1911). Thus Harmon gives us a sense of the XYC's operations, which is extremely important because there are almost no journals from the XYC that survive today.

As Harmon was at Fort Alexandria on the Upper Assiniboine River from 1800-1805, he gives a good account of what competition was like during these years (Harmon 1911; Lamb 1957). This is important because the XYC was in operation in these years and little is known of their establishment on this part of the river. Harmon also describes the various native groups who were visiting the posts in this region and the kinds of activities in which they participated. This gives us a good idea of the native people from the NWC perspective as well as how the NWC perceived the HBC and the XYC.

Harmon was only stationed along the Saskatchewan River for one season and he gives us very little information on the NWC activities in this region. However, he does

provide information on the abandonment of the South Branch Posts in 1794 and he was at the new South Branch Post right after it was re-established so he provides a good description of the building of the new fort (Harmon 1911; Lamb 1957). Harmon (1911) also provides good descriptions of the other three areas of this study. This is important because it gives something to compare the HBC journals against and helps to develop a less biased view of the events that occurred.

Unfortunately, Harmon was stationed in the Rocky Mountains during the events of Seven Oaks and the establishment of the Red River Colony and he cannot give first hand perceptions of the NWC's side of things (Lamb 1957). However, he does provide us with a second-hand account of the events that he received from other partners in the NWC that paint the company in an especially favourable light (Harmon 1911; Lamb 1957). This version of events is quite understandable and is interesting in its small differences from most other accounts, which rely on HBC records. These particular events show the usefulness of being able to compare both sides of the story.

The journal of Duncan M'Gillivray is of marginal importance as he was at Fort George, somewhat west of the Saskatchewan Forks study area, but interesting none the less for the perspective it gives (Morton 1929). M'Gillivray's journal is written during the trading season of 1794-5 at Fort George on the North Saskatchewan River. The post is located just inside the present day Alberta border, adjacent to the HBC post of Buckingham House (Morton 1929). At the fort, M'Gillivray provides good accounts of some of the native activities and other events and he describes some of the trading standards at the fort. M'Gillivray also discusses some of the tactics used by aboriginal groups in order to garner a better price for their furs. Most of these strategies are

recorded in the HBC journals, but it is excellent confirmation to hear it from the opposing company as well. M’Gillivray also lists the names of the chiefs that visit the post as well as the various bands with whom they were affiliated (Morton 1929). This is excellent for getting a sense of where the various native groups are trading and for what they are trading.

Tanner’s *Narrative* is quite useful as it is told from the point of view of a white captive, who lives among the Ojibway for thirty years (James 1956). He gives quite an interesting account of how he was treated differently by the HBC than the NWC. It is reassuring to see how this treatment from the perspective of a “Native” matches with some of the stories recorded in the HBC journals. In this manner, one is provided with confirmation of some of the evidence that is recorded in these journals, thus showing that they are not totally biased. Tanner also gives a useful account of the Massacre of Seven Oaks and the troubles at the Red River Colony. As Tanner has dealings with all the traders and companies in the area of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, his information is particularly useful in revealing the native perspective in these areas.

3.4 Other Sources

The following section focuses on those sources that cover the history of the fur trade and its people. In short, these are mainly secondary historical sources and biographies. Included are some primary sources on the historical expeditions that were undertaken to find out more information about the lands and peoples that were part of the fur trade. Additionally, the usefulness of the post journals is also examined.

One of the more interesting publications for the archaeologist, in terms of location and descriptive analysis, is the published report on the expeditions of Henry Youle Hind in 1857 and 1858 (Hind 1971). Hind was responsible for carrying out investigations of the Assiniboine, Red and Saskatchewan river valleys and the surrounding countryside with a view towards their suitability for settlement. Consequently, he gives extremely detailed descriptions of the land and vegetation throughout these areas, which allow one to understand the environment in which the fur trade was conducted (Hind 1971).

Hind (1971) also records some of the existing fur trade posts he visited during his travels as well as a few of those that were abandoned during the height of competition. These references are beneficial to the fur trade archaeologist as they provide a better idea of the locations of some of these posts than the journals do. Hind's observations will be compared with the material contained in the District Reports from Carlton and Brandon Houses to obtain environmental data for the regions to be studied. The environmental information forms the most important part of Hind's contribution. Hind's descriptions of travel through the areas are also useful as they give an idea of the distances between each of the study areas and how long it would take aboriginal people or traders to go from one post to another. These distances are especially important when considering the leapfrogging of posts that occurred during competition and the establishment of outposts in various areas.

MacGregor's (1998) biography of Peter Fidler is also useful in analyzing distances and events during the fur trade. The biography tracks the movements and actions of Fidler and others while conducting the inland fur trade. There is also an

advantage with the biography because a great deal of what is said in it can be compared with the post journals and district reports that Fidler wrote. As mentioned earlier, Fidler's work is an important reference for describing the fur trade not only in the Souris Mouth area, but along the Saskatchewan River as well.

The next group of references I discuss involve historical studies that describe the specific areas that I am investigating in this thesis. These works are a significant part of the background chapter on the fur trade. In the case of Morton's publications (1937, 1939, 1942), his work can be useful in an attempt to locate some of these posts.

Arthur Silver Morton was a professor of history at the University of Saskatchewan from 1914 until 1945 (Champ 1999). Morton became keenly interested in western Canadian history and as University librarian he built up a substantial collection of books on the subject. Morton also realized that in order to study the subject he needed to collect and preserve historical materials, which he did through the Historical Association of the University of Saskatchewan (Champ 1999).

Through his interest in history, Morton began to explore historic sites in the province of Saskatchewan, which included several fur trade post sites. Morton actually went out into the field and was instrumental in locating the remains of many posts that may have been lost otherwise (Champ 1999). This work is important to this thesis because, aside from visiting sites on the Saskatchewan River, Morton also examined parts of the upper Assiniboine River and the lower Qu'Appelle River.

Morton's 1937 book, Under Western Skies: Being a series of pen-pictures of the Canadian West in early fur trade times, is important to us for the easily readable condensation he provides of vast amounts of information. This book gives brief,

accurate sketches of most of the events and people of the fur trade that are of concern to this study. Morton's book (1937) is good for supplying a brief overview of the history of the trade and for succinctly outlining the lives of some of the important figures in both the HBC and the NWC. This is a great boon to the scholar because one can quickly assimilate a vast amount of information.

Morton's second piece of work, A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71, is much more extensive and complete (1939). In it he gives detailed analysis and interpretation of the history of the fur trade in the North West. He also discusses the nature of the competition between the various trading companies in the fur trade throughout its expansive history. Morton (1939) pays particular attention to many of the areas that are under detailed analysis for this thesis. As a result Morton provides a different, more regional analysis of the fur trade than Innis or Rich do.

The main drawback of Morton's information is that there are some problems with his fieldwork as he misidentified many posts and based several of his identifications on limited evidence. An archaeologist would need much more evidence to come to the same conclusions that Morton did about the affiliations of posts. Although his identification of post locations must be used sparingly and with great caution, his historical descriptions are still extremely useful.

The next few paragraphs deal with more area-specific histories of the fur trade that mostly discuss the area of the Souris River mouth and the trading that occurred there (Bumsted 1999; Jackson 1982; Morton 1967; Wood and Thiessen 1985). Bumsted's (1999) work is geared totally towards the competition between the HBC and the NWC. He especially focuses on the Massacre of Seven Oaks and the troubles of the

Selkirk Settlement (Bumsted 1999). While this work may not be useful for the overall background, it is of some application specifically to the Souris Mouth area. As well, it is of some use in describing the nature of competition between the HBC and the NWC. Bumsted relies on primary as well as secondary source materials, which helps to provide an accurate picture of the events during this deadly struggle.

W. L. Morton's (1967) publication is a basic history of the province of Manitoba. There is some consideration of the fur trade, but this part is small in comparison to the rest of the book. The remainder of the book is concerned with the later history of Manitoba in the 20th century (Morton 1967). However, Morton (1967) does discuss the importance of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers and gives consideration to the Massacre of Seven Oaks. As the Assiniboine River runs through three of the areas studied in this thesis, Morton's discussion of its importance is of great value.

The next two selections are of considerable importance for discussions of the Souris Mouth area. These two publications study the posts of the Souris Mouth area in relation to the trade with the Mandan and Hidatsa Indians of the Upper Missouri River (Jackson 1982; Wood and Thiessen 1985). Wood and Thiessen (1985) provide an excellent discussion of these native groups and the character of the trade in this area. They also describe the land and vegetation and give a historical summary of the trade rivalry between the HBC and the NWC (Wood and Thiessen 1985). In addition, they produce selected transcripts of some of the traders' journals that are concerned with trading to the Mandan area. These journals are from traders and clerks in the NWC such as: John Macdonell, Francois-Antoine Larocque, David Thompson and Charles McKenzie (Wood and Thiessen 1985). The inclusion of these journals strengthens their

overall picture of the trade here and brings more recognition to these writings. Bringing attention to these journals is important because of the NWC connection. Too often the journals of the HBC overshadow writings left by members of any other company and it is refreshing to get a glimpse of another perspective.

Jackson's article (1982) is complementary to Wood and Thiessen's work as he also discusses trade with the Mandans. However, he explores this trade from its connection to Brandon House and highlights the HBC's side of the matter. Jackson (1982) discusses the nature of the native peoples in this region and their activities in regards to the fur trade. He also considers the history of European visits to the area not only from the British and French, but also from the Spanish (in earlier years) and Americans (Jackson 1982). Thus, this article is extremely useful in discussing the character of trade at Brandon House and can be compared with the post journals for accuracy of information.

An important piece of work up for discussion in this section is Provo's (1984) introduction to the journal on Fort Esperance, which was a NWC post on the Qu'Appelle River. Provo (1984) interprets the trading situation at this post during the years 1793-1795. He provides a brief history of the NWC, the economy of Fort Esperance and a discussion of the native groups trading at this post and their economic strategies (Provo 1984). Provo's analysis of the trade at this post is quite important as HBC records for this region are scarce and the NWC maintained a virtual monopoly of this area for the majority of the fur trade rivalry period. This post was also quite important for the provisioning trade and was a chief rival to Brandon House during its

early years. Thus, this work is essential to the analysis of the fur trade in the Qu'Appelle River area.

Provo (1984) also provides transcripts of John Macdonell's journal for 1793-1795, which he uses in his analysis of Fort Esperance. Macdonell was the NWC trader in charge of this post during these years and the inclusion of this primary source material is important for analysing the trade of this area (Provo 1984). These journal transcripts are compared to those of the HBC to examine the differences in trade policy and to see how accounts of similar events might differ with different points of view in the fur trade struggle.

One last group of writings to consider under this section are those of the HBC employees who wrote the post journals. Most of the HBC writings used in this thesis are the Journals of Daily Occurrences. As well, some of the General District Reports are used. The district reports are useful because they record information about the regional geography, people, competition and resources. This information is particularly useful to the researcher who is trying to understand why a particular area was attractive for settlement. They also tend to describe all the posts in that particular district and this is significant because some of these posts may not be recorded anywhere else. Although these reports were supposed to be written in a stylized format for all the districts, there is sometimes much variation in the amount of data recorded, depending on who wrote them (Hamilton 1985:40-41). One example of the variation in district reports is illustrated by J. P. Pruden and Peter Fidler. Pruden wrote the district reports for Carlton House on the Saskatchewan River from 1815-1821 and they average about 2-3 typed

pages in length (HBCA B.27/e/1-3). Peter Fidler authored the Brandon House district report for 1819 and it goes on for 13 typed pages (HBCA B.22/e/1).

The daily journals contain much information on the day-to-day operations at the posts. This can include anything from trading activities, to the weather, to significant or unusual events that may have happened. Often the journals include entries about trouble with competitors, different native groups that come into trade and the movement or abandonment of a post. The discussion of the movement of a post or sometimes even the reason for moving is useful because these post movements can often be confirmed through archaeology or other narrative sources. As a result, the HBC journals are used extensively throughout the thesis.

However, the daily journals and the district reports also have problems. Because they are written by individuals hoping to advance their position within the company, the journals can contain a biased view. The motivation of the author is an important consideration when attempting to use the data that are recorded in these sources (Hamilton 1985:47). Clearly a HBC employee writing about the actions of the NWC, XYZ or other competitors is going to paint them in a negative light. The result is that the actions of these other companies are going to seem worse than they might actually have been. As well, the HBC and especially the actions of the writer are going to come across in a much more positive view than they might have been in reality. The personal relationships of the writer will also influence what he says about individual people and one must be careful with the use of this information.

In order to reduce the risk of basing one's analysis on biased accounts, several measures must be taken to substantiate the data. Where possible, the information

recorded in the journals and district reports has been subjected to confirmation from other sources. These include archaeological data, other journals or narrative accounts written at the time and even historical accounts. The use of other sources helps one to gain a better, overall understanding of events that occurred. Unfortunately not all of the journal information could be confirmed elsewhere. In these cases the information is still used, but with the knowledge that there is some bias in the data.

3.5 Archaeological Investigations

This final section of the chapter deals with a brief discussion and analysis of the various archaeological sources available for the different regions of concern to this thesis. It includes a brief review of the work that has been done archaeologically in regard to the posts under consideration. This section also provides a cursory analysis of the reports that have been written and their value to researchers. Finally, it determines how these sources may be useful to this thesis and discusses any shortcomings that the material may have in regard to the current project.

The vast majority of archaeological reports and investigations are site specific and only give cursory examination to the surrounding region. For fur trade posts, regional comparisons are not often done unless it is for a government report on the status or condition of known posts. These government reports are usually concerned with assessing the potential of the fort sites for reconstruction and tourism (Foster 1966; Hamilton 1982; Hems 1986; Smythe 1968; Smythe and Chism 1969). These studies are important because they locate and identify fur trade post sites with an interest towards preservation. However, they do not require much in the way of a research problem

during their archaeological investigation. The information on location and company affiliation for these posts will be useful in this study, though.

The government reports may, however, become useful in delineating the posts occupying each of the study regions. The general overview style that is used tends to identify the majority of posts in each region according to location, affiliation and time period (Foster 1966; Smythe 1968; Smythe and Chism 1969). These studies become helpful for analysing my regional selections and determining which posts belong where. However, the data from these reports need to be incorporated into a research-oriented problem and I try to address that issue in this thesis.

Hems' (1986) report deals a little more with trying to reconcile a research problem with Cultural Resource Management (CRM). This project is interesting because not only did the researchers try to examine the remains from an individual interaction level (between trader and client), but also from a more regional scale as well (Hems 1986). The result is that the sites were examined not only within their own specific area, but linked with other regions to determine how events across the North West were reflected in a specific site.

Hamilton's (1982) report also deals with a research problem in the face of CRM work. This report is related to the same group of reports that were part of Hems' 1986 study. Hamilton (1982) also further developed this work in his Master's Thesis (1985), hence the theoretical orientation of this report. While outlining the importance of the fur trade sites in this study, Hamilton (1982) also includes recommendations for future research on the sites and describes any potential dangers to the sites themselves. This is fully within the scope of a CRM report. However, Hamilton (1982) goes on to analyze

the data and interpret possible social interactions that were occurring based on the materials that they recovered from the sites.

This work is continued in Hamilton's M.A. thesis (1985), which provides even more theoretical background to the Souris Mouth sites. It is refreshing to see this calibre of work done in a CRM report, which so often end up being site reports with little or no interpretation or theoretical background conducted on the recovered materials. Both this report and Hamilton's thesis are important tools in interpreting the sites of the Souris Mouth areas from the archaeological perspective.

One of the earliest reports that compiled a mass of information on the Souris River mouth area is that of Stewart (1930). Stewart was concerned with the locations and movements of posts in this region and did extensive research to determine on which side of the Assiniboine River these posts were located. He was especially concerned with the movements of Brandon House (Stewart 1930). However, as will be seen in the next review, he made some errors in his conclusions. This report is still useful, though, as Stewart includes a list of references and data about this particular area as well as an extract of Peter Fidler's District Report of 1819 and J. B. Tyrell's notes on this area as he passed through it in 1890 (Stewart 1930). Thus, the extraneous data included in this report can be quite useful for a modern analysis, even if some of Stewart's conclusions were wrong (Brown 1964).

The next article is one written by Alice Brown (1964), who had extensive knowledge of the region (having lived there for several years), and she disagrees with Stewart's position. Part of the discrepancy in the two articles is the result of other

documentation becoming available in the time since Stewart's (1930) article was written. This documentation sheds new light on the post locations.

Brown also went into the field and conducted a surface survey, finding evidence of long-term occupations in certain areas that were inconsistent with Stewart's findings. Since Stewart did not go into the field and was primarily looking at documents, he would not have known about these inconsistencies. Stewart mistook which side of the river the first Brandon House was located on, compounding the problem of determining on which side of the river subsequent movements of the posts were made (Brown 1964; Brown 1974). Brown's work also greatly assisted in the survey and excavation work of the Souris Mouth Forts Archaeological Project that has previously been discussed through Hamilton's (1982, 1985) and Hems' (1986) reports. Thus, in analysing the location and mapping of posts for this area more reliance will be placed on Brown's work and the work of Hamilton and Hems than on the earlier work of Stewart.

Tottle's (1981) work is mainly a site report of the excavations that were carried out at Pine Fort. He is mostly concerned with site identification and description of the artifacts found. He also devoted a section to the interpretation and identification of building remains and the functional aspects of these buildings (Tottle 1981). This is important for interpreting the basic functions of the site, but does not provide much information on the social aspects of life at the fort.

Hamilton (1986) takes the materials excavated from the site one step further. In his analysis, Hamilton (1986) is concerned with the socio-economic relationships at the fort. In this sense, he identified activity spheres within the fort and tried to interpret these based on a sexual division of labour and social versus economic activities

(Hamilton 1986). Concluding that a variety of social and economic activities occurred at the fort that went beyond the scope of it being just a fur trade establishment, Hamilton (1986) provides a clear idea of what was occurring within the fort itself. However, this study does not really provide any information on what this fort's relationship may have been to other forts in the area or even some of the activities of native groups there.

Few archaeological data are available in the Qu'Appelle area for the time period under consideration here. An excavation was conducted at Last Mountain House, but this post wasn't established until 1869 (Klimko and Hodges 1993). Although this post is outside of the time constraints of this study, it was an outpost of Fort Qu'Appelle and may have some comparative value for other outposts that are within the time period in question. In any event it does provide some information on what native people were trading after the amalgamation of the HBC and NWC, which can be compared with the earlier trading interests of aboriginal groups. This may have some value in determining the trading choices of native people.

Priess (1997) also did an investigation of the site of Fort Esperance. This study was more to identify the remains of the first Fort Esperance and to determine if the site was adequately protected by Parks Canada land holdings (Priess 1997). While this is essentially a government report on the status of the remains, some historical background and a brief analysis of the archaeological testing are provided (Priess 1997). The main use of this report is to further cement the locations of the two Fort Esperances as the historical documentation is somewhat confused about where the posts were exactly located (Priess 1997). Because of the lack of data on this area, reliance is placed upon the post records that cover this area and some of the historical documentation as well as

the few archaeological reports that exist. This area has been considered less important in past studies as the posts that operated here were mostly outposts of the Souris Mouth area and to some extent the upper Assiniboine River area as well.

The upper Assiniboine River is another area in which the archaeological data are somewhat lacking. Information for this area is mostly obtained from Morton's visits to the area and the HBC post records. However, some archaeological investigation has been carried on here, but most of it has not been published. One publication that has resulted is Olga Klimko's Master's thesis (1983). This publication focuses on archaeology at Fort Pelly I, which wasn't established until 1824 and is outside of the time range for this study (Klimko 1983). However, Klimko (1983) does provide background to the Assiniboine Elbow area in general and information on other posts in the area that are part of my study. She also describes the landscape and area around Fort Pelly, which is useful as many other posts were located in close proximity (Klimko 1983). Due to its establishment shortly after the amalgamation of the HBC and NWC, any materials recovered from Fort Pelly I would bear close resemblance to goods being used by the HBC around the time of the amalgamation. Thus, descriptions of items from this post can be used for analysis in my thesis.

The other important area of analysis is the Saskatchewan River. While the majority of concern will be given to the area in and around the Forks, other posts along the river may be taken into consideration. Due to the lack of journal evidence, two important publications are those on Sturgeon Fort (Barka 1962; Barka and Barka 1976). The HBC post journals only have incidental references to Sturgeon Fort. These references mostly occur in other post journals where the trader is either talking about

sending someone to establish a post near Sturgeon River or someone is visiting the post there (Barka and Barka 1976; HBCA B.87/a/2). Thus the archaeological investigations conducted at this post are important because they provide some of the only data available for this post. An important aspect of this post is that it existed at a time just before the formation of the NWC, so it gives an idea of how the pedlars from Montreal operated (Barka and Barka 1976). This is important, as it was these pedlars that grouped together to become the NWC.

The next set of data concerns Francois-Finlay post, one that is outside of the study area for the Saskatchewan Forks region, but is important because the investigations cover a pedlars' post and the data could be compared to that from Sturgeon Fort, which is also a pedlars' post (Barka and Barka 1976). The initial work here was by Alice Kehoe (1978, 2000) and this was considerably expanded upon by Olga Klimko (1982). Klimko (1982) did extensive historical background research on the Saskatchewan River fur trade in the area around the Nipawin Reservoir for a CRM report. Part of the analysis in the reports that Klimko (1982) was involved in was aimed at examining native sites that were located near the post site. The importance of this is that it provides evidence of native groups using the area prior to the existence of fur trade posts here.

Kehoe's work (1978, 2000) on the Francois site is important because she conducted the first excavations. Her report describes the artifacts and features found here, which is useful to other researchers wanting to look at the same material. The focus of the study was mainly to identify activity areas and the function of buildings (Kehoe 1978). This is important information for interpreting the post site.

Kehoe elaborates on this work in a subsequent article (2000). This article provides a little more analysis of the materials from Francois' House. The view of the publication is to interpret the activities that were happening at this post (Kehoe 2000). The article is important for publishing archaeological data from this site.

One site that was examined archaeologically near the Saskatchewan Forks nodal area is the Grant and McLeod site (FhNa-12) (Klimko 1989). This site is located a few kilometres upriver from the Francois-Finlay complex and represents two small wintering posts established by the Grant brothers and the NWC (Klimko 1989). Extensive archaeological work was done here and Klimko (1989) provides a detailed analysis. The information provided in this publication is useful because it supplies more data on wintering posts along the Saskatchewan River valley. The interpretation and analysis is well done and is of use to anyone examining fur trade sites in this area.

The final two publications that I would like to cover in this chapter fall under a more general archaeological analysis of the fur trade in Western Canada. Both of them are doctoral dissertations, which include aspects of the fur trade throughout Canada, but focus mainly on Western Canada (Forsman 1999; Klimko 1994). The dissertation by Forsman (1999) is not necessarily directly relevant to this thesis in terms of its problem orientation. Forsman (1999) is concerned with architectural diversity in fur trade sites across North America, spanning a two hundred year time period. His thesis tends to be influenced more by structural archaeology and fort size as related to competition rather than with the social and locational considerations that resulted because of competition. However, one of the areas that Forsman's (1999) thesis is particularly useful for is the inclusion of tables of post affiliation and location. These tables include the references

and sources that were used to examine each post and this is extremely useful for anyone that wants to do research on fur trade posts. Forsman (1999) provides an easy and convenient method for looking up references for most posts across Canada.

Klimko's (1994) dissertation is also of somewhat limited usefulness for the current study. Her thesis deals with the state of fur trade archaeology in Western Canada and the changes that have occurred in the discipline over the years (Klimko 1994). However, the usefulness of the thesis is in the way it outlines all the archaeological work that has been conducted at fur trade sites by archaeologists (Klimko 1994). Klimko (1994) describes the type of research that was conducted at each post site, the nature of the materials collected and whether the data were published or not. So, like Forsman's thesis, Klimko's dissertation is useful as a research tool to quickly identify archaeological references on fur trade sites and to determine which posts have been excavated or surveyed and which posts have not.

3.6 Summary

Throughout this chapter, I have examined primary and secondary sources that are of use to examine the problem presented by this thesis. The intention here is to provide an overview of the available information on the fur trade areas under consideration. The sources examined range from historical-economic studies to archaeological site reports. An attempt has been made to provide an idea of the usefulness of each source for the current study as well as to identify where some of the earlier studies have fallen short in providing good overall knowledge on the fur trade institution itself.

Any shortcomings that may exist in fur trade archaeology are in the actual archaeological investigations themselves, or lack thereof. Many of the smaller posts that are under consideration in this thesis have been ignored archaeologically. Of those few that have had excavations or surveys conducted at them, only a small amount of these have actually been published. Thus, it is important to draw attention to these sites and stimulate interest in investigating them more thoroughly before they become lost forever. This last point is even more important with the knowledge that many of these posts have already been lost.

Chapter 4

Environmental and Cultural Background

4.1 Introduction

The first part of this chapter defines some of the terms and concepts that will be used throughout the remainder of the thesis. The intention is to remove any ambiguity that may arise as to what these terms refer.

The second section provides an understanding of the geographical and physiographic settings in which the trade of these nodal areas was conducted. Each nodal area is discussed separately because the data presented here are important aspects of the analysis of the environmental factors involved in post movements and it is necessary to compare each area separately. However, some of the areas are very similar and, as a consequence, the discussion for these areas is not that different. The object is to provide an overview of what the underlying physical conditions of the nodal areas are and what kinds of climate, vegetation and animals the fur traders were dealing with at this time period.

The third section in this chapter discusses the cultural backgrounds of groups located in the nodal areas. This is done to provide a better understanding of those groups that were involved with the trade in the nodal areas. The aboriginal groups

influenced the movement of fur trade posts and made the fur trade possible in the first place.

When analyzing the data, one should understand all the background factors and how these may have played a role in post movements. As well, one can then weigh the significance of these factors versus the other variables that are under consideration. Basically this background information is an anchoring point for the analysis that comes in a later chapter.

4.2 Definitions of Terms

A significant number of the terms used in this thesis originate in spatial studies conducted in the field of geography. Thus, the definitions and some of the ideas come from geography, but their application is in an archaeological context. This is an example of the multidisciplinary approach that is necessary in archaeology.

The concept of *nodes* and *nodal elements* is central to this thesis. In geography, nodal elements usually refer to cities, towns or other agglomerations of population (Bryant and Lemire 1993:7-8; Polyán 1987:718). These nodal elements can also be referred to as centroids as a term used in spatial analysis (Worrall 1991). On a more regional scale, nodes can represent units as small as stores or businesses within a city and sometimes even a single house (Hanson 1976; Taylor 1977:139-140). Basically, nodes are areal units that are used primarily in the analysis of spatial data (Worrall 1991:12, 15). For the purposes of this thesis, each fur trade post is considered a node.

However, this thesis also uses the concept of a nodal area. For the purposes of analysis, the nodal areas in this thesis are formed of irregular units based on function

(Worrall 1991:25). The function in this case is the economic operation of the fur trade and the immediate resources needed to sustain a post. As such, a nodal area is defined as limited in geographical area and time span with a density of posts that is five or greater. The nodal area can be defined both geographically and temporally, but the density of posts is most important as this provides the reason for giving these areas special consideration.

In this thesis the temporal restrictions limit the nodal areas to the competitive era of the fur trade from about 1768 to 1821. While some forts may be present within or just outside some of the nodal areas, they are not considered because they either occurred before or after the temporal limitations placed on this study.

The geographical limitations on the size of a nodal area are highly subjective. However, the size of nodal areas in this thesis is based on the concept of ingathering centers and Meyer and Thistle describe these phenomena as being 80 to 100 kilometres apart (1995:427). As a result, the nodal areas for this study are limited to 100 km across. The temporal limitations of this thesis may allow for the extension of distance in some areas if the posts involved are all from the same general competitive period in time. However, as a general rule, the goal has been to limit each separate nodal area to a distance of 100 km.

The breadth of a nodal area can also be subjective. In this thesis, the breadth of the nodal areas is usually limited to within a few hundred meters of the banks of whatever river the nodal area is centred on. Fur trade posts were rarely located very far from the banks of the river and most of the building materials and supplies for the posts were obtained near the riverbanks. The Saskatchewan Forks nodal area has an expanded

breadth as the land between the two branches of the river has been included as part of the nodal area. The reason for this is that the fur traders extensively used the land and resources here. Also the distance involved is only about 30 kilometres. It would be redundant to divide the area into two as each one would be too similar to the other, without naturally occurring barriers.

Another important spatial concept that is important to this thesis is linear elements. Linear elements are usually considered in geography to be multi-line transportation corridors and important individual trunk lines (Polyan 1987:718). For this thesis the important linear elements are the rivers and the trails linking fur trade posts together. Rivers were the main transportation corridors for the fur trade (Morse 1979:1, 5) and are also the defining feature in all of the nodal areas examined. The trails that the fur traders and the natives used to travel across land are the secondary linear elements of this thesis. Although there is less focus on the trails, they are of almost equal importance in terms of getting people and goods from one location to another. The importance of the linear elements to the thesis is the way in which they link all the nodal areas together.

The above mentioned are the main terms and concepts that are used throughout this study. The majority of other terms used throughout the thesis are self-explanatory and are provided with brief descriptions as they are used. The goal of the definitions provided in this chapter is to explain a few of the important concepts used in the problem orientation and analysis sections of the thesis. By providing these explanations any confusion or ambiguity should be removed at the outset.

4.3 Environmental Background of the Nodal Areas

This section discusses the environmental information associated with each of the nodal areas discussed in this thesis. These nodal areas are circled in Figure 4.1. This information consists of descriptions of climate, geology, animals and vegetation for each of the four nodal areas. In order to present this information clearly and concisely, each of the nodal areas is described separately. By separating the nodal areas, one can more readily identify where the similarities and differences lie. The geographical boundaries of each nodal area are also discussed, as this information is pertinent to understanding the environment of these areas. The first of the nodal areas that is described is the Saskatchewan Forks nodal area.

4.3.1 Saskatchewan Forks

The Saskatchewan Forks nodal area includes the area where the North Saskatchewan and South Saskatchewan Rivers meet as well as parts of both rivers upstream from their juncture (Figure 4.2). The study area extends roughly 100 km up both branches of the Saskatchewan River from this juncture. While the focus of the Saskatchewan Forks study area is primarily on the rivers themselves, it also includes the land between and the land slightly to the north and south of each river. The number of posts that will be dealt with in this area is fifteen.

4.3.1.1 Climate and Vegetation

The vegetation of the Saskatchewan Forks study area is a mixed-wood boreal forest and partly parkland transitional zone (Klimko 1994:33; Thorpe 1999:133). This

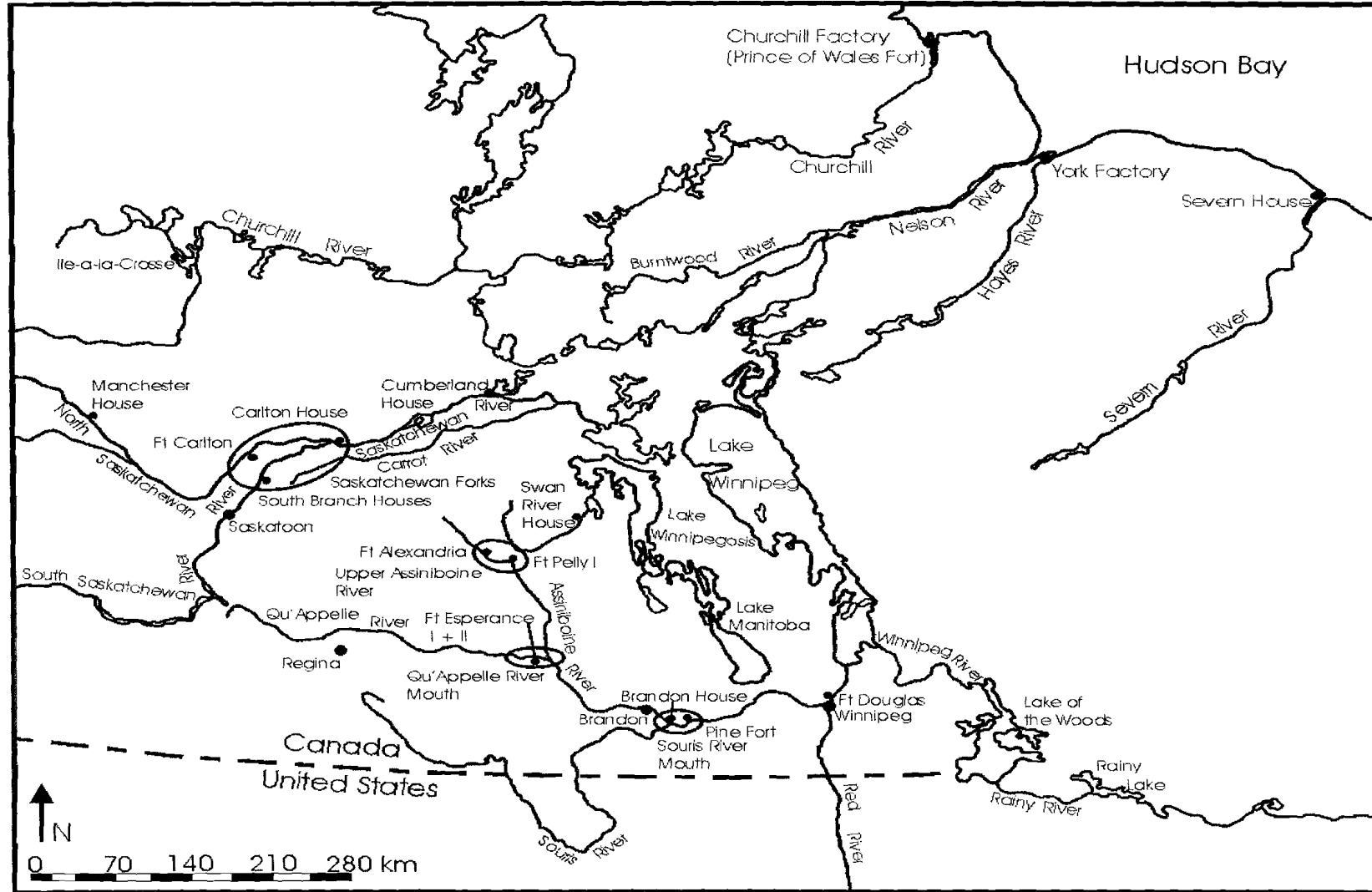


Figure 4.1. Map of the overall study region with the locations of nodal areas circled.

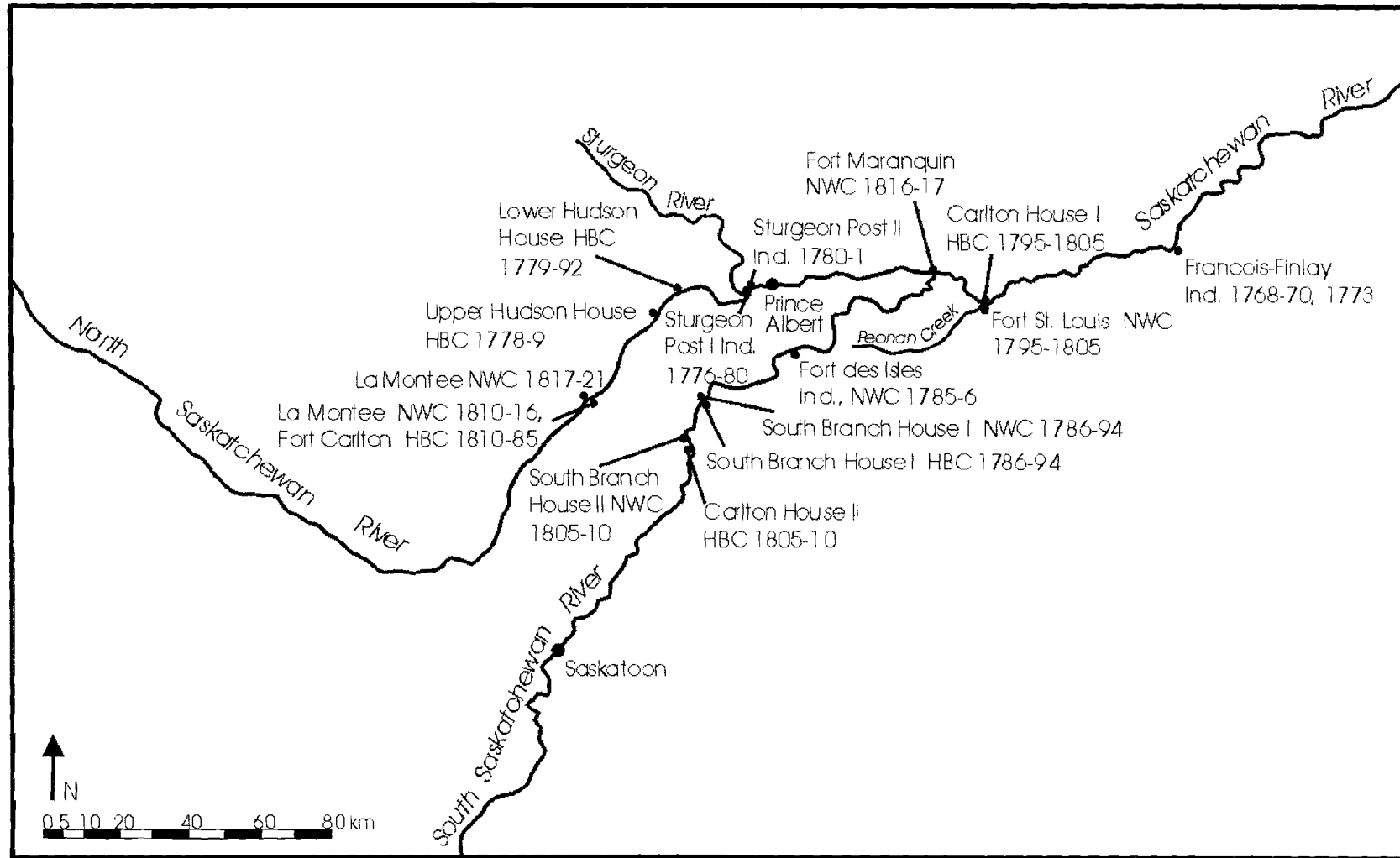


Figure 4.2. Map of the Saskatchewan River forks nodal area.

basically means that the region straddles the edge of the boreal forest to the north and the parkland zone to the south. The boreal forest is generally characterized by stands of black spruce and sphagnum moss in low lying areas. Higher areas include groves of white spruce, trembling aspen and paper birch with some jack pine (Meyer and Epp 1990:325). The parkland consists mainly of aspen groves and open meadows interspersed with grasslands (Meyer and Epp 1990:325; Thorpe 1999:135-136). The soils are generally sandy, but become blacker towards the rivers, according to J. P. Pruden in his District Report for Carlton House in 1815 (HBCA B.27/e/1). The soils of the Saskatchewan Forks study area are mainly Dark Gray Chernozemic with some occurrence of Brunisolic soils (Saskatchewan Land Resource Centre, University of Saskatchewan [SLRC] 1999:130-131). The dark gray soils are thought to be former grasslands that have been affected by forest growth and the invasion of trees (Burley 1982; SLRC 1999:129). The Brunisolic soils are representative of typical forest soils, which is consistent with their location on the north side of the Saskatchewan River where the southern boreal forest is more extensive (SLRC 1999:129-131). This analysis would fit in with the vegetation conditions of being transitional between parkland and boreal forest. The region produces a wide variety of resources for both food and building materials.

This time period is represented by the Little Ice Age climate, which generally consisted of long, cold winters and short, cool summers (Bamforth 1990:361; Lundqvist 1999:95, 118). During the fur trade era the thaws generally occurred at the end of March to the middle of April and about the end of September the frost would set in for the duration of the winter (HBCA B.27/e/1). Crops were planted shortly after the

ground had thawed and the harvest would be taken in from the middle of August until the end of September (HBCA B.27/e/1). If the winters were mild, it would cause a great deal of difficulty in securing provisions as the buffalo would remain far out on the plains to feed, instead of coming into the more forested areas closer to the posts (Klimko 1994). Thus, the climate could be quite harsh at times to live in.

4.3.1.2 Animals

The animals of this region reflect the diversity of the vegetation of this area as several different species are supported. Fish resources would have been one important source of food along the Saskatchewan River, especially in spring and early summer (Meyer 1982a:38). Some of the species that may have been exploited are: jackfish, pike, suckers, sturgeon and perch (Merkowsky 1999:154; Meyer and Epp 1990:326). Fish may have been important in the summers; especially at times when aboriginal groups were going to war and provisions may have been hard to come by. These animals would have been a good source of nourishment to both fur traders and native peoples.

More important to the fur trade and subsistence of native groups are the large game animals. These species provided a larger supply of food on which people subsisted. Some of the animals that were exploited in the Saskatchewan Forks area included moose to the north in the forested areas and pronghorn antelope, mule deer, elk and bison in the south (Wapple 1999:141; Klimko 1994:33; Meyer 1982a:39). The above-mentioned animals would have been most important for subsistence at the posts, especially throughout the long winter season. Predators such as the grizzly bear, cougar,

timber wolf, coyote, red fox and lynx were probably not hunted by humans for subsistence on a regular basis (Meyer 1982a:40). The fur traders preferred bison meat, but deer and other animals were often eaten when bison were scarce or not readily available.

Some of the smaller game that was present included beaver, muskrat, river otter, rabbit, marten, mink and weasel (Meyer 1982a:40; Wapple 1999:139, 141). These species were exploited by native people primarily for their furs and then traded at the posts for different types of goods. Hence, these animals were an important part of the economic side of the trade. Other smaller fauna that were present were various types of waterfowl, such as geese, ducks and swans (Smith 1999:146, 148). Ruffed grouse and sharp-tailed grouse may have been a source of food as they are present in this area (Meyer 1982a:40-41; Smith 1999:147). The birds were likely taken mostly in the spring and fall during periods of migration when large numbers of them would be present.

Thus, an abundance of animal species was potentially available for both subsistence and trade, although over-exploitation could be a problem locally. The presence of large numbers of animals made the areas attractive for the establishment of trading posts and insured that native groups were present. However, despite such abundance there were still winters of starvation and hardship in the area. This is one aspect that is examined in regard to the competition of the companies.

4.3.2 Upper Assiniboine River

This next section is concerned with an area of the Assiniboine River, which was often referred to by the fur traders as “the Elbow”. The particular nodal area for this

section is located roughly 15 km southwest of the present town of Pelly, Saskatchewan (Klimko 1983:9). The area extends from the Assiniboine Elbow to two km west of the No. 9 highway. The northern boundary is five km south of the No. 49 highway and the southern boundary is a west to east line positioned just south of the location of Fort Riviere Tremblante (Figure 4.3). The Key Indian Reserve No. 65 sits roughly in the middle of this nodal area. The Swan River system is outside of this nodal area and therefore fur trade post and resource data from this river will not be considered here. The total number of fur trade posts that will be covered in this nodal area is eleven.

4.3.2.1 Climate and Vegetation

The climate and vegetation of this area is somewhat analogous to the Saskatchewan Forks area, but the Upper Assiniboine River is more of a mixed or transitional region. The area itself sits on the border between the southern boreal forest and the aspen parkland (Thorpe 1999:133). As a result, this area could also be termed a mixed wood boreal forest. Characteristic of this type of vegetation zone is a mixture of conifers (softwoods) and broad-leaved trees (hardwoods), which are usually in separate stands, but can often be mixed together (Thorpe 1999:135). Trees that are common in this type of region are trembling aspen, white spruce, balsam fir, balsam poplar, beaked hazelnut, green alder, and low-bush cranberry. It is also possible to get Manitoba maple, green ash and American elm in the eastern stretches of the region (Thorpe 1999:136).

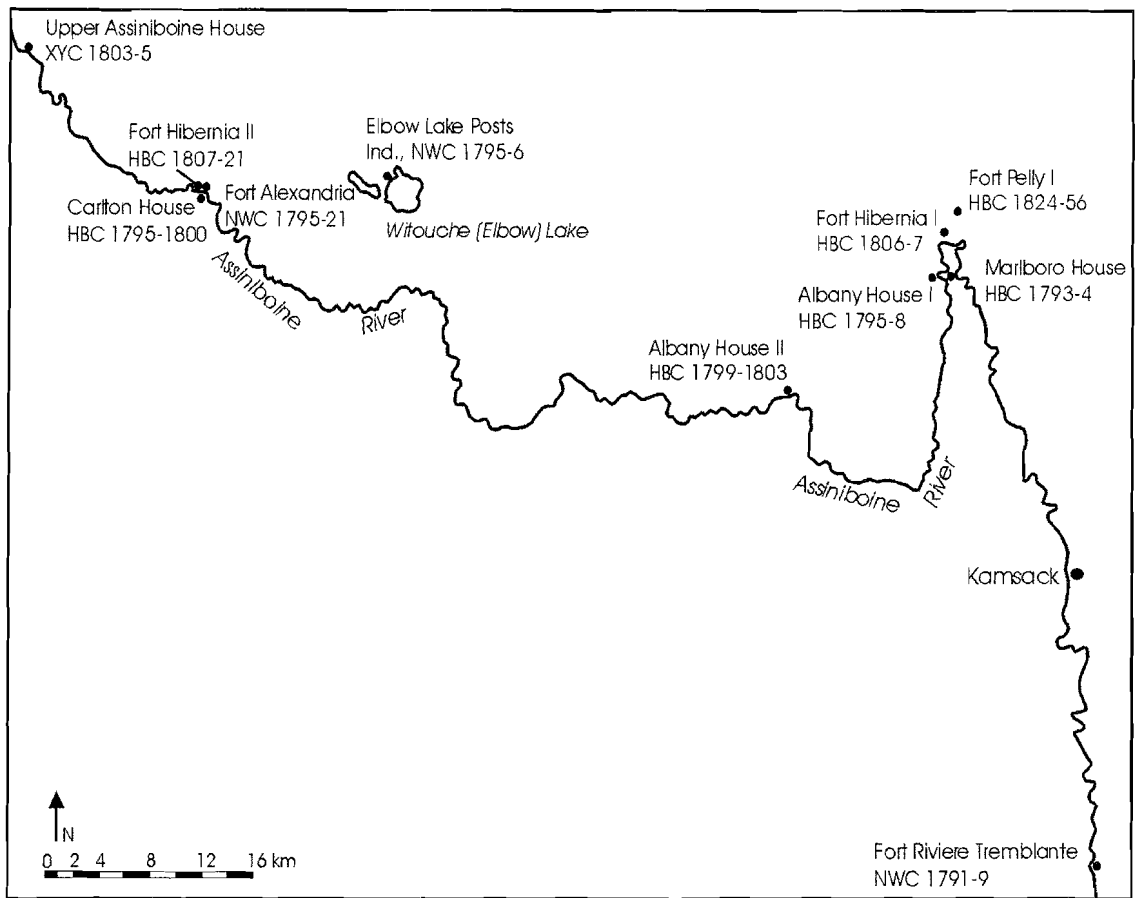


Figure 4.3. Map of the Upper Assiniboine River nodal area.

Soils in the area are generally consistent with those that support a mixed wood boreal forest zone. The northern side of the Assiniboine River consists mainly of Dark Gray Chernozemic soils and the southern portions of the Assiniboine River are Black Chernozemic soils (SLRC 1999:130-131). Black Chernozemic soils typically represent grassland soils, which would be consistent with the aspen parkland. These soils are on the southern side, which is where the aspen parkland part of the region lies (SLRC 1999:130-131). The Dark Gray Chernozemic soils are representative of grassland soils that have been modified by the invasion of trees and shrubs (SLRC 1999:129). These soils lie on the northern side of the Assiniboine River in this area, where there is more of

a boreal forest zone. Thus, the soils in the region are consistent with a mixed wood boreal forest vegetation zone.

The climate of the Upper Assiniboine River area would have been similar to the Saskatchewan Forks nodal area (Lundqvist 1999:95, 118). This climatic state is also consistent with the mixed wood boreal forest zone. Subarctic climates consist of winters that are long and severe and summers that are short and cool (Lundqvist 1999:118). Subarctic climates usually coincide with regions that contain boreal forest. Continental climates, which are characteristic of aspen parkland and mixed wood forest, have winters that are long and cold and summers that are rather warm (Lundqvist 1999:118).

4.3.2.2 Animals

Several different animal species are supported in the Upper Assiniboine River nodal area. The majority of the animals are similar to those in the Saskatchewan Forks area, but there are a few differences. Fish species represented in the Upper Assiniboine River area are sucker, whitefish, walleye, northern pike and perch (Merkowsky 1999:154). As with the other areas, fish would provide a good source of food. Fish sources may have been used more extensively during shortages of big game, but were probably used less when other sources of meat were abundant (Milne 1994:137-138). Thus, acquiring fish would have been important to both aboriginal groups and Europeans alike.

Several types of birds were present throughout the region as well. In this discussion, attention is given to those species that were most likely used as food. Ducks, geese and swans of many types were present in the Upper Assiniboine River (Smith

1999:146, 148). This area also had many species of grouse, including ruffed, sharp-tailed and spruce grouse (Smith 1999:147-148). Game birds and waterfowl were an important source of food in the fur trade for both their flesh and eggs (Milne 1994:137). In addition, some birds were also used for trade, particularly swans for their skins, which were valuable for the down (Hurlburt 1977:58).

Mammals present in the area reflected typical species expected in a mixed wood boreal forest. Predators such as mountain lions, bears, coyote, wolves, foxes and lynx were in this region (Wapple 1999:141). Some of these animals may have been used as food sources, especially by native peoples (Hurlburt 1977:47-48). However, these would have been secondary to other mammal species. Small game such as rabbit and wolverine were also in the Upper Assiniboine area and would also have provided food. Marten, mink, river otter and beaver were present and were important sources of fur (Wapple 1999:141). These animals were also used as food. In the case of the beaver, the meat and tail of this animal were often considered a delicacy (Hurlburt 1977:44-45; Milne 1994:135).

Large game animals in the area were usually the preferred source of subsistence. Species that were present in the Upper Assiniboine area were mule deer, pronghorn antelope, elk and bison (Wapple 1999:141). Such animals were mainly used for food, but bison were also used for clothing and implements. While bison and other large game animals were usually sought after for food, the other animals mentioned above would have provided subsistence for fur traders and aboriginal groups during times when large game animals were scarce.

4.3.3 Qu'Appelle River Mouth

The nodal area for the Qu'Appelle River mouth extends from just downstream of its junction with the Assiniboine River in Manitoba to almost 65 km up the Qu'Appelle River in Saskatchewan. This represents the east and west boundaries of the nodal area, respectively. The north and south boundaries are basically the upper terraces on either side of the river, as the posts were not located very far from the river itself. The downstream limit of the nodal area is at a small tributary called Beaver Creek (Saunders 1977:5; Smythe 1968:132). The mouth of Beaver Creek forms the eastern boundary of the Qu'Appelle River mouth nodal area (Figure 4.4). The western limit is defined near the foot of Round Lake, where the NWC had a post from 1810-1814 (Saunders 1977:4; Wright 1955:41). Eight posts will be discussed for this nodal area.

4.3.3.1 Climate and Vegetation

The environment of the Qu'Appelle River Mouth area is somewhat different from that of the other two areas discussed thus far. The Qu'Appelle River generally falls into the vegetation zone known as the aspen parkland (Thorpe 1999:133). This type of zone represents the transition from forest to grasslands. Wooded areas in the aspen parkland were dominated by trembling aspen as well as some balsam poplar and red-osier dogwood (Morgan 1980:148; Thorpe 1999:136). Along the Qu'Appelle River valley, one could also see Manitoba maple, American elm, plains cottonwood, green ash and bur oak. Grassland patches consisted of fescue prairie, which is comprised mostly of plains rough fescue (Morgan 1980:148; Thorpe 1999:136). Historically, the aspen parkland contained less tree cover than at present, so the Qu'Appelle River Mouth area

probably more closely resembled a tall-grass prairie during fur trade times (Thorpe 1999:136). As such, this area would have been a prime location to obtain provisions.

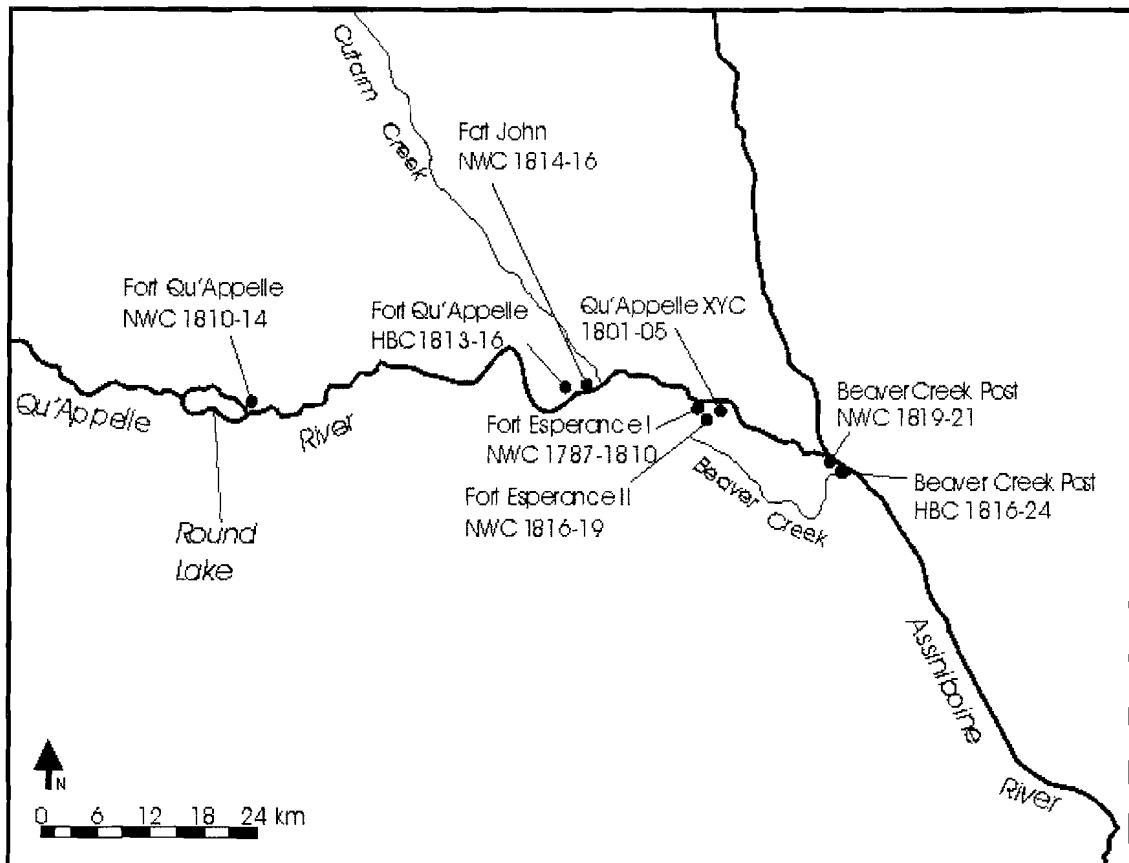


Figure 4.4. Map of the Qu'Appelle River mouth nodal area.

The soils of the Qu'Appelle River Mouth area are primarily of the Black Chernozemic type (SLRC 1999:130-131). As mentioned previously, this type of soil is representative of grassland soils and is consistent with the vegetation in this region (SLRC 1999:129). The soils of this area provided an abundance of grasses to sustain large populations of bison, deer and elk, which were so important to the provision trade.

The climate for the Qu'Appelle River Mouth area is a continental climate (Klimko and Hodges 1993:5; Lundqvist 1999:95). This type of climate has winters that are long and cold and summers that are relatively warm (Lundqvist 1999:118).

Continental climates are consistent with aspen parkland and mixed forest vegetation regions.

4.3.3.2 Animals

The animals represented in this area are similar to those of the Saskatchewan Forks and Upper Assiniboine areas. However, there are a few different species represented here that are not necessarily in the other areas. Fish species in this area are the same as for the Upper Assiniboine River area (Merkowsky 1999:154). There is some indication that whitefish may have been a particularly important species in this area, especially during the late 19th century (Klimko and Hodges 1993:6).

Greater prairie chicken was one species of bird located in the Qu'Appelle River mouth nodal area (Smith 1999:146, 149). As with the other areas, this area also had ducks, geese and swans as well as sharp-tailed and ruffed grouse (Smith 1999:146-148). Many of these birds were only seasonally available, but would have been a pleasant supplement to the diets of fur traders and native people (Klimko and Hodges 1993:6).

Predators in the area of the Qu'Appelle River are the same as for the Saskatchewan Forks and Upper Assiniboine. Coyotes, wolves, foxes, Grizzlies, bobcats and cougars were in this area (Wapple 1999:141). The fur-bearing animals are also mainly the same with the exception of the marten. This species was not present in the Qu'Appelle River Mouth area (Wapple 1999:141). However, river otter, mink, weasel, rabbit and beaver were all located in this area. Thus, this region had the same advantages of food and fur sources as the other ones.

The large game animals were also fairly consistent with the previous regions. Moose, as with the Saskatchewan Forks, were present in the Qu'Appelle region, while they are not in the Upper Assiniboine River (Wapple 1999:141). Elk, deer and bison were also all within this area. Pronghorn antelope were present here and in the Upper Assiniboine, but they were not represented in the Saskatchewan Forks nodal area (Wapple 1999:141). However, the majority of large animals seem to have been the same as the other areas. The minor differences in animal species were likely representative of the different fluctuations in the vegetation due to the differences in the environmental zones. Thus, the Qu'Appelle River Mouth contained a wide variety of animals that were available for exploitation in the fur trade both as food resources and trade merchandise. Despite this abundance, there were many times of starvation for both fur traders and native peoples (Milne 1994:197, 200, 205).

4.3.4 Souris River Mouth

The nodal area for the Souris River mouth extends along a stretch of the Assiniboine River in southwestern Manitoba (Figure 4.5). The eastern limits of this nodal area extend to the location of Pine Fort, which is about 24 km below the junction of the Souris and Assiniboine Rivers (Tottle 1981:2). The Souris River mouth nodal area stretches westerly to the location of Brandon House IV; more than 36 km upstream from the mouth of the Souris River (Hamilton 1982:133). The northern and southern limits of the nodal area are once again along the respective banks of the Assiniboine River. Eleven posts are included in the discussion of the Souris River mouth nodal area.

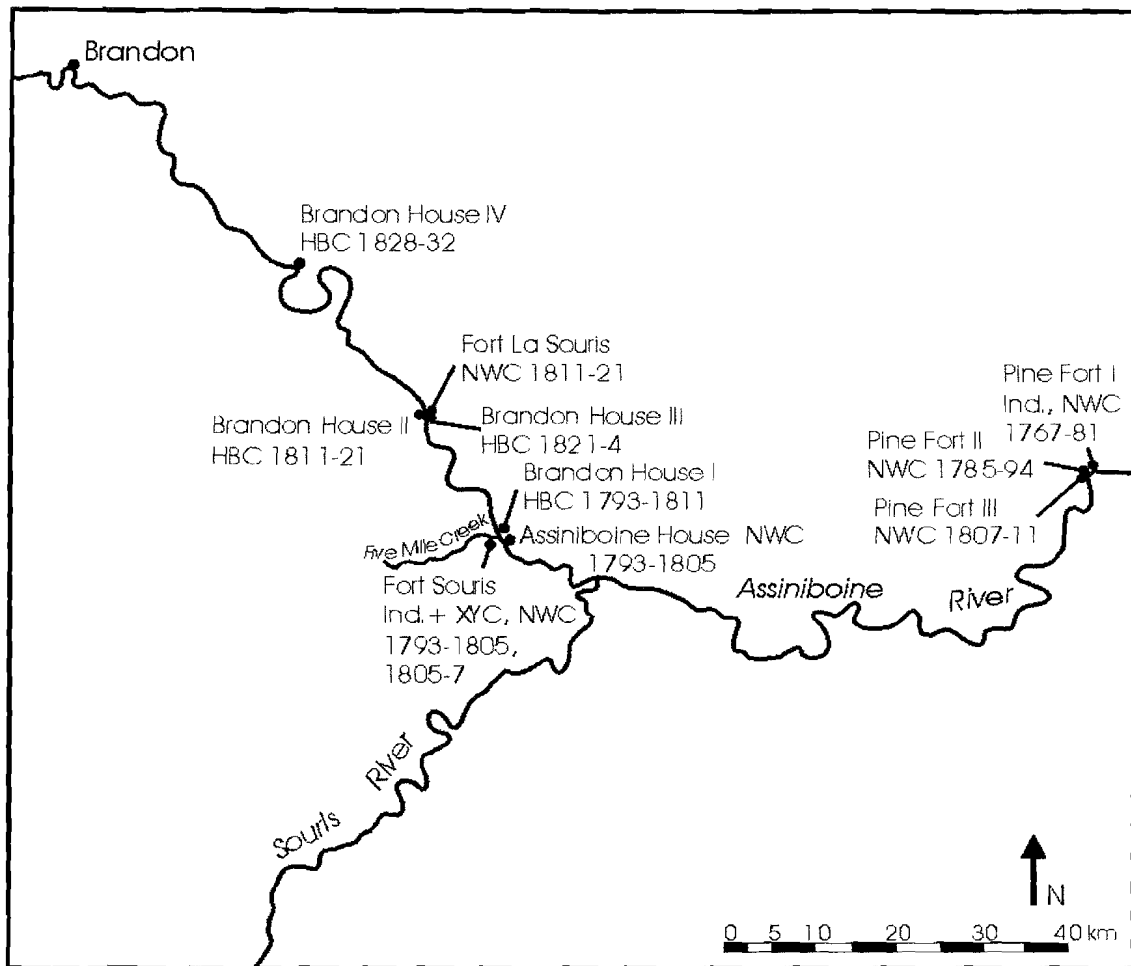


Figure 4.5. Map of the Souris River mouth nodal area.

4.3.4.1 Climate and Vegetation

The majority of the Souris River mouth nodal area is surrounded by parkland vegetation; it sits very close to the boundary between parkland and mixed grass prairie (Department of Natural Resources, Manitoba [DNR, Man] 1983a:11; Warkentin and Ruggles 1970:457). As mentioned previously, the aspen parkland is dominated mainly by copses of trembling aspen with some occurrences of balsam poplar and green ash (DNR, Man 1983a:11; HBCA B.22/e/1; Thorpe 1999:136). Bur oak is quite extensive throughout the Souris Mouth area (Thorpe 1999:136). In the more swampy areas along

some parts of the river are sections of tamarack and black spruce (Tottle 1981:6, 12). The different kinds of trees throughout the area were essential as building materials and the gum of the spruce trees was very important for repairing canoes (Tottle 1981:13). The grasses of the region consist mostly of western porcupine and northern wheat grass as well as big bluestem. Some blue grama grass would also be present (Thorpe 1999:137). Thus the feed needed to support bison and other grazing animals is present.

The soil of this area is primarily Black Chernozemic (Canada-Manitoba Soil Survey, University of Manitoba [CMSS] 1983:12-13; Warkentin and Ruggles 1970:465). This type of soil is consistent with parklands and grasslands. Considerable sections of prairie are noted historically; Peter Fidler notes in his report for the Brandon House District in 1819 that some sections of the landscape were devoid of trees to within 90 to 275 meters of the river (HBCA B.22/e/1).

4.3.4.2 Animals

As with the other areas, there were several different species of animals present in the Souris Mouth area. Fish were plentiful in the Assiniboine River and were seasonally available. Historically, aboriginal groups usually caught fish in the summer and it is likely that fur traders were subsisting on them as well (HBCA B.22/e/1). The species present in this area included walleye, suckers, goldeye, perch and northern pike (Scott and Crossman 1969:14, 18, 23-24). Fish would have been an excellent supplement to the diet when bison may have not been readily available in the summer months (Syms 1980:119).

Bird species in the Souris Mouth area were fairly consistent with those in the Qu'Appelle River Mouth area. Ducks, geese and other migratory waterfowl occurred substantially in the area (DNR 1983b:20-21). Other birds in this area that may have been possible sources of food include partridge, ruffed grouse and sharp-tailed grouse (DNR 1983b:22). As can be seen, the area potentially had a substantial amount of food from its bird sources, although Fidler makes no mention of them in his district report for Brandon House (HBCA B.22/e/1). Perhaps bison and deer meat was in plentiful enough supply that year (1819) that they didn't need to use the bird sources, or perhaps, birds were not an important part of the diet at Brandon House.

Predators in the area were also fairly consistent with the other areas. Cougar, Plains grizzly, fox, bobcat, wolf and coyote were all found in this region (DNR 1983b:19, 23, 24). The fur species in the region were fairly consistent, including mink, muskrat, otter, beaver and fisher (DNR 1983b:23-24). These species would have been exploited for the fur trading side of the economic activity in this region during the time period under study.

Large game animals also occurred throughout the Souris River Mouth area. Some of the species were elk and bison (DNR 1983b:19). Moose had a low occurrence frequency for this particular area, but could exist in a small section of land to the north of the junction of the Souris and Assiniboine Rivers (DNR 1983b:19). The addition of the occasional moose may have been a welcome change to the usual diet.

4.4 Cultural Background of Aboriginal Groups

This section provides information on the native groups that had interactions with the fur trade posts in the nodal areas identified in this thesis. This includes information on their languages, territories and movements. The territories of the groups are mainly discussed as they pertain to the nodal areas of this study. That is to say that each of the groups considered in this section has their territory explained only for its boundaries within Manitoba, Saskatchewan or Alberta. There is also some mention of some of the states to the south as these are important for the Mandan and Hidatsa. The territories are handled this way because it is these regions that are important to the current study. This part of the chapter also identifies the language groups that each aboriginal group is a part of as well as which groups were allies and which were enemies. This last part is especially important because the Europeans would often trade with aboriginal groups that were at war with each other and on occasion this impartiality resulted in fatal consequences for the Europeans.

One of the main groups that the traders in these areas dealt with was the Cree. The Cree language is part of the Algonquian language family (Darnell 2001:638; Lowie 1982:4; Russell 1991:121). It is likely that the initial Cree territories lay in the boreal forest environment of north western Ontario and north central Manitoba and Saskatchewan (Meyer 1988:192-193). During the time period of the inland trade, with which this thesis is concerned, various Cree groups would have been present throughout the boreal forest of Saskatchewan and parts of south western Manitoba (i.e. the parkland) for several centuries (Meyer 1988:196-197; Russell 1982a:159). These Crees were subdivided into several regional bands based in various geographical regions

(Russell 1982b:188-189), sometimes characterized by differing dialects. The bands were situated throughout the territory mentioned above and the Crees participated in annual aggregations that usually occurred in the spring (Meyer and Thistle 1995:414).

The Cree had a number of allies and it appears that they tended to keep a buffer zone between themselves and their enemies. During the 18th century the Cree were allied with the Assiniboin, the members of the Blackfoot Confederacy (including the Sarcee) and the Gros Ventre (Darnell 2001:640; Russell 1982b:207-208). Around the beginning of the 19th century the Cree broke their alliance with the Blackfoot and became allied with the Mandan and Hidatsa (Darnell 2001:641). The Cree were also enemies with the northern Athapaskans and the Dakota Sioux, the latter being located to the south of Manitoba (Ray 1974:14, 98; Russell 1982a:180, 184, 1982b:207). The Cree also broke away from the Assiniboin at the beginning of the 19th century, but reformed their alliance around the time of the amalgamation of the HBC and NWC (Darnell 2001:641).

By the time of amalgamation between the NWC and the HBC, the Cree appear to have abandoned the lower Assiniboine River (Ray 1974:104). Disease may have played a factor in the shift in territory for this group (Russell 1982b:209-210). Despite the destruction to the populations caused by disease, the Cree still remained one of the main groups that the Europeans traded with, especially in the Saskatchewan Forks nodal area, but along the Assiniboine River as well.

Another group that was of extreme importance in the fur trade for the areas considered in this study is the Assiniboin. The Assiniboin language is within the Siouan language family (DeMallie and Miller 2001:572; Lowie 1982:4; Ray 1974:4-6). It is

apparent that the Assiniboin consisted of a northern and a southern group. The northern Woodland Assiniboin occupied the woodlands between the Churchill and Saskatchewan rivers (DeMallie and Miller 2001:573). The southern Plains Assiniboin expanded throughout the parklands of Saskatchewan to Alberta (DeMallie and Miller 2001:573-574; Ray 1974:21). The southern group was apparently adapted to a Plains/Parkland lifestyle and may have had some tensions with the Cree (Russell 1982a:172). However it is generally accepted that the Assiniboin and the Cree had a strong alliance (Russell 1991:172; Sharrock 1974:106).

Although much has been made of hostilities between the Cree/Assiniboin and the Blackfoot Confederacy, Russell has shown that there is no evidence to support the idea that there was chronic warfare between these two alliances prior to ca 1800 (1991:187, 199). Rather the evidence seems to indicate that, in the middle of the 18th century, the Assiniboin and Cree were trading partners with the Blackfoot and Gros Ventre (DeMallie and Miller 2001:574). There is one account of the Peigan asking and receiving assistance from the Cree and Assiniboin as early as about 1730 suggesting these groups had long had an alliance (Bryan 1991:183). However, by the late 18th century there were growing hostilities between the Assiniboin/Cree and the Blackfoot and Gros Ventre (DeMallie and Miller 2001:574). As part of their relationship with the Cree, the Assiniboin were also enemies with the Dakota Sioux even though they may have been part of the latter group in the past (Ray 1974:14, 104).

During the late 18th century the Assiniboin migrated to the south resulting in the majority of the population living between the Qu'Appelle and Souris rivers (DeMallie and Miller 2001:574). For the most part it appears that, by 1821, the Assiniboin had

shifted to occupy parts of southern Saskatchewan and the Missouri River area of North Dakota and Montana (DeMallie and Miller 2001:575; Ray 1974:22, 101). These Assiniboin groups would still have traded at the posts in the Assiniboine River nodal areas throughout the competitive period.

The next group to be considered is the Blackfoot Confederacy, which consisted of an alliance of several groups. The majority of groups in the Blackfoot Confederacy, such as the Blood, Peigan, Blackfoot and Atsina/Gros Ventre, are Algonquian speakers (Dempsey 2001:604; Lowie 1982:4; Russell 1991:187). However the Sarcee were also part of this confederacy and they spoke an Athapaskan language (Lowie 1982:4; Russell 1991:187). At one time it was thought that the Blackfoot moved from the North Saskatchewan River into southern Alberta sometime in the early 1700s, but Russell finds no evidence for this and the original Blackfoot territory is in southern and central Alberta (Dempsey 2001:604; Russell 1991:187-199). Certainly Ray places them in southern Alberta around 1765 (1974:22). The Athapaskan-speaking Sarcee were originally in northern Alberta and moved into central Alberta in the 1700s (Russell 1991:198). During the time period of this thesis most of the Blackfoot groups would have been mainly in the southern and central portions of Alberta and northern Montana.

It appears that the main enemies of the Blackfoot Confederacy were groups referred to as the Snake and their allies (Russell 1991:196). It is not clear who exactly these groups were, but they were located farther to the south and were mainly a threat in the summer months after which they retreated from the northern grasslands (Russell 1991:196-197).

The following discussion focuses on two groups, but they are in the same section here because they were often referred to by the same terms: Minnitaree, Gros Ventre or Fall/Rapids Indians. This term was used for the Siouan-speaking Hidatsa groups of the middle Missouri and for the Algonquian-speaking Atsina/Gros Ventre from the upper Missouri (Lowie 1982:4; Russell 1991:200; Stewart 2001:345). Before and throughout the competitive period of the fur trade, the Gros Ventre occupied the area between the North Saskatchewan and South Saskatchewan rivers (Fowler and Flannery 2001:677; Magne 1987:226-229; Russell 1991:200). The Hidatsa group appear to have occupied southeastern Saskatchewan and were definitely in the middle Missouri River area of North Dakota (Magne 1987:226; Russell 1991:212; Stewart 2001:329). By the beginning of the 19th century, the Hidatsa group had left south eastern Saskatchewan (Magne 1987:228-229). The Hidatsa were enemies with the Sioux and Assiniboin and had alliances with the Mandan (Stewart 2001:329). The Atsina/Gros Ventre were friendly with some Cree and Assiniboin groups at times and were at war with them at other times (Fowler and Flannery 2001:677-678; Russell 1991:205). In the late 18th and early 19th centuries it appears that the Cree were definitely enemies with the Gros Ventre as each of these groups often sent war parties against the other (Russell 1991:204-205). Some of the Gros Ventre may have formed alliances with the Snake, a generic term, and they had alliances with the Blackfoot Confederacy.

The Gros Ventre seem to have mostly left southern Saskatchewan sometime before the middle of the 19th century (Fowler and Flannery 2001:678; Magne 1987:230-231; Russell 1991:202, 205) and retreated south into Montana (Magne 1987:230-231; Ray 1974:101). In the 18th century they traded in the Saskatchewan Forks area and it is

known that the Atsina were responsible for the destruction of South Branch House (HBC) in 1794 (Klimko 1989:6; Russell 1991:204). It is also likely that the Hidatsa occasionally traded at posts in the Assiniboine River areas as well and they were known in the Souris River mouth nodal area as the traders here frequently sent trading expeditions to the Missouri River. As such, these groups had quite an impact on the fur trade in all of the nodal areas studied in this thesis.

The final group to be discussed in this section is the Ojibwa. This group is of relatively minor importance to this study, but they would have had some influence on the Souris River mouth and the Qu'Appelle River mouth posts (Albers 2001:652). The Ojibwa speak an Algonquian language (Albers 2001:652; Lowie 1982:4). These people were mainly concentrated in northwestern Ontario, adjacent Minnesota and parts of southeastern Manitoba and were friendly toward the Cree and Assiniboin (Albers 2001:652; Ray 1974:22). In the late 1700s, some groups of Ojibwa began moving further west into southern Manitoba, but they were occupying territory abandoned by Cree and other Ojibwa that had been devastated by smallpox (Albers 2001:652; Ray 1974:101; Russell 1991:216). During the early part of the 19th century the Ojibwa experienced trade problems with the Mandan and increased hostilities with the Sioux (Albers 2001:653). This was a time when they were adapting to more of a plains lifestyle. The Ojibwa probably did not have much direct influence in most of the nodal areas of this study, but likely traded at the Souris River mouth posts and some posts farther up the Assiniboine River.

4.5 Summary

The focus of this chapter has been to provide additional background to the nodal areas and their outlying regions discussed throughout this thesis. Before this background could be discussed definitions of some of the terms used throughout were provided.

The environmental data presented in this chapter allow the reader a better understanding of the conditions under which these posts were operating. As well, a basic understanding of the diets that both the fur traders and aboriginal groups potentially had available to them is important. Environmental conditions and availability of food sources are possible factors affecting the movement of fur trade posts.

The information on native groups is crucial for understanding the difficulties the fur traders had to deal with in terms of which groups were enemies and which were friends. Relations between groups often had consequences for the fur traders and this study would not be complete without giving consideration to these groups.

Chapter 5

Fur Trade Post Data

5.1 Introduction

The following chapter is an overview analysis and description of the histories in each of the nodal areas that will be considered in this thesis. The information under consideration here will involve an overview of each of the study areas with a brief description and review of the fur trade posts within each. The overviews of the study areas themselves will include details on the river systems, native groups, competition and other elements that are relevant both to the functioning of the fur trade as well as to the analysis of the thesis problem.

The goal of this chapter is to familiarize the reader with the regions under examination and to briefly outline the data available for each area. This will enable the reader to understand what is being analysed and also provide a ready reference for information about the posts in each of the areas. It should also prove to be of use to other researchers wanting data on these regions.

The chapter is separated into four main sections, which correspond to each of the four study areas. Each section includes discussions of the individual posts, which describe the details and relevant factors that are important to this thesis. This information will be important later on when considering how the posts were moved

around and how the events occurring at each post may have changed with new locations or new competition.

One important definition that needs to be addressed in this section is what the various functions of each of the posts could possibly be. These functions are valuable in understanding the role of each post and their position within the competitive hierarchy. For the division of the function of the posts, the categories are based on Terry Smythe's (1968) work for the Canadian National Historic Sites Service. However, there are slight modifications to the definitions in some of his categories as updating is necessary due to the presence of new information and the need for more clarity. There are six main categories that are defined as follows:

1. Wintering Posts- These posts formed the basic trading establishment and were primarily occupied only during the winter months when furs were taken. Wintering posts were usually located next to the native peoples' hunting grounds and were quite often small and short-lived. The locations of these posts tended to change frequently due to competition and depletion of furs. While some people may consider an individual wintering post to be a small part of the fur trade, they are quite important and in this thesis the majority of posts in the nodal areas are of the wintering type.
2. Provision Posts- Posts of this nature were primarily used to trade or produce pemmican to sustain the canoe brigades on their journeys to the north and west. The majority of these posts were located along the Red and Assiniboine Rivers; however, some of the posts on the Saskatchewan River

produced both pemmican and furs. Provision posts are also quite important in this thesis as a large number of posts under consideration are of the provision type.

3. Provision Depots- This type of post was located at strategic points along the supply line to store pemmican for the passing canoe brigades. These posts also stored meat and other foods to supply traders throughout the region and had a somewhat analogous function to the Provision Posts if on a slightly larger scale. An example of such a post is Cumberland House. These posts are of somewhat less importance to the thesis as there are only a few within the nodal areas, but the ones that are there were of vital importance to the fur trade competition.
4. District Posts- the trading districts outlined by the various companies, especially the HBC, each had at least one major post that served as the district headquarters. These were manned either by a wintering partner, Chief Factor or Chief Trader, who was responsible for the whole district. These posts would be kept open for the whole year and their locations changed very rarely. District Posts also served a depot function for wintering posts in their jurisdiction through distributing trading goods and storing furs for transport back to the Main Depots. Posts of this type are of great importance in the fur trade and in this thesis as well, since there are a few located within the nodal areas. One is Brandon House.
5. Main Depots- these were the major stations to which trading goods were shipped from major commercial centres such as London and Montreal. From

the Main Depots, the goods were shipped to the District Posts and from there they were transported to the wintering and provision posts throughout the Indian Country. Furs acquired from the inland trade were then shipped back to the Main Depots from which they were taken to the major commercial and manufacturing cities. Examples of Main Depots include York Factory and Fort William. While these forts were quite important to the fur trade, they are not a high priority in this thesis as none of them are located in the nodal areas considered here. However, there will be some discussion of them as they were instrumental in the establishment of several of the posts located in the nodal areas.

6. Portage Posts- the last category of posts discussed by Smythe (1968) is the Portage Posts. The main function of this type of post was as a trans-shipment station located where natural obstacles blocked the path of the canoe brigades. These posts were built so that goods could be moved around the obstacles in stages. Some examples of these posts are Mountain Portage above Fort William and the Methye Portage Houses. While this type of post is not present in any of the nodal areas in this thesis, they are of some importance as they were useful in delivering goods to the posts that are under consideration in this thesis.

Spatial characteristics of the forts are provided throughout the discussion of individual posts. This is archaeological information that mainly details the dimensions and the complexity of the sites that were found. Dimensions refer to the maximum

length and width of the stockade surrounding a post. For those posts that do not have stockades, the maximum size of the building clusters is used to determine the dimensions of the post. The number of buildings and features that are present at the post site determines complexity. By examining these data an idea of post type or function can be gained, which is a factor in determining how long a post might have remained in one location. For those posts that have no excavation data, post type is inferred from journal descriptions, historical accounts or the probable function based on other known post types in the immediate vicinity.

5.2 Saskatchewan Forks Fur Trade Posts

The largest number of excavated posts are located in the Saskatchewan Forks nodal area. This section examines each of those posts as well as several others that are known historically and describes characteristics of each that are considered later on in this study. The tables that accompany each of these subsections are invaluable as quick reference tools to look up information on each of the posts that is examined (Table 5.1). The written descriptions of the posts themselves are designed to provide more detailed information on the posts and explain the importance of each of the features of the posts. Additionally all of the posts for this section can be found on Figure 5.1.

5.2.1 Francois-Finlay House

The Francois-Finlay House is technically outside of this nodal area. However, it is one of the few posts that have been excavated in this region. As such, the materials recovered from this post are compared to materials recorded at other posts in different

Table 5.1. Operation data for fur trade posts in the Saskatchewan River forks nodal area.

Name of post	Years in operation	Post Function	Affiliation	Reasons for Moving or Closing Posts
Francois-Finlay House	1768-1770, 1773	Wintering Post	Independent	Competition located elsewhere
Sturgeon Post I	1776-1780	Wintering Post	Independent	Destroyed (by Natives?)
Sturgeon Post II	1780-1781	Wintering Post	Independent	Competition located elsewhere
Upper Hudson House	1778-1779	Wintering Post	HBC	Competition too fierce + located elsewhere
Lower Hudson House	1779-1792	Provisioning Post	HBC	Competition had shifted elsewhere when destroyed (by pedlars)
Fort des Isles- 2 posts	1785-1786	Wintering Posts	Independent, NWC	Competition located elsewhere
South Branch House I- 3 posts	1786-1794	Provisioning Post	Independent, NWC	After 1st season Independents merged with NWC, then abandoned due to native attacks
South Branch House I	1786-1794	Provisioning Post	HBC	Abandoned due to native attacks
Fort St. Louis	1795-1805	Provisioning Post	NWC	Competition located elsewhere
Carlton House I	1795-1805	Provisioning Post	HBC	Competition located elsewhere
South Branch House II	1805-1810	Provisioning Post	NWC	Competition located elsewhere
Carlton House II	1805-1810	Provisioning Post	HBC	Competition located elsewhere
Fort La Montee	1810-1816, 1817-1821	Provisioning Post	NWC	Fear of native attacks, amalgamation with HBC
Fort Maranquin	1816-1817	Wintering Post	NWC	Competition remained at previous location
Fort Carlton	1810-1821, 1821-1835, 1835-1855, 1855-1885	District Headquarters	HBC	Underwent several building phases, Destroyed during the NW Rebellion

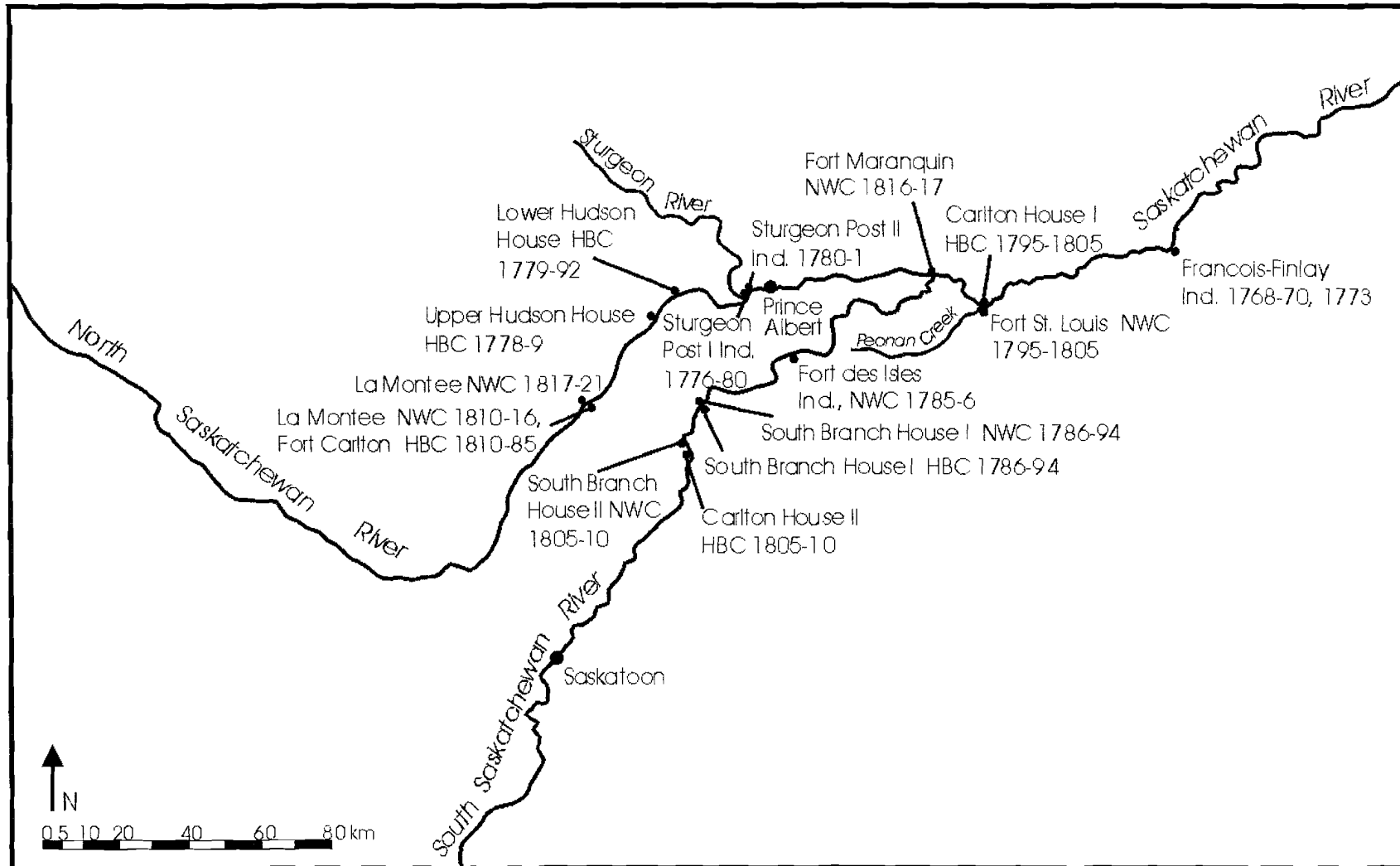


Figure 5.1. Map of the Saskatchewan River forks nodal area showing fur trade post locations.

nodal areas to provide the majority of the archaeological data used in this thesis. The inclusion of this post also provides data on materials in use at an independent trader's post. As well, the post was only a wintering post (Klimko 1994:72), but it shows that even a small, intermittent trading establishment could have a major impact on the inland fur trade.

The Francois-Finlay post was first established in 1768, by a voyageur named Francois Le Blanc, a little below a rapid called Finlay's fall on the Saskatchewan River (Kehoe 1978:1,3; Klimko 1982:139,140; Smythe 1968:180). Francois was a French voyageur working for his master James Finlay and established the post as one of the first independent trading posts on the Saskatchewan after the defeat of the French (Smythe 1968:180). The post was closed in 1770, but was reopened in 1773 by Francois (Kehoe 1978:4). In the autumn of this year, Francois apparently decided to abandon the post and move farther up river to trade (Kehoe 1978:5; Smythe 1968:181). The post was not used again and fell into ruin so that by 1792 there was nothing left (Klimko 1982:141). The post had a significant impact on the fur trade as the success that was achieved here eventually forced the HBC establish posts inland.

Two posts were excavated at the Francois-Finlay site. Both of these posts were investigated under the direction of Alice Kehoe (Kehoe 1978). The first site was termed FhNa-3 and was interpreted by Kehoe (1978:10) as Francois' House. The excavation revealed that the post was not very complex. This post did not have a separate stockade as the walls of the cabins formed three sides of the stockade and a stockade fence was built to complete the fourth side (Kehoe 1978:21). The dimensions of the post measured 18.3 m by 6.7 m (Kehoe 1978:17, 23). The building itself represents four cabins with

the most westerly one interpreted as the Master's house. The rest of the cabins were lined up next to this one in much the same manner as row houses (Kehoe 1978:21, 23). Due to its small size and relatively straightforward construction, Francois' house is likely representative of a small, wintering post.

The second of the posts excavated at this location is termed FhNa-19 and Kehoe considered it to be the original 1768 building phase of the Francois-Finlay post. There appears to have been a second rebuilding phase at this site thought to have occurred sometime in 1770 (Kehoe 1978:57). The dimension of the post at this site were about 9.8 m by 6.4 m (Kehoe 1978:62-63). The layout of the post consisted of a cabin with a fireplace, a small courtyard and another, smaller cabin that had a fireplace and storage cellar. Directly to the east of the site was a feature that was interpreted as a "smithy" (Kehoe 1978:62-64). Once again the small size and simplicity of construction suggests that this was a small, wintering post.

However, these sites may be more complex. As part of the Nipawin Reservoir Heritage study Olga Klimko conducted much expanded excavations here. She reinterpreted these sites and believe that the remains here are not related to Francois or Finlay. First, it is proposed that there were two building phases at FhNa-3, which might represent a NWC post (Klimko and McKeand 1998:342). Secondly, she found evidence for four different structures at FhNa-19 that probably represent three separate posts. Structure 1 is probably either an early HBC or NWC post, while Structure 2 likely represents a temporary NWC wintering post (Klimko and McKeand 1998:342). Structures 3 and 4 might be associated with a third site (FhNa-7) and, if so, could be part of a more substantial HBC post (Klimko and McKeand 1998:344). No conclusive

determinations could be made about the affiliation of the post remains here, other than that they do not likely represent posts belonging to either Francois or Finlay. However, the Francois-Finlay post was likely at this location, but may have been destroyed by riverbank erosion (Klimko and McKeand 1998:342). The sites are still important as representing the remains of wintering posts from the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

This post complex also demonstrates the importance of location in achieving success in the fur trade. The posts were constructed on a terrace overlooking the river at a point just below where traders would have to portage around Finlay's Falls (Kehoe 1978:6). Although the bank below the house was too steep to climb in the late 1970s, at one point it was gentle enough to drive down teams of horses (Kehoe 1978:6). The portage around the rapids was nearby, which would make the post convenient to get to (Kehoe 2000:179). Further enhancing the productivity of this location is the fact that the plateau overlooking this spot had been a favoured camping and lookout spot of the Natives for at least 2000 years (Kehoe 1978:6, 2000:179). The area was a rendezvous center and the Crees referred to the spot as nipowiwinihk, which means "a standing place" (Meyer and Thistle 1995:415). These posts would thus be in a prime location with several customers travelling throughout the area at different times.

5.2.2 Sturgeon Post I

This post is quite significant to the thesis as it has been excavated and it is also located in the nodal area for the Saskatchewan Forks. Sturgeon Post is also unique because, although independent traders established it, they formed one of the first alliances that led to the eventual formation of the NWC (Barka and Barka 1976; Smythe 1968:17). The post is further signified by the fact that it was the first built on the North

Saskatchewan River (Barka and Barka 1976:20). Sturgeon Post proves to be a significant link in the fur trade competition of this nodal area.

Unfortunately, the excavation at Sturgeon Post I was unable to determine how large the posts were, but the authors speculate that they would have been similar to upper Hudson House, which was about 24 meters square (Barka and Barka 1976:48-49). The house at upper Hudson House was about 11.3 m by 8.2 m (Barka and Barka 1976:48-49). Three areas were excavated at this site and the remains likely indicate the presence of two or three houses (Barka and Barka 1976:48, 53-54). It is known from some of the journals that anywhere from 2 to 6 houses once stood at this location (Barka and Barka 1976:46-47). It is suggested that this site represents a wintering post.

The trading houses at this site would all have been located in one stockade and were in operation from 1776-1780 (Barka and Barka 1976:11-12; Klimko 1994:72; Smythe 1968:193-4). The site was settled by at least seven different pedlars, all working for individual concerns (Barka and Barka 1976; Morton 1939:320; Smythe 1968:194). Individuals reported to be at this fort site in the 1777-78 trading season were Charles McCormick, Booty Graves, William Bruce, Peter Pond, Peter Pangman, Nicholas Montour and Bartholomew Blondeau (Morton 1939:320; Smythe 1968:194). At the end of that trading season, the pedlars combined their leftover goods and sent Peter Pond on a trading expedition to the Athabasca Country as a representative of their coalition. This is of great historical significance because many of the above traders became partners in the first NWC and the opening of the Athabasca Country was a crucial source of wealth for the NWC throughout its history (Barka and Barka 1976:15; Morton 1939:328; Smythe 1968:194). Thus Sturgeon Post I was of strategic importance

in the development of competition that occurred in the fur trade after the defeat of the French.

The post eventually burned in the summer of 1780, possibly at the hands of aboriginal groups (Barka and Barka 1976:20; Morton 1939:331). In the autumn of the same year, the pedlars returned and rebuilt a little below the former settlement. However, by this point the pedlars had begun to concentrate their efforts further up the North Saskatchewan River (Barka and Barka 1976:15; Morton 1939:321-322). These additional posts are discussed later in this section.

5.2.3 Sturgeon Post II

This was the second of the establishments near the mouth of the Sturgeon River as it emptied into the North Saskatchewan River. This post was in operation for just one trading season from 1780-1 (Smythe 1968:193). After Sturgeon Post I burnt down, it was most likely Peter Pangman who established the wintering post a little below the previous one (Smythe 1968:193). The post was of relatively minor importance as the pedlars were already concentrating their efforts further up the river.

The main significance of the post is that it shows the popularity of the location, as the site was re-established despite troubles with Native groups in the area. A native under the care of the pedlars had mistakenly been given two doses of laudanum and subsequently died from the treatment (Barka and Barka 1976:17). The native tribe involved did nothing about the incident during the winter, but the following spring (1779), they attacked the pedlars and forced them to flee. The following summer, it is speculated that this native group burned down the first Sturgeon Post, which required rebuilding that fall (Barka and Barka 1976:17-20; Smythe 1968:194). Thus, not only

did competition force the relocation of trading posts, but difficulties with aboriginal groups also factored into the movement of posts.

5.2.4 Upper Hudson House

Upper Hudson House was the second post, after Cumberland House (1774), established by the HBC on their move inland (Morton 1939). This was another wintering post built upon the North Saskatchewan River and was established for the HBC in 1778 (Morton 1939:322; Smythe 1968:196). Robert Longmoor was the trader selected for the job of pushing the interests of the HBC farther inland. In the fall of 1778, Longmoor left Cumberland House to proceed upriver and the following tells of the founding of the post in his own words:

22nd Thursday. ... arrived at the Canadians Settlements ... I put up Close by them, there not being any Woods farther up, within Less than 10 days paddle in short days, and the River almost fast, with Ice. The Masters came to me, and told me, that If I Cused to stay any were Nigh, it was very Agreeable, if not they would go as far as I did, that they should be close by me, and as I had no Provisions for the men, I thought It best to Stay. *23rd Friday.* This day one Blondish a Frenchman, Came to me, and made me the Proffer of a House Half built, about Hundred Yards from the other French Houses [Rich (editor) 1951:311-312].

Thus, the location of Upper Hudson House was due more to circumstances than it was to actual choice. Perhaps this explains why the post was only in operation for one trading season.

A further impediment to success at this post was the severe difficulties Longmoor had with the Pedlars who surrounded him. Not only did they prevent the native groups from freely trading with him, but the Pedlars also physically assaulted Longmoor's men (Morton 1939:323-324). Longmoor often found that even when he sent men out to trade with people and entice them to come into his fort, the Pedlars

would either intercept his men or the natives groups when they came in (Morton 1939:323). In one case, when Longmoor went out to confront them, they beat one of his men who was with him. The Pedlars would also send out copious amounts of tobacco and alcohol to the native peoples so that they were more likely to come into the pedlars' settlements rather than Longmoor's (Morton 1939:323). There was very little Longmoor could do as he was severely outnumbered and for the most part he had to stick it out as best he could. As a result of these difficulties the settlement of Hudson House was relocated the following year, providing a good example of relocation due to competition/intimidation.

5.2.5 Lower Hudson House

After a disastrous trading season, Hudson House was moved to a new location between Upper Hudson House and the Pedlars' Sturgeon Post (Morton 1939:326; Smythe 1968:195). This post represents the first long-term outpost established from Cumberland House and was built by William Tomison in the autumn of 1779 (Morton 1939:326; Smythe 1968:195). Although the house was primarily a wintering post, it was sometimes kept open throughout the summer (HBCA B.87/a/5, 7, 9). The post remained in operation under various traders of the HBC until 1792 when it seems to have been burned by the Pedlars (Russell 1999:35; Smythe 1968:195).

However, the first season of occupation at Lower Hudson House proved to be quite a successful one. Tomison managed to arrive in the autumn before the Pedlars came and for a time was able to trade furs and provisions without competition (Morton 1939:330). Even when the Pedlars did arrive they did not build right next to him, but instead occupied the posts at the mouth of the Sturgeon River (Morton 1939:330). Thus,

Tomison was able to trade without much interference and found himself in a position between the native groups of the upper Saskatchewan and the Canadian traders at Sturgeon Post. The trade went so well that by January, trade goods were running short at Hudson House, even with a few Canadians reoccupying the post 22 km above Lower Hudson House (Morton 1939:330).

Times were not always good at Hudson House. The trading season of 1781-1782 proved to be disastrous (Morton 1939:331). The native people had applied one of their usual tactics of burning the plains to the south of the posts to keep the buffalo far out (Morton 1939:331). This strategy helped to increase the value of provisions, as they could not be obtained readily near the posts. However, during the winter, this course of action hurt the aboriginals as much as the traders. Native groups would come into the posts starving and the traders would do what they could to feed them by sacrificing their own supplies. During this time of starvation, smallpox came with devastating effects on the native tribes (Morton 1939:331-333). William Walker, who was Master at Lower Hudson House during the season of 1781-1782, can best sum up the devastation that the smallpox caused:

Nov. 9, 1781-... Tomorrow I must put my people to short Allowance...for I am not likely to get any provisions from Indians, or indeed very little of any thing else, the Small pox is raging with such great Violence over this Country, not hardly sparing any that takes it, that in a short time I do not suppose they will hardly be a staid Indian Living, for where they die there they lay and the Wild beasts eats them up, for they are frightened of going nigh one to another as soon as they take bad [HBCA B.87/a/4].

While the smallpox was devastating, populations eventually began to recover and the Company's trade continued. Eventually Hudson House was abandoned as the focal point of the competition had shifted elsewhere.

5.2.6 South Branch House I (NWC and Independents)

The story of South Branch House is an interesting and somewhat violent one with some confusion thrown in, as there were several posts of this name under control of different trading companies. The original manifestation of this post was Fort des Isles, which was constructed for the trading season of 1785-6 for the NWC. Another post (also called South Branch House) in the same location was built by independents (Morton 1939:337; Smythe 1968:189-190).

The first actual South Branch House was constructed a year later upriver from Fort des Isles. The posts were moved here to avoid being cut off by the HBC, which was also building a post in this area (Smythe 1968:190). William Thorburn managed the two posts for the Independents and Nicholas Montour for the NWC (Smythe 1968:190). By the end of the first season at this location both of these posts merged into the NWC post. Despite the stiff competition in this region with the number of concerns represented at these posts, all the companies achieved great success (Morton 1939:337). The nature of the fur trade in these times is born out at the sites of the South Branch posts. Posts were frequently moved around to try to out-compete the rival firms and moderate success was usually achieved with such tactics.

5.2.7 South Branch House I (HBC)

In the early spring of 1785, Tomison, of the HBC, decided that his company should have a post on the South Branch as well. The post was mainly developed to be a provision post and competed directly with the NWC on the South Saskatchewan (Smythe 1968:191). Mitchell Oman built the post for the trading season of 1786 and as mentioned previously the NWC immediately abandoned Fort des Isles and moved

across the river from the HBC's post (Morton 1939:338; Rich 1960:172; Smythe 1968:191). The posts of both companies remained in operation until 1794, when a native group attacked and killed a number of servants at the HBC post and the posts were abandoned (Smythe 1968:191).

South Branch House illustrates the danger that was inherent in the fur trade due to some of the tactics used by the companies, especially the NWC servants. The Atsina (Gros Ventres) had a history of violence and warfare with the Cree and Assiniboin that dated back to the 1780s (Russell 1991:204). In the fall of 1793, a group of Atsina were attacked and massacred by a group of Cree. Believing that the traders were providing the Cree with arms and ammunition, the Atsina then raided some posts of both the NWC and HBC on the Upper Saskatchewan, securing clothing and arms (Morton 1939:456-57; Rich 1960:172). Encouraged by their success at these posts, the Atsina attacked the posts on the South Branch the following summer (1794). The HBC post was taken by surprise and quickly fell to the attacking group with only one man escaping alive. The NWC post had more warning of the attack and the men there managed to defend it, but decided it was prudent to abandon the post after the Atsina had left (Morton 1939:457; Rich 1960:172). This brought about the abandonment of posts on the South Branch and subsequent movement to the main Saskatchewan just below the juncture of the two branches (Morton 1939:457).

5.2.8 Fort St. Louis

This fort was a NWC post built just below Peonan Creek on the Saskatchewan River (Figure 5.1) to replace South Branch House, which was abandoned after the Atsina attack in 1794 (Morton 1939:457; Smythe 1968:189). The post was established

in 1795 by Louis Chastellain, who had been master at South Branch House (Morton 1939:457; Smythe 1968:189). This post was also a provision post as it replaced the one on the South Branch. Fort St. Louis appears to have been a successful establishment as it was in operation for a decade until 1805, when it was abandoned and the NWC moved back to the South Branch (Smythe 1968:189).

Although this post was open during the years of the XYZ, it is unclear whether the company had a permanent establishment in the area or not. There is some indication in the HBC journals that the XYZ did have a post either near Fort St. Louis or at the mouth of the Sturgeon River in 1798; however, no remains have yet been found (Smythe 1968:188, 195). No doubt, there was an XYZ post somewhere along here, as they built in most of the same locations as the NWC and HBC.

5.2.9 Carlton House I

After the destruction of South Branch House in 1794, the HBC followed the NWC to the main Saskatchewan and constructed Carlton House I in 1795 (Morton 1939:457-458; Russell 1999:34-35; Smythe 1968:187-188). As with the NWC's Fort St. Louis, Carlton House I was built as a provision post to replace the loss of South Branch House.

Although the house was primarily a provision post, it appears to have occupied mainly as a wintering post and relations with the NWC were congenial enough that the Company left some of their stores with the NWC post over the summer months (HBCA B.27/a/1). Part of this friendly atmosphere may have been due to the events of the previous year and the need of the traders to present a more unified front in the face of hostile native groups.

While relations were generally friendly at this time, it appears that the NWC did build a small outpost part way down the South Branch during the season of 1795-6 (HBCA B.27/a/1; Klimko 1982:121). The location of this outpost proved somewhat of a difficulty to the HBC as it cut off native groups from the south (HBCA B.27/a/1). These southern groups were essential for the trade in provisions as they procured the majority of bison meat and pemmican. However, the HBC did manage to do a decent trade in furs and provisions at this post until it was abandoned for a new post in 1805 (Smythe 1968:187).

It also appears that all the companies (HBC, NWC, XYC) had posts in operation at the Sturgeon River. The posts were in operation during the season of 1798-9, but due to the unavailability of records it is unclear for how long they operated (B.197/a/1). As mentioned previously, no remains of these posts have been found and it is quite likely that they may have eroded into the North Saskatchewan River by now (Barka and Barka 1976:25-26). However, the brief mention made in the records of these posts shows that the competition in the Saskatchewan Forks nodal area was quite fierce, especially during the period of time when the XYC was in operation.

5.2.10 South Branch House II (NWC)

It is unclear which company moved back to the South Branch first, but it is likely that both the NWC and HBC moved at the same time (1805) (Russell 1999:34-35; Smythe 1968:192). There is also some ambiguity as to why the companies moved back to the South Branch, but perhaps it was a more advantageous location for the procurement of provisions. In any case, South Branch House II was a provision post and was likely occupied year round.

Daniel Harmon wintered at the NWC post in 1805-1806 and returned to Fort William the following year (Harmon 1911: 116-124; Lamb 1957:96-103). It was at South Branch House II that Harmon took a country wife and learned the trade of a fort on the prairies. Harmon also relates that the HBC was not occupying its post during the summer months (Lamb 1957:100). The two rival concerns still felt a sense of danger from aboriginal groups so they located their posts within a few hundred paces of one another (Lamb 1957:98). The fear may have been justified as, during the operation of this post, many native people, who were going to war passed by. There is no clear indication when the post was closed, but most likely it was sometime between 1808 and 1810 (Smythe 1968:191). The post would definitely have been closed by 1810 when the NWC constructed a replacement on the North Branch almost directly opposite this post (Klimko 1982:121).

5.2.11 Carlton House II

Probably by mutual agreement with the NWC, the HBC also moved back to the South Branch in 1805 and constructed Carlton House II about 10 km above the site of their previous occupation of the South Branch (Smythe 1968:191-192). Harmon places this post within “a few hundred paces” of the NWC’s South Branch House II (Lamb 1957:98). Although this post was a provision post it appears to have only been occupied during the winter, while it was abandoned in the summer to take the returns back to York Factory (Lamb 1957:100).

It is likely that the close proximity to the NWC post was due to a need for mutual protection, especially with the events of 1794 mentioned above. As with the NWC’s South Branch House II, Carlton House II was probably closed sometime

between 1808 and 1810 (Smythe 1968:192). By 1810, the HBC had also relocated to the North Branch almost directly opposite to the site of Carlton House II and opened a new post there. The closing of these posts brought to an end the occupation of the South Branch for the Saskatchewan Forks nodal area.

5.2.12 Fort La Montee

After abandoning the South Branch yet again, the NWC constructed a new post on the North Branch several kilometres above the site of Upper Hudson House. The post became quite important as a provision depot and was essential for supplying pemmican to the passing canoe brigades (Smythe 1968:197). Once again, the NWC and HBC had located themselves right next to each other in order to keep an eye on each other and defend each other against the native hostilities if necessary (Smythe 1968:197-198).

The post does seem to have a somewhat tumultuous history, though, as it appears to have moved several times. The post was originally located on the east bank of the North Saskatchewan River until 1816 (Figure 5.1). In the trading season of 1816-1817, the NWC was apparently operating a wintering post right at the junction of the Forks of the Saskatchewan River (Klimko 1982, 1994). This new post is referred to as Fort Maranquin (Mosquito) and appears to have only operated for the one trading season (Klimko 1982:121, 1994:74). It is unclear whether La Montee was closed during this season or whether Fort Maranquin was just an outpost for La Montee. In any event, La Montee was back in operation in 1817 (this time across the river from the previous location) until the time of union between the HBC and NWC in 1821 (Klimko 1994:74; Smythe 1968:197-198).

There are two likely scenarios for what occurred. The first scenario is that the NWC post, La Montee, was never closed. In this case, Fort Mosquito would simply be an outpost of La Montee that was only used during the winter of 1816-1817. This seems likely, as there is no mention in the Carlton House Journal of 1816-1817 of the NWC being a great distance away from the HBC post (HBCA B.27/a/6). In fact, the journal continues as if the NWC is still right beside them. The second scenario is probably what truly happened. The NWC left for the Forks because they feared trouble from some of the native groups. However, when the HBC didn't follow them, the NWC returned the following year, but to the opposite side of the river and slightly farther upstream (Dyck 1978:18). In any case, the posts on the North Branch of the Saskatchewan River show that there is often more than one reason for a post to be moved or completely abandoned and the reasons are often tied to certain locations.

5.2.13 Fort Carlton

Although this post is sometimes referred to as Carlton House III, it is more frequently known as Fort Carlton and that name will be used here. Fort Carlton was established in 1810 beside the NWC's La Montee of 1810-1816 (Smythe 1968:197-198). This post was also a provision depot and became an important supply post for the HBC. The most likely reason that the two competing companies located their posts so close to each other can be found in the post journals for this period. There are several entries in the journal, which relate information about native groups going on the warpath against their enemies (HBCA B.27/a/4, 5, 6, 8, 10). By having their posts located side by side, the two companies could defend each other in case of any trouble from aboriginal groups and also keep tabs on one another.

It is known that there were probably four phases of construction or rebuilding at this site (Dyck 1978:18). Phase 1 was first built in 1810 and lasted until 1821 and it is this one that I am primarily interested in. This phase consisted of two posts located side-by-side; one belonging to the NWC and the other to the HBC and each being about 45 meters square (Dyck 1978:18, 21). The archaeological evidence is limited, but it appears that at least five or six structures were present in each fort (Dyck 1978:21). These posts are quite a bit larger than either of the previous two examples considered. The size and complexity of the posts seem to indicate that they may have been provision posts, but were likely district posts.

The second phase of construction here dates to 1821 and represents the expansion of the post after the HBC and the NWC merged (Dyck 1978:18). There is no real archaeological evidence from this phase of Fort Carlton, but it is suggested that a stockade encompassed the two original forts (Dyck 1978:18). The third phase of construction was in 1835 and the fort changed to include six sides (Dyck 1978:19). The longest axis of this post was about 110 m and the short axis was around 61 m (Dyck 1978:22). There appear to be several structures associated with this phase as well. The final phase likely was built in 1855 and represents a return to a rectangular fort (Dyck 1978:19). The dimensions for this phase are 63 m by 58 m (Dyck 1978:22). All three of these final phases of Fort Carlton are consistent with a district post, but as they are outside of the temporal span of this thesis, they are not given much consideration.

The post seems to be located at a point where a trail joined the North and South Branches and became a point where traders would leave their canoes to proceed upriver on horseback (Smythe 1968:197). There were cultivated fields around the post in which

vegetables and grains were planted and the main trade at the post was in provisions (Smythe 1968:198). The two companies seem to have generally gotten along well, but the HBC was on guard in 1816-1817, as they were wary of the events that had occurred the previous year leading up to the Massacre of Seven Oaks at Red River (HBCA B.27/a/6). After the union in 1821, Fort La Montee was abandoned and Carlton House remained as a provision post (Smythe 1968:198). The post remained in operation until 1885 and has since been developed as a Provincial Historic Park (Klimko 1994:73, 80; Smythe 1968:198-199). Fort Carlton is the last post to be considered for the Saskatchewan Forks nodal area, which leads us to the next section that discusses the Upper Assiniboine River nodal area.

5.3 Upper Assiniboine River Fur Trade Posts

As with the Saskatchewan Forks nodal area, there are several trading posts that were located in the Upper Assiniboine River nodal area. All the companies had posts in this region including some independent traders as well. The area is somewhat unique, as the HBC had posts from two different factories on the Bay competing against one another for a time. As with the other nodal areas this section includes a table outlining key information about each post (Table 5.2) and the descriptive section that follows provides additional information about the history of each trading establishment. The location of each post is also illustrated in Figure 5.2.

Table 5.2. Operation data for fur trade posts in the Upper Assiniboine River nodal area.

Name of post	Years in operation	Post Function	Affiliation	Reasons for Moving or Closing Posts
Fort Riviere Tremblante	1791-1799	District Headquarters	NWC	Competition located elsewhere
Marlboro House	1793-1794	Wintering Post	HBC	Competition relocated following year
Fort Alexandria	1795-1805, 1807-1821	District Headquarters	NWC	Lack of trade; amalgamation
Elbow Lake Posts	1795-1796	Wintering Posts	Independent, NWC	Peter Grant rejoined NWC and location was no longer necessary
Carlton House	1795-1800	Provisioning Post	HBC	Intercompany competition
Albany House 1	1795-1798	Wintering Post	HBC	Intercompany competition; Destroyed by NWC
Albany House 2	1799-1803	Wintering Post	HBC	Lack of trade
Upper Assiniboine House	1803-1805	Wintering Post	XYC	Amalgamation
Fort Hibernia 1	1806-1807	Wintering Post	HBC	Competition located elsewhere
Fort Hibernia 2	1807-1821	Provisioning Post	HBC	Amalgamation
Fort Pelly 1	1824-1856	District Headquarters	HBC	Flooding and poor soil

5.3.1 Fort Riviere Tremblante

Although this post is outside of the nodal area, mention is made of it here as it was the first post located along the upper reaches of the Assiniboine River and it has some significance for later posts in the region. Fort Riviere Tremblante is an important inclusion in this section because there has been some excavation work done at it, which provides more complete information on the site (Mackie 1968). The excavation data are especially useful, as there seems to be very little primary documentation available for the post (Mackie 1968:101).

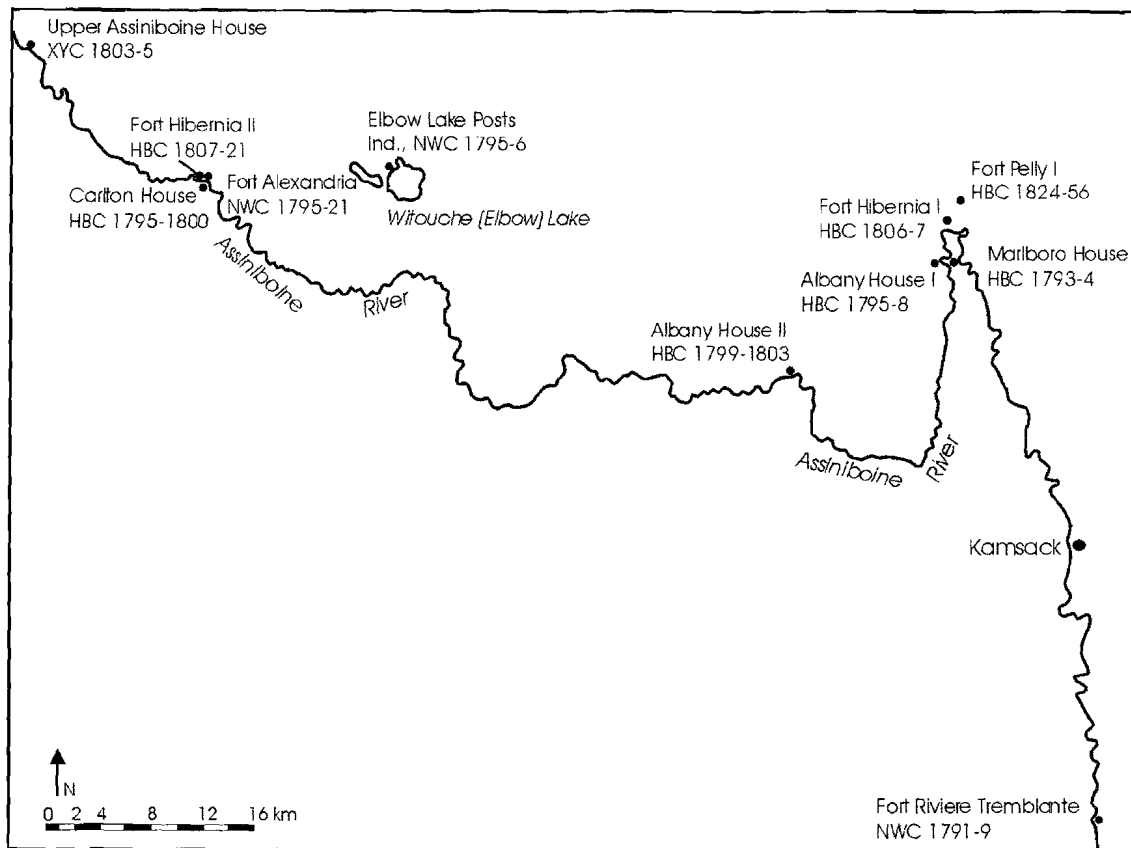


Figure 5.2. Map of Upper Assiniboine River showing fur trade post locations.

This fort appears to have undergone two phases of construction. The first phase consists of a stockade measuring 74.7 m by 45.1 m and the excavation revealed evidence of three buildings (Mackie 1968:103). The second phase of construction probably occurred in 1793 and was an expansion of the post. The stockade was enlarged on all sides by about 3 m from the original stockade (Mackie 1968:103-104). The second stockade relates to the period when the fort was a headquarters or district post for the Upper Red River Department of the NWC (Mackie 1968:103). This post is even larger than Fort Pelly I and although I do not have more information on the excavations, I am sure that subsequent excavations would have revealed several more buildings located within the stockade.

Robert Grant established Fort Riviere Tremblante in 1791 for the NWC (Mackie 1968:102; Morton 1939:432; Smythe 1968:142). The fort quickly became the headquarters for the NWC's Upper Red River Department and for the first few years of the fort's existence, the NWC was alone in this area (Mackie 1968:102; Morton 1939:433). As such, the post was successful in collecting both furs and pemmican and did not face any serious competition until two years later (Smythe 1968:142). In 1793, the HBC built Marlboro House further up the Assiniboine River and started the first real competition for Fort Riviere Tremblante. This caused the beginnings of decline for the post and, although it remained in operation for several more years, it was eventually closed in 1799 to relocate next to the competition farther up the river (Morton 1942:4; Russell 1999:34; Smythe 1968:142).

5.3.2 Marlboro House

This post was the HBC's first foray into the Upper Assiniboine River area and was constructed in 1793 (Morton 1939:435, 1942; Smythe 1968:142-143). Although the HBC already had a post on Swan River, this was somewhat removed from the Upper Assiniboine Valley and the trade from there wasn't focused as competitively as it was on the Assiniboine. Marlboro House was just a wintering post and was only occupied for one season (Smythe 1968:143). Even though Marlboro House was at best just an outpost from Swan River, the NWC felt it threatened their trade enough that they built a small wintering post beside it for just that one season as well (Klaus 1968:2; Smythe 1968:143).

The venture must have been quite successful because by the spring, Isham (master at Marlboro House) had traded all his goods and was required to turn customers

away (HBCA B.159/a/1). The success of the HBC there also confounded the NWC as they complained that the HBC could get to the Elbow so much quicker that they would secure all the fall trade before the NWC could return from the Grand Portage (Smythe 1968:143). As a result of the location of Marlboro House, the trade at Fort Riviere Tremblante was being cut off to the north and west and this is probably why the NWC built a small outpost near Marlboro House for that season. In any event, the trade war continued on and both the NWC and HBC moved farther up the Assiniboine River the following year. Both Marlboro House and the NWC post beside it were abandoned and never re-occupied by either company.

Unfortunately during my visit to the area I could not find evidence of the post's location. Much of the land in this area is under cultivation and has been cultivated for several decades now. As a result, no post features were visible on the surface. The same is true for Albany House I, which is in the same area.

5.3.3 Fort Alexandria

The NWC continued the struggle on the Upper Assiniboine River by establishing Fort Alexandria 25 km, by an overland route, to the west of Marlboro House in 1795 (Morton 1939:436; Rich 1960:183; Smythe 1968:147). The fort quickly became a major trading post and eventually replaced Fort Riviere Tremblante as the NWC's most important post on the Upper Assiniboine River (Smythe 1968:147). The post was in more or less continuous operation up until the amalgamation of the HBC and the NWC in 1821, at which time the fort was abandoned (Smythe 1968:147).

Daniel Harmon spent several winters at Fort Alexandria and he describes the conditions there as well as the competition (Lamb 1957). The NWC and XYC applied

the same tactics to each other that they did to the HBC. In 1803, the XYC built a post about 8 km upriver from Fort Alexandria. In retaliation, Harmon sent three men about a day's march beyond where the XYC was building, with a small assortment of goods to prevent native people from going to the XYC post (Lamb 1957:67). During the existence of the XYC post, the NWC seems to have gotten along quite well with the HBC. Harmon left Fort Alexandria in 1805, at which point the post was closed for a couple of years (Lamb 1957:88-89; Morton 1942).

In 1807, however, Fort Alexandria was reopened and remained in operation until 1821 (Wright 1955:41). Although it was not the only NWC post on the Upper Assiniboine, Fort Alexandria remained as the anchor point from which all outposts were established and controlled. The location of the fort was well chosen as it was directly in the path of the natives and allowed the NWC to prevent them from trading their furs at the Elbow (Klimko 1983:21). This vexed the other companies greatly and forced the HBC to establish two different posts at different times in the vicinity of Fort Alexandria and, as mentioned previously, the XYC was resigned to establishing a post upriver (Wright 1955:41). Thus, it is little wonder that Fort Alexandria was such an important post for the NWC.

My survey for the location of Fort Alexandria did prove somewhat fruitful. I did find depressions at three sites in the area: two were on the north side of the river and one was on the south side. However, there seems to be much confusion as to which of the posts in this area the depressions might represent. Fort Hibernia II and Carlton House were also in the same vicinity as Fort Alexandria. It is likely that the depressions at the three sites belong to the three fur trade posts. No clear idea of the size of the sites could

be gained as there was no evidence of stockade lines. Total numbers of buildings present is also unclear as two of the sites had only one depression each and the third site only had two, possibly three depressions. Further subsurface testing or excavation could prove to be quite informative for these sites.

5.3.4 Elbow Lake Posts

Two posts were built on the north side of what was called Witouche (now Elbow) Lake in 1795 (Smythe 1968:146-147). Elbow Lake is located about 6.5 km northeast of where Carlton House was on the south side of the Assiniboine River. Both of these posts were small outposts and at best can be considered minor wintering posts (Smythe 1968:147). Peter Grant had broken away from the NWC and was representing a new concern at this location. The NWC followed him and constructed a small outpost here as well (Smythe 1968:147). The competition was so fierce that after only one year Peter Grant gave up and rejoined the NWC (Morton 1942). With Peter Grant leaving, the NWC had no need of a post at this location and they abandoned it as well. No other posts were ever rebuilt in this area, but this small example shows the ferocity of the competition in this nodal area.

5.3.5 Carlton House

Peter Fidler and Charles Isham established this post in 1795 for the HBC, within about 140 meters of the NWC's Fort Alexandria (Morton 1939:436; Smythe 1968:148). Carlton House replaced Marlboro House, which was located right at the Elbow, and thus one can observe the leapfrogging of posts due to competition. Although it was usually just occupied in the winter months, Carlton House served as a provision post. The post obtained provisions for canoe brigades going to the north and west, but also did a good

trade in furs (Morton 1939:436). This was even with all the competition that was going on around.

Carlton House was established out of York Factory. It was from the latter place that the post received all of its trading goods and men and it was to York Factory that the furs were taken in the spring (Morton 1939:436). This arrangement was complicated when traders from Albany Factory came out and established Albany House at the Elbow, giving the HBC two posts that were competing against one another (Klimko 1983:22; Morton 1939:436). The close association of the two posts may have led to the abandonment of Carlton House, and subsequently the area, in 1800 by the York Factory people (Morton 1939:436). However, they did not leave permanently and would be back in a few years.

5.3.6 Albany House I

John Sutherland established Albany House I about 1.5 km overland from Marlboro House (Morton 1939:436; Smythe 1968:145). The post was mainly a wintering post, but it would have traded in both furs and provisions. Although Morton (1939) and Rich (1960) claim Albany House I was built in 1796, the journal that John Sutherland kept indicates that he began building Albany House in the fall of 1795 (HBCA B.159/a/2). It is possible that the post wasn't completed until the following spring and that is why the date of 1796 is sometimes used.

Men from Albany Factory constructed the post and, in this case, they were supplied out of Brandon House (HBCA B.159/a/2). The location of the post caused a problem as they were merely 24 km away from the York Factory post of Carlton House and were thus in competition with one another for the same furs and provisions. The

close proximity of the two posts led the Committee in London to reprimand both factories for locating their posts within trading range of one another (Rich 1960:183-184). This is perhaps what led to the orders for the abandonment of Albany House I in the spring of 1798 (HBCA B.159/a/4). However, John Sutherland from Albany Factory left for just one trading season, only to return the following year (Smythe 1968:146).

5.3.7 Albany House II

John Sutherland's second post near the Elbow was also under the direction of Albany Factory. However, when he returned to his former establishment, he found it completely destroyed and so he moved to a new spot about "5 or 6 miles [8 or 9.5 km] overland farther up the River than my old House and I suppose 15 miles [24 km] by the River" (HBCA B.159/a/5). Once again the post was mainly used as a wintering post for trading furs (Smythe 1968:146).

I searched for the remains of this post as well. I based my survey on Morton's (1942) reported location of the site. However, I could not discover any of the depressions that Morton had seen. Perhaps with subsequent cultivation the site has been obliterated. Morton may also have been mistaken in his identification of the depressions. Perhaps they were not the remains of the post, but of an old farmstead. In any event only a more extensive survey could determine where the site may have been.

The season after Albany House II was established, Carlton House closed its doors and there was then only one HBC post on the Upper Assiniboine River (Morton 1939:436). It also appears that the HBC was on quite amicable terms with the NWC at this time, as the masters would visit each other often (Smythe 1968:146). However, there was some vexation as Fort Alexandria did cut off trade to Albany House from the

west. As well, Sutherland had no one, who spoke the language, to send out among the native groups and felt this caused a great loss of trade (HBCA B.159/a/5). The lack of trade may have accounted for the post being closed in 1803 (Smythe 1968:146). Albany Factory never returned to this area again, leaving it up to York Factory to trade here (Klimko 1983:22). At this point the HBC did not have a post in the Upper Assiniboine River area, but it would only be a couple of years before they returned.

5.3.8 Upper Assiniboine House

The XYC only opened one post in the Elbow area of the Assiniboine River and for only one season, 1803-1804 (Lamb 1957; Russell 1999:34-35). The post was generally referred to as the XYC post, but is now known as XY Upper Assiniboine House or simply, Upper Assiniboine (Russell 1999:34-35; Smythe 1968:149). Little else is known about the post, except for a few entries in Harmon's journal (Lamb 1957). The latter indicates that the establishment was little more than wintering post, which was probably not very substantial (Lamb 1957:69). This may explain why Morton could not find any remains of the post (Morton 1942; Smythe 1968:149). I also searched the area that the post should have been in, but was not successful in finding any traces of it. Therefore, the location data for this post will be based on the entry in Harmon's journal, which indicates that it was about 8 km upriver and on the opposite side from Fort Alexandria (Lamb 1957:67; Yanchinski 1951:18). The post was likely closed in the spring of 1805 with the amalgamation of the NWC and XYC (Morton 1942).

5.3.9 Fort Hibernia I

Representatives of York Factory returned to the Assiniboine Elbow in 1806 when they constructed Fort Hibernia I (Morton 1942; Russell 1999:34). No journal

survives for Fort Hibernia I, but the post was most likely a wintering post and was probably not occupied during the summer. As it was replaced the following year by a post of the same name near the NWC's Fort Alexandria, it is likely that Hibernia I was only open for a single season (Smythe 1968:145). Fort Alexandria was re-established in 1807 and it is probable that Hibernia was moved back to the old site of Carlton House in order to directly challenge the NWC there.

The general location of Fort Hibernia is under cultivation and little evidence of the post's existence could be found. Some remains had been found in the general vicinity during the Fort Pelly I excavations, but these were thought to belong to an outbuilding of Fort Pelly I. As Fort Hibernia I was only in operation for a single season, it is not expected that there would be much evidence left behind anyway. However, subsurface testing in the area could reveal the location of the post.

The importance of Fort Hibernia is that it represents the reoccupation of the area by the HBC. Albany House II closed in 1803 and the HBC did not have a post on the Upper Assiniboine River until Fort Hibernia was established in 1806. Fort Alexandria was closed in 1805 after the XYC rejoined the NWC. With the HBC out of the area, the NWC may have decided that there was no need to keep a post here. However, when the HBC established Fort Hibernia, the NWC re-established Fort Alexandria the following year (1807) (Wright 1955:41). In this sense, Fort Hibernia becomes an important post, and it shows the strategic importance of the Upper Assiniboine River area.

5.3.10 Fort Hibernia II

As mentioned previously, when the NWC reopened Fort Alexandria in 1807, the HBC closed Fort Hibernia I and re-occupied the old site of Carlton House, now calling it

Fort Hibernia II (Morton 1942; Smythe 1968:149). Because of the location, the post is sometimes referred to as Carlton House II, but the HBC records indicate that it was called Fort Hibernia II (HBCA B.159/a/6, 7; Yanchinski 1951:18). The post was of similar size to Carlton House and was mainly used as a provisioning post, but did trade furs as well (Smythe 1968:149). The journal for 1818-1819 indicates that traders were sent out from this post and they even established a couple of small outposts of unknown location as well (HBCA B.159/a/7). Fort Hibernia II would thus have been of considerable importance in this region.

The traders had to be careful at times in this area, though. W. H. Cook writes in his journal for 1818-1819 that native people would sometimes come to the post and ask for men to be sent out with trade goods (HBCA B.159/a/7). Cook says that this was often a trick to lure traders out of their posts and then rob them of their goods. In fact, he even entered into an agreement with the NWC trader that if they didn't send anyone out then neither would he (HBCA B.159/a/7). It is apparent that in the Upper Assiniboine River area at this point in time, the HBC and the NWC were on relatively good terms with each other. However it also points out how the traders were often distrustful of native people even though robbery was rare. Fort Hibernia II was closed in 1821 when the HBC and the NWC merged and no further posts were built in the area until 1824 when the first Fort Pelly was constructed near the site of Fort Hibernia I (Klimko 1983:23; Smythe 1968:144, 149).

5.3.11 Fort Pelly I

Although the time of operation of the fort (1824-1856) is outside of the temporal limitations of the thesis, I feel it is important to include these data because we know that

Fort Pelly I was a district post (Klimko 1983, 1994). Examining the size and complexity of this post gives us an idea of what to expect a district post to be like. There appear to have been three construction phases for the stockades and numerous buildings were added to the post during its operation (Klimko 1983). The original construction phase of the post included a stockade measuring 36.5 meters square (Klaus 1968:5; Klimko 1983:80). This first post contained a store, an officer's house, men's houses, an Indian guardroom, a small kitchen, a blacksmith's shop, stable, sawpit and boat yard (Klaus 1968:6; Klimko 1983:80). Archaeological excavations revealed portions of the palisades, factor's house, kitchen, warehouse, trading shop, men's house, stable, and blacksmith's shop (Klimko 1983:57-73). We can see that the complexity of this post is in keeping with its role as a district post, although its size is somewhat smaller than Fort Carlton. However, the excavations did reveal an expansion in the size of the fort that increased its dimensions to 61.5 m by 49.2 m (Klimko 1983:82). This expansion likely occurred in 1831 after a previous expansion in 1828 (Klimko 1983:82). Two or three new buildings were added to the fort during these subsequent expansions bringing it into line as a large district post.

The location has been set aside as a provincial historic site and is protected as such. During my visit to this site in the summer and autumn of 2001, one could still see some of the cellar depressions. As well, the chimney mounds were also quite visible. No further work need be done at this site, other than possibly reconstructing it as a tourist attraction.

5.4 Qu'Appelle River Mouth Fur Trade Posts

The Qu'Appelle River Mouth is the smallest of the nodal areas considered in this study, but it is still quite important. The title of this nodal area may, however, be a little misleading. Although the majority of posts here are located near the juncture of the Qu'Appelle and Assiniboine Rivers, there are some posts that are located further upriver from this point (Figure 5.3). However, these posts were all specifically trading against one another and that is why they are considered here as part of one nodal area.

The fur trade posts of the Qu'Appelle River mouth area once again provide evidence of the complexity of movements that occurred during the competitive years of the HBC, NWC and XYC. The movements were sometimes only short distances or at other times several tens of kilometres and in a few cases the sites were re-occupied (Priess 1997:1-3; Wright 1955:41). This nodal area and the Souris River mouth nodal area, which follows, were the settings for one of the most violent periods in the history of the fur trade and these areas show the severity of the tactics used by all the companies involved. The posts for the Qu'Appelle River mouth nodal area are summarized in Table 5.3.

5.4.1 Fort Esperance I

The first occupation of the Qu'Appelle River area by European fur traders occurred when the NWC established Fort Esperance I in 1787 (Malcolmson 1964:36; Morton 1939:437; Priess 1997:1; Smythe 1968:135). This post became quite important for the NWC and could be considered a provision post or even a minor provision depot (Smythe 1968:135). Robert Grant established the post and it remained uncontested until the XYC built near it in 1801 (Malcolmson 1964:47; Provo 1984:55; Smythe 1968:135).

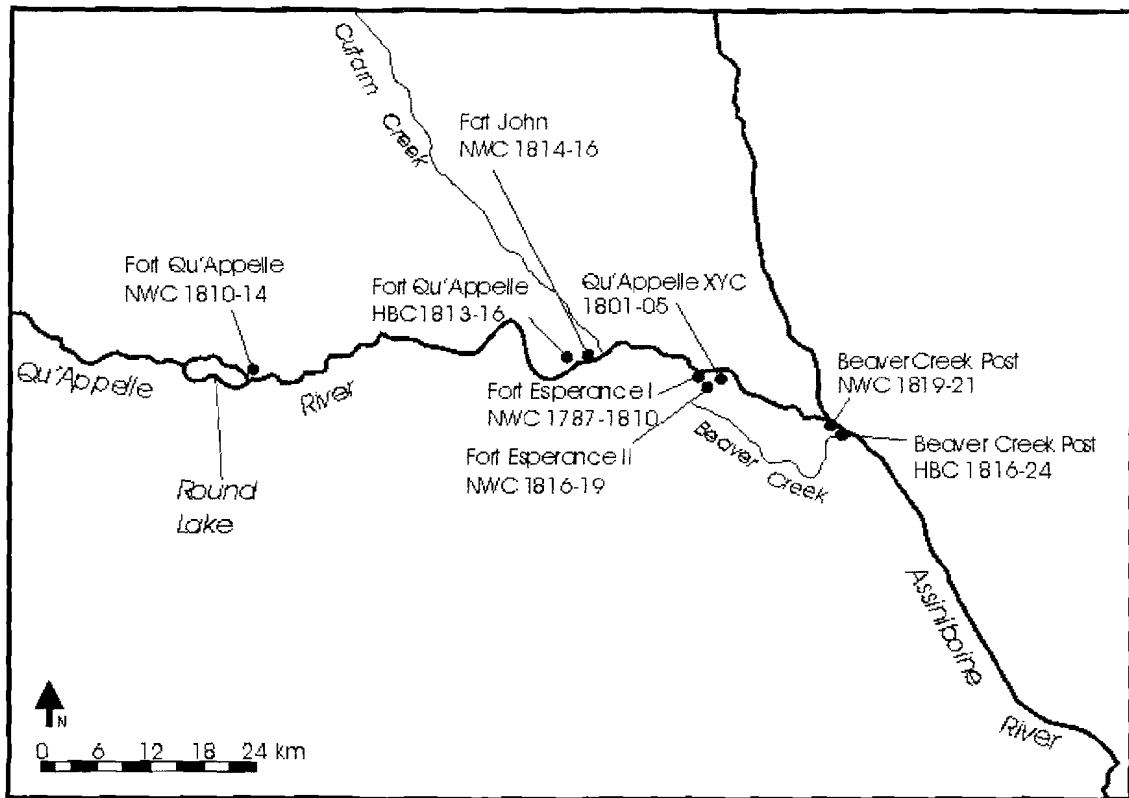


Figure 5.3. Map of Qu'Appelle River mouth nodal area showing fur trade post locations.

Table 5.3. Operation data for fur trade posts in the Qu'Appelle River mouth nodal area.

Name of post	Years in operation	Post Function	Affiliation	Reasons for Moving or Closing Posts
Fort Esperance I	1787-1810	District Headquarters	NWC	Possibly burned by Natives
Qu'Appelle	1801-1805	Provisioning Post	XYZ	Amalgamation
Fort Qu'Appelle	1810-1814	Provisioning Post	NWC	Competition located elsewhere
Fort Qu'Appelle	1813-1816	Wintering Post	HBC	Burned by NWC twice
Fort John	1814-1816	Provisioning Post	NWC	Abandoned for more defensible location
Fort Esperance II	1816-1819	Provisioning Post	NWC	Fear of native hostility/attacks
Beaver Creek Post	1816-1824	Provisioning Post	HBC	After amalgamation it became uneconomical
Beaver Creek Post	1819-1821	Provisioning Post	NWC	Amalgamation

The archaeological report on Fort Esperance I is brief, but does contain some pertinent information. Although the excavations revealed little about the dimensions of the fort, the report does contain planviews of Fort Esperance I and II (Priess 1997:19, 21). The diagrams put the dimensions of Fort Esperance I and II at 45.7 m by 42.6 m and show 4 depressions in each of the posts. These depressions could represent the cellars of individual buildings, but the excavation report isn't clear on whether there were structural remains at these locations (Priess 1997). However, the plan views are drawn by Morton and may not necessarily be accurate. Another diagram in the report shows that Fort Esperance II could be as large as 100 square meters (Priess 1997:22). The size of the posts does suggest their role as provisioning posts and likely Fort Esperance I was district headquarters after the closing of Fort Riviere Tremblante.

The importance of Fort Esperance lay in its close proximity to the bison herds. The post was mainly responsible for collecting pemmican and grease to provide canoe brigades with provisions on their long journeys (Malcolmson 1964:38-39). The post also supplied other posts in the region that have been mentioned before, namely, Fort Alexandria, Pine Fort and Fort Riviere Tremblante (Malcolmson 1964:42). As Fort Esperance supplied them with food, these other posts were able to concentrate on chiefly trading for furs, which was the point of their existence in the first place.

After the XYC was absorbed back into the NWC in 1804, Fort Esperance I did not face any more competition in its immediate vicinity. The HBC did not enter the Qu'Appelle River until 1813 and by this time the NWC had moved their fort to a new location farther upriver (Malcolmson 1964:48; Wright 1955:41). Fort Esperance seems to have been abandoned in 1810, but it is uncertain why. The most likely suggestion is

that there were serious difficulties with the native people around this time and that the fort may even have been destroyed (Malcolmson 1964:45; Priess 1997:1-2). Priess (1997:2) excavated the post and found extensive amounts of baked chinking (clay used for sealing gaps between logs), indicating that the post was burned. This is probably the case as the NWC sometimes had quite a lot of trouble with native groups. However, there is very little in the way of a documentary record for this specific time period at Fort Esperance I. Thus, the above reason can only be considered a probable cause for the abandonment of the post, but it is not known for certain why the NWC decided to change locations. In any event the post was abandoned by 1810 and the NWC was in a new location.

5.4.2 Qu'Appelle

This post, simply referred to as Qu'Appelle, was constructed by the XYZ in 1801 and represented the first direct competition to Fort Esperance I (Malcolmson 1964:47; Russell 1999:34-35). The post can be considered a provision post, but was probably occupied only in the winter (Smythe 1968:134). The post has been located, by A. S. Morton, on the south bank of the Qu'Appelle River about 2.5 km downstream from Fort Esperance I (Saunders 1977:4; Smythe 1968:135). One can assume that the XYZ located here in order to intercept the natives coming up the Assiniboine River before they could get to the NWC post. The post was in an excellent position to do this and may have caused much trouble for the NWC there. However the competition proved to be ruinous for both companies and the XYZ was absorbed back into the NWC in 1804. The XYZ's Qu'Appelle post was not abandoned until the following year,

1805 (Saunders 1977:4; Malcolmson 1964:47; Smythe 1968:135). After the union of the XYC and the NWC, Fort Esperance I would have been used (Saunders 1977:4).

5.4.3 Fort Qu'Appelle (NWC)

There can be much confusion with the posts on the Qu'Appelle River. Many of posts here were called Fort Qu'Appelle or Qu'Appelle River post, even if they also had other names. It appears that both the NWC and the HBC had forts along this river that were called Fort Qu'Appelle. To avoid confusion when referring to these two posts, the name of the post will be followed in parenthesis by the initials of the company it was associated with.

Fort Qu'Appelle (NWC) was established in 1810 when the first site of Fort Esperance was abandoned that spring (Malcolmson 1964:45, 48; Russell 1999:34-35; Smythe 1968:138-139). Like most of the posts along this river, Fort Qu'Appelle (NWC) was a provision post providing pemmican for the canoe brigades. It is possible that there may have been some competing posts located near to it, but there is very little information about the post itself and even less about possible other posts (Smythe 1968:139). Whatever the case may be this post was closed in 1814, when the NWC opened Fort John downriver near the HBC's post there (Saunders 1977:5; Malcolmson 1964:48; Smythe 1968:139). This led to one of the bloodiest conflicts in the history of the fur trade, which is briefly discussed a little further on.

5.4.4 Fort Qu'Appelle (HBC)

This is the first identifiable HBC post located on the Qu'Appelle River and it can be more properly called Fort Qu'Appelle I, as the HBC had other forts here named Qu'Appelle after the union of 1821 (Saunders 1977:5; Russell 1999:34-35; Smythe

1968). The establishment of this provision post in 1813 caused the NWC to abandon their Fort Qu'Appelle and relocate close to the HBC post (Saunders 1977:5; Malcolmson 1964:47-48). The location of Fort Qu'Appelle (HBC) was about 12 km upstream and on the opposite side of the river from the site of Fort Esperance I (Malcolmson 1964:47).

Fort Qu'Appelle (HBC) became embroiled in a bitter trade war with the NWC when they established Fort John nearby in 1814 (Saunders 1977:5; Malcolmson 1964:48). They also located their post just downstream from the HBC, which indicates that the objective was to cut off access to native people coming in from the Assiniboine River. The NWC tried a couple of times to burn the buildings of the HBC. Finally in 1815, the NWC succeeded in burning the HBC post and the following year stole the furs from its brigade (Malcolmson 1964:48; Smythe 1968:137). The capture and destruction of Fort Qu'Appelle (HBC) was just the first step in the NWC's march down the Assiniboine, which culminated in the Seven Oaks Massacre at Red River (Saunders 1977:5; Malcolmson 1964:48). The actions surrounding this event are sometimes more generally referred to as the Pemmican War (Smythe 1968:137). After the destruction of their post in 1816, the HBC abandoned it and settled on the Assiniboine River, just downstream from its confluence with the Qu'Appelle River (Malcolmson 1964:48; Smythe 1968:137). Thus ended the HBC's occupation of the Qu'Appelle River until the 1850s (Saunders 1977:5).

5.4.5 Fort John

The NWC established this post in 1814, when it moved from its site (Fort Qu'Appelle [NWC]) at the foot of Round Lake to be near the HBC's post, Fort

Qu'Appelle, further down the Qu'Appelle River (Saunders 1977; Malcolmson 1964:48). This site was a major provision post for the NWC and it could be for this reason that it was in such a bitter dispute with the HBC post (Smythe 1968:138). Pemmican was an important commodity in this region and the NWC, with their long transport lines, were especially in need of it.

Although the two competing posts had an agreement not to interfere with the trade of one another, this did not last (Smythe 1968:138). The NWC, feeling threatened by the HBC Red River Colony, organized, in 1816, a group of Natives and Metis and marched on the colony (Saunders 1977:5; Malcolmson 1964:48). As previously mentioned, this culminated in the Massacre of Seven Oaks. After these events, the HBC left the Qu'Appelle River to settle at the mouth of Beaver Creek. At this time, the NWC abandoned Fort John and moved back to a spot near Fort Esperance I, which was more defensible.

5.4.6 Fort Esperance II

The second Fort Esperance, established in 1816 by the NWC, is located just 275 meters west of the original site of Fort Esperance (Malcolmson 1964:48; Smythe 1968:136). Fort Esperance II was, like its predecessor, a provision post that was likely only occupied in the winter (Klimko 1994:72; Smythe 1968:136). It was located on a small knoll, possibly for defence, as the NWC was having many difficulties with the native people of the Qu'Appelle River at this time (Malcolmson 1964:48-49; Smythe 1968:136).

During the operation of Fort Esperance II, the NWC was alone on the Qu'Appelle River, as the HBC had moved just south of the forks of the Qu'Appelle and

the Assiniboine (Malcolmson 1964:48; Wright 1955:41). Thus, for a period of three years, the NWC once again had a monopoly on the Qu'Appelle River. In 1819, the NWC, fearing the hostility of native groups, closed Fort Esperance II and moved to Beaver Creek beside the HBC post (Saunders 1977:5; Smythe 1968:136). This move also allowed them to compete more effectively against the HBC and was a better location strategically, as it was near the junction of the Qu'Appelle and Assiniboine Rivers (Malcolmson 1964:49). With the closing of Fort Esperance II, the Qu'Appelle River was left unoccupied until the HBC moved back onto the river after the union of 1821.

5.4.7 Beaver Creek Post (HBC)

The Beaver Creek posts do factor into the trading that occurred in the Qu'Appelle River nodal area and that is why they are mentioned here. Once again, the NWC and the HBC called their posts here by the same name. As a result, the initials of the company they belong to, in parentheses, differentiate them.

The first Beaver Creek post belonged to the HBC and they built it in 1816 after their Fort Qu'Appelle was destroyed by the NWC prior to the Seven Oaks Massacre (Malcolmson 1964:48; Smythe 1968:132). The fort was a provision post and it provided an important trading link between the posts of the lower and upper Assiniboine River. During its first three years, the post had a strategic advantage over the NWC at Fort Esperance II (Malcolmson 1964:49). The HBC was alone at this location and could intercept people coming up the Assiniboine River, as well as obtain provisions from those along the Qu'Appelle River. The HBC could prevent a good deal of trade from going to the NWC post.

The post remained moderately successful, even after the NWC left Fort Esperance II and built beside the HBC at Beaver Creek (Smythe 1968:132). The HBC continued to occupy this post, after the Union, until 1824, at which time it was deemed unprofitable (Smythe 1968:132). However, the HBC did not totally abandon the area and they returned in 1831 to build Fort Ellice, which went on to become an important post (Malcolmson 1964:49; McCook 1968:34).

5.4.8 Beaver Creek Post (NWC)

Due partly to native hostilities and a loss in trade, the NWC closed Fort Esperance II and built this post next to the HBC's post of the same name (Saunders 1977:5; Malcolmson 1964:49). This move occurred in 1819 and Beaver Creek Post (NWC) became the main provision post for the NWC in the Qu'Appelle River area. The NWC continued the Pemmican War with the HBC at this new location on the Assiniboine River and their rivalry was maintained as before (Saunders 1977:5; Smythe 1968:132; Smythe and Chism 1969:26-27).

However, the trade rivalry between the two companies could not last and in 1821, they were united into one company. During the fall of this year many of the NWC posts were closed. Thus, Beaver Creek Post (NWC) would have been closed this year and the newly united company would have used the HBC post at this location. Beaver Creek Post (NWC) was the last post constructed in the Qu'Appelle River mouth nodal area during the time period under examination in this thesis. The next section is the last one for this chapter and looks at the posts around the forks of the Souris and Assiniboine Rivers.

5.5 Souris River Mouth Fur Trade Posts

The central part of this nodal area is the juncture between the Assiniboine River and the Souris River. The posts located here were in a critical area in the supply chain of the fur trade companies and the Middle Missouri trading network. Thus, the area is of much importance and the posts located here played a significant role in the history of the fur trade for Western Canada. The movements the posts went through within this nodal area are comparable to movements of posts in the other nodal areas, once again showing the importance of location in competition.

There are many fur trade posts in this nodal area and the data concerning location and times of occupation are quite muddled. The following descriptions are the most likely locations and dates based upon all the evidence examined. As with the Qu'Appelle River Mouth, the Souris River Mouth also was witness to much violence and competition during its occupation history. Brandon House was one of the HBC posts that was pillaged in 1816, during the events of the Seven Oaks Massacre (Brown 1974:13). Like all the other nodal areas, the traders of the Souris Mouth area also had their troubles with native groups and the frequent expeditions of war parties. Nonetheless, the region provided an essential trade in provisions and was steadily occupied by fur traders for a period of over thirty years. The trade that occurred here was, at times, vicious and cutthroat and, at other times, quite amicable. The intensity of the competition is borne out in the movements of posts and the scramble for competitive advantage. Like all the other areas this nodal area has supplementary information to the written descriptions. Table 5.4 provides a summary of pertinent information and the post locations can be found in Figure 5.4.

Table 5.4. Operation data for fur trade posts in the Souris River mouth nodal area.

Name of post	Years in operation	Post Function	Affiliation	Reasons for Moving or Closing Posts
Pine Fort I	1767-1781	Wintering Post	Independents, NWC	Restructuring of independents into NWC
Pine Fort II	1785-1794	District Headquarters	NWC	In same location as Pine Fort I; Competition located elsewhere
Brandon House I	1793-1811	District Headquarters	HBC	Diminishing resources such as firewood, theft by Natives
Assiniboine House	1793-1805	Provisioning Post	NWC	Amalgamation
Fort Souris	1793-1798, 1798-1805	Provisioning Post	Independents, XYC	Restructuring of independents into XYC
Fort Souris	1805-1807	Provisioning Post	NWC	Fort rafted to old Pine Fort due to lack of firewood/building materials?
Pine Fort III	1807-1811	Provisioning Post	NWC	Competition located elsewhere
Brandon House II	1811-1816, 1817-1821	District Headquarters	HBC	Destroyed by NWC; After amalgamation moved to NWC fort
Fort La Souris	1811-1821	Provisioning Post	NWC	Amalgamation, occupied by HBC in 1821
Brandon House III	1821-1824	District Headquarters	HBC	District Headquarters moved to Upper Assiniboine
Brandon House IV	1828-1832	Wintering Post	HBC	Minimal trade and uneconomical after reorganization of Assiniboine River area

5.5.1 Pine Fort I and II

Pine Fort was first established in 1767 by independent traders out of Montreal (Hamilton 1986:4; Smythe 1968:122). This was around the time when the various Montreal traders were beginning to form themselves into a common concern. Shortly after the post's construction, these traders were being referred to as the NWC. The first incarnation of Pine Fort was also called Fort des Epinnettes and it is likely that this post was in use until 1781 (Hamilton 1986:4; Smythe 1968:122). At this time the fort was

abandoned and later re-established by the NWC in 1785 (Hamilton 1986:4; Smythe 1968:122).

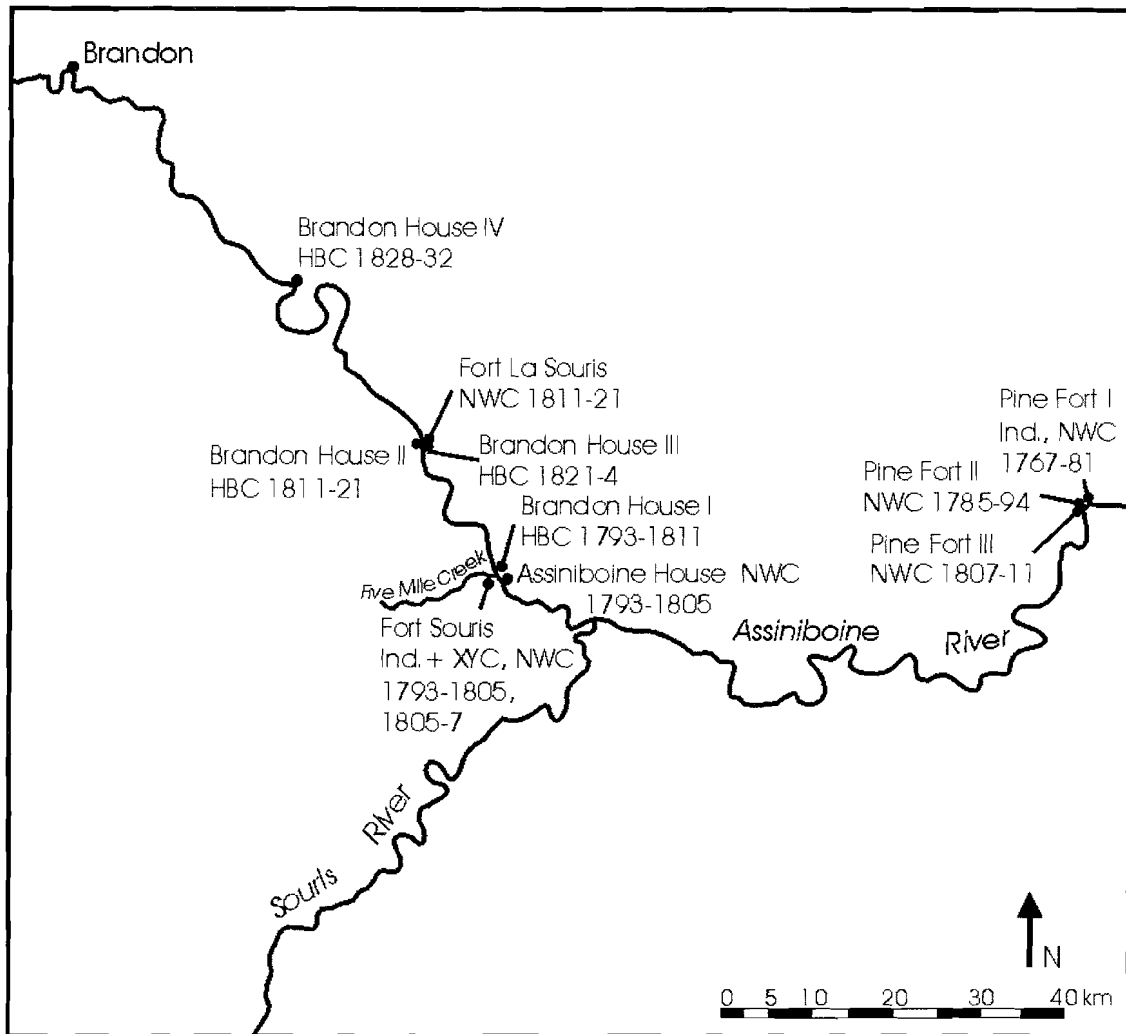


Figure 5.4. Map of the Souris River mouth nodal area showing fur trade post locations.

Pine Fort II was used by the NWC as a provision post and also as a regional headquarters (Klimko 1994:54). It only diminished in importance with the later construction of Fort Esperance on the Qu'Appelle and even then it could be said to have rivalled Esperance in pemmican production. Both Pine Fort I and II were also significant because they operated under monopoly conditions with no competition

except for maybe the occasional independent trader. The HBC did not enter the region until 1793 and when they did, they located further upriver from the site of Pine Fort (Brown 1964:87; Tottle 1981:17). The Pine Fort excavations, supervised by Hugh Mackie, occurred from 1972 to 1974 and uncovered what was probably the 1785-1794 occupation of the fort (Hamilton 1986:4-6; Tottle 1981:32-34). The excavation of this site revealed that there were two construction phases as evidenced by the presence of two stockades at this site (Hamilton 1986:6; Tottle 1981:40). The outer stockade measured 67 m by 36.6 m and the inner stockade was 64 m by 33.5 m (Tottle 1981:35, 40). Although the overall dimensions of Pine Fort are smaller than Fort Riviere Tremblante, Pine Fort does reveal the same two phases of construction as Fort Riviere Tremblante. In fact the amount that the fort was expanded in both cases is almost identical as it was roughly 3 m at both sites. It is difficult to say what this similarity means, but perhaps the NWC had a standard dimension by which they could expand a post.

The complexity of Pine Fort is shown in the structural remains found at the site. Two bastions were discovered at the site, one of which is in the northeast and the other in the southwest corner (Tottle 1981:45). Of the two buildings found inside the stockade, "Building I" was the larger. A jog in the wall of the building, in which one end was narrower by 0.6 m than the other, suggests that this structure may have originally been two buildings that were joined during expansions of the post (Tottle 1981:58). This first building likely represents the main living quarters with attached kitchen or hide-tanning area and blacksmith shop (Tottle 1981:65). "Building II" is located in the center of the stockade and could represent a storehouse (Tottle 1981:78).

More likely, this building was the trading house and may also have contained a kitchen. The size and complexity of Pine Fort definitely suggests that it was a provisioning post, but its similarities to Fort Riviere Tremblante also indicate that it could rightly be called a district post as well.

Pine Fort also represents one of the problems facing archaeologists in locating remains. The Assiniboine River is slowly eroding the bank near the fort site and soon the entire fort could slump into the river (Tottle 1981:2, 6). It is apparent that some of the remains may have already been washed away as Tyrrell's report from 1890 indicates that the site he found had already been partly eroded by the river (Smythe 1968:122-123). The same problem is occurring at the site of Sturgeon Fort on the North Saskatchewan River. The rate of erosion was calculated and found that the river may have moved north by almost 100 meters over the last two centuries (Barka and Barka 1976:25-26). Thus, while the fort may have been well back from the edge of the river during its operation, the site has now been partially eroded away. Thus in the future, Pine Fort may be totally lost and this can occur at many sites, making it difficult for the historical archaeologist to find fur trade post remains. Pine Fort was important in the past, but is just as important today in showing the need to locate as many sites as possible before they are destroyed forever.

5.5.2 Brandon House I

Brandon House I is another important site in the Souris Mouth area. This post represents the HBC's first foray into the region and the extensive competition that occurred in war for provisions. The HBC built this provision post in 1793 just upstream from the mouth of the Souris River (Smythe 1968:128; Tottle 1981:16). Some sources

had placed the post a further 6.5 km up the Assiniboine River (Smythe 1968:128; Stewart 1930). However, it is now reasonably certain that the site of the first Brandon House was on the northeast bank of the Assiniboine River opposite the mouth of Five Mile Creek (Brown 1964:86-87; Brown 1974:12-13).

The first Brandon House was quite important for the HBC and served as a regional headquarters (Klimko 1994:55). The post depended extensively on its trading connection with the Mandan villages to the south, especially as competition became more intense (Jackson 1982:15). As competitors tried to cut off trade to Brandon House both above and below along the Assiniboine, the HBC countered by sending expeditions down to the Mandan villages to prevent the NWC from having an exclusive trade there (Jackson 1982:15). When the Spanish took an interest in the trade here and tried to prevent the British from trading, the HBC was still able to carry on by establishing good relations with the person in charge. On the other hand the NWC was having extensive difficulties and several times almost came to blows with the Spanish representative (Jackson 1982:15-16). The HBC could still make a profit in this area without the difficulties faced by the other companies.

Brandon House I remained in operation for several years until it was moved in 1811 to a new location (Brown 1964:87; Brown 1974:15). The location of Brandon House shifted several times during its almost 40 year history, but it always remained within the general vicinity of the Souris River Mouth. However, the location of this post did gradually creep farther up the Assiniboine River with each subsequent establishment (Brown 1964:87). While the second building phase of Brandon House will be given consideration in its own section later on, the last two Brandon Houses

were constructed after the union in 1821 and will only be given brief mention as they are outside the time restrictions of the study. As mentioned above, the site of the first Brandon House was closed in the spring of 1811 and moved to a new location across and farther up the Assiniboine River (Brown 1964:86-89; HBCA B.22/a/18a). Thus ended the operation of the HBC's first post in the Souris River Mouth nodal area.

5.5.3 Assiniboine House (Fort Assiniboine)

The NWC placed this post near the mouth of the Souris River in 1793 and the following year, they closed Pine Fort I and moved their operations to this post (Smythe 1968:124). The post has also been known as Fort Assiniboine, Stone Indian River House, McDonnell's House and Riviere La Souris House (Brown 1974:12; Smythe 1968:124). To avoid confusion with other posts in the area, it will be referred to as Assiniboine House. With the close of Pine Fort I, Assiniboine House became the principal NWC provision post for the Souris Mouth area.

Although the archaeological evidence is somewhat ambiguous as to where Assiniboine House is actually located, David Thompson had to cross the river in order to travel to the south and west, indicating that the post was located on the northeast bank of the Assiniboine River (Brown 1964:83; Brown 1974:11-12). This would put the post right next to the first location of Brandon House, which was not an uncommon practice as we have seen the same occurrence in the other nodal areas. The closeness of the posts to one another created quite a problem with supplies of wood as the two companies kept cutting wood down around each others' forts (HBCA B.22/a/4). As James Sutherland wrote in the Brandon House Journal for 1796-1797, he was afraid that in two more years there would not be any firewood near the house (HBCA B.22/a/4).

The lack of firewood may explain the movement of posts across the river and further upstream in the subsequent years.

Assiniboine House operated until about 1805 when it was abandoned after the amalgamation of the NWC and XYC (Smythe 1968:124). At this point it seems to have been moved across the river to the southwest bank and given a new name. The new fort may even have occupied the old XYC buildings on this side of the river (Smythe 1968:126). Assiniboine House was never reoccupied, but the wood from the buildings may have been used in later sites.

5.5.4 Fort Souris (XYC)

While this post may have originally been constructed in 1793 by independent traders from Montreal (Smythe 1968:125), it most likely came under the control of the XYC in 1798. The XYC was in this post for sure by 1800, as that company is mentioned in the Brandon House Journal for the trading season of 1800-1801 (HBCA B.22/a/8). However, the XYC most probably would have occupied this post in 1798, the year that company was formed (Brown 1964:83). The post is located on the southwest bank of the Assiniboine River, opposite from the sites of Brandon House I and Assiniboine House (Brown 1964:87; Smythe 1968:125).

Fort Souris (XYC) was operated mainly as a provision post. The primary trade would be for provisions from native people in the surrounding area, as well as sending expeditions down to the Mandan villages. Thus the site would have provided competition to both the HBC and NWC, but it was competition that could not be maintained. When the NWC and XYC amalgamated in the fall of 1804, the news took some time to reach the posts inland and Fort Souris (XYC) was not closed until 1805

(Brown 1964:84-85). This may not have been the last occupation of the location as it appears that the NWC, after closing Assiniboine House in the same year, may have moved across the river and built their new house on the same site as Fort Souris (XYC) (Brown 1964:85; Smythe 1968:125). However, it was the end of the XYC occupation of the site.

5.5.5 Fort Souris (NWC)

The NWC moved across the Assiniboine to the old site of the XYC's Fort Souris and constructed their own fort there of the same name (Smythe 1968:126). The fort also seems to be commonly known as Riviere la Souris (Brown 1964:85; Brown 1974:15-16; Smythe 1968:126). There is also another NWC company fort in the area that was called Fort La Souris (Brown 1964:87). In order to avoid too much confusion, I will refer to the current post as either Fort Souris (NWC) or Riviere la Souris while the later post will simply be called Fort La Souris.

Material remains of a fur trade post were found at the Cullen Site (DkLv-8), which is probably the NWC's Fort Souris (Hamilton 1982:74). The site was recorded during a survey project of the Souris River mouth area and it shows that the post was about 23 m by 20 m (Hamilton 1982:76). The survey also shows the presence of 4 large depressions, 3 intermediate ones and 5 smaller pits. The clustering of these depressions suggests the presence of at least three, if not four, buildings at this site (Hamilton 1982:76). Only a surface collection was conducted at the site so it is difficult to know for sure how many buildings are present. The size of the post suggests that it was a provisioning post.

Riviere la Souris replaced Assiniboine House as the NWC's provision post for the Souris River Mouth area. The post remained as opposition to Brandon House I, but was not apparently in operation for very long. It seems that in 1807 the post was demolished and the buildings were rafted downriver to the site of the former Pine Fort (Brown 1964:85-86; Smythe 1968:126). Thus Fort Souris (NWC) was only occupied for two or three trading seasons before it was closed and moved. It is not clear why it was moved back to Pine Fort, but perhaps there was no firewood available at the site or the NWC felt that they could compete better at the other site. Whatever the case, the HBC was left without direct competition at the Souris Mouth for the first time in 14 years (Brown 1964:86). However, the isolation did not last as the competition heated up again just a few short years later.

5.5.6 Pine Fort III

The NWC reoccupied the site of Pine Fort in 1807 for unknown reasons (Brown 1964:85-86; Tottle 1981:16-18). By this point in time Fort Esperance on the Qu'Appelle River was the NWC's main provision depot and the forts at the Souris Mouth may have been taking some of the trade away from Fort Esperance. By moving farther downstream to Pine Fort, the company might have been attempting to reduce the overlap in the trading areas of the two posts. As well, American claims to the trade of the Mandan villages reduced the amount of furs and provisions that the British could obtain there and the NWC may have decided that it was not worth sending traders that way (Jackson 1982). In such a case, the company would not need a post right at the junction of the two rivers and Pine Fort may have been a better location for the provision trade.

Whatever the case may be, the NWC abandoned the Souris Mouth for a short period while occupying Pine Fort III. It is not sure how long the NWC remained at this location, but they may have closed it sometime in 1811. It was during this spring that the HBC moved Brandon House to a new location farther up the Assiniboine River (Brown 1964:86-87; HBCA B.22/a/18a). The NWC would most likely have closed Pine Fort III and moved to a location near to the new HBC post. The last occupation of the Pine Fort location came to an end.

5.5.7 Brandon House II

Because of new evidence that came to light during the 1960s, it is clear that the HBC moved to a new location in 1811 on the southwest bank of the Assiniboine River 6.5 km upstream from the site of Brandon House I (Brown 1964:86-87; Hamilton 1982:127; Hems 1986:25). This differs from previous evidence that Brandon House II was not occupied until 1818 (Smythe 1968:128-129; Stewart 1930). However, these other sources did not have the benefit of the Brandon House Journal for 1810-1811 that describes a move across and upriver in the spring of 1811 (HBCA B.22/a/18a). It is quite evident from the journal that the post had been moved in 1811 and that it was this post that was pillaged during the events leading to the Massacre at Seven Oaks (Hamilton 1982:127-128).

The reason for relocating Brandon House is not entirely clear, but it seems likely that the original location was probably running short of building materials and firewood (Hems 1986:25). Previous journals had mentioned the trouble of obtaining firewood and perhaps the post was moved in order to have a more ready supply. The new location may also have been an attempt to put more distance between Brandon House

and the NWC's Pine Fort. However, this ploy was not very successful as the NWC relocated opposite the new site of Brandon House sometime in 1811 (Hems 1986:26; Tottle 1981:18). Brandon House also appeared to be having difficulty in preventing the aboriginal groups from stealing at the post (Hems 1986:25). Thus, the new location was an attempt to prevent theft as well as to gain better access to firewood.

Brandon House II proved to be quite successful and remained in operation until the union in 1821 (Brown 1964:87; Hamilton 1982:127-128). Despite the fact that it was destroyed in 1816 during the height of the Pemican War, it was re-established in 1817 at the same site (Hems 1986:28-29). This is consistent with the archaeological evidence of the outlines of two stockades at the site (Brown 1974:18; Hamilton 1982:127). One stockade would represent the Brandon House II that was destroyed in 1816 and the second stockade could relate to its reconstruction the following year. The HBC maintained its commitment to keeping a post operating in the Souris Mouth area. Brandon House II was abandoned in 1821 after the union and the HBC moved into the former NWC's post on the east side of the river (Hems 1986:29). This new occupation is discussed later on.

5.5.8 Fort La Souris

When the HBC moved to the site of Brandon House II in 1811, the NWC abandoned Pine Fort III and located on the opposite side of the river from the HBC. This new post was called Fort La Souris and it was situated in order to keep a Brandon House II under constant scrutiny (Brown 1964:89; Hems 1986:26). The site was not easily accessible as the bank of the river is quite steep here. There is also an extensive bog to the east of the site that required the NWC to build a "corduroy" road in order to

reach dry ground (Brown 1964:89; Hems 1986:26). However, the advantage of being able to look down into their competitor's fort was more than enough incentive to outweigh the difficulties of constructing the post.

Fort La Souris was in operation when Metis, influenced by the NWC in 1816, pillaged Brandon House II. It was to this fort that the Metis and native raiders retired after looting the latter (Brown 1964:88-89; Hems 1986:28). Fort La Souris became the staging point from which this band of Canadians, Metis and native people continued down the Assiniboine to its mouth, at which point the rampage ended with the Massacre of Seven Oaks (Hems 1986:28). The main significance of this post is its existence during these events.

The post remained in competition to Brandon House II until the union of 1821 (Hamilton 1982:125; Hems 1986:29). At this point the NWC closed the post, but the HBC reoccupied this site after closing Brandon House II across the Assiniboine River (Brown 1964:89; Hamilton 1982:125). Thus, the site was not totally abandoned in 1821, but the post was no longer called Fort La Souris. Instead it became Brandon House III.

5.5.9 Brandon House III and IV

Only brief mention will be given of both these posts, as their time of occupation was after amalgamation. As previously mentioned, Brandon House III was established in 1821 when the HBC moved across the Assiniboine River and occupied the NWC's site of Fort La Souris (Brown 1964:89; Hamilton 1982:125). The operation of this post was brief as the fort was closed down in 1824 (Brown 1964:90; Hems 1986:29). The post was presumably no longer viable at this time and may have been redundant as Fort

Pelly was opened that year on the Upper Assiniboine (Klimko 1983, 1994). With no major competition, the HBC probably felt that it was unnecessary to maintain a post near the Souris Mouth in addition to one on the Upper Assiniboine (Hems 1986:29). This brought an end to the occupation of Brandon House III.

Brandon House IV was a short-lived post as well. The post was constructed in 1828 on the northeast side of the Assiniboine River about 19 km upstream from Brandon House III (Hems 1986:29; Smythe 1968:129). Measurement data are available for Brandon House IV (DkLw-23) (Hamilton 1982:133). Data on the size of the fort come from a visit made to the site in 1930 by Stewart and in 1973 by Roy Brown. He lists the dimensions as 33.5 m by 30.5 m, which likely represents the area across which the cellar depressions and chimney mounds could be seen (Brown 1974:42; Hamilton 1982:134). The largest building at the site is located right inside the gate and was likely the trading house. There are also three or four smaller buildings located within the compound (Brown 1974:42; Hamilton 1982:135).

The fort was a wintering post maintained in order to prevent native people from taking their furs and provisions to other markets (Smythe 1968:129). The trade at this post was minimal, though, and it was closed in 1832 as part of a reorganization of the whole Assiniboine River area (Brown 1964:90; Smythe 1968:129). With the closure of Brandon House IV, the whole of the Souris Mouth area was abandoned and the fur traders never returned to the area (Hems 1986:30). As a result we come to the end of the occupation of the Souris River Mouth nodal area by fur traders as well as the end of the discussion of the fur trade posts.

5.6 Summary

Although the discussion in this chapter is quite extensive, it provides a relatively brief overview of the fur trade post under consideration. The chapter also discusses some aspects of the fur trade and how certain events are pertinent to specific posts. The goal was to provide outlines of each of the nodal areas and to discuss specifics of each of the posts within those nodal areas. By doing so, a brief history of post movements is provided, in addition to outlining some of the reasons that the posts were relocated. The end result is a condensing of the vast amount of information contained in the literature and documents pertinent to these various regions.

The tables that outline the basic information presented here are important tools for examining the data, both for this chapter and the next as well. The maps that are provided detail the borders of each nodal area and show the relationship of post locations to one another. By examining the locational data and comparing each nodal area, an overall picture of post movements emerges. It is the data provided in this chapter that are used for comparing and outlining the fur trade competition of the areas studied in this thesis. In addition to providing some supplemental background on the fur trade, this chapter supplies the information essential to the thesis problem.

Chapter 6

Understanding Fur Trade Post Movements

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses and compares the data presented in previous chapters in order to develop an explanation for nodal area development and post movements. By examining all of the evidence gathered, certain factors can be identified that are informative about the two conditions mentioned above. Conclusions can then be drawn about the application of these factors to other research.

The most important factor that is examined in regard to post settlements and movements is competition. The fur trade during the time period that is studied in this thesis was fiercely competitive and this is reflected in nodal area development and the movements of posts. All of the other factors related to the development of nodal areas (resource access, transportation access, access to native groups) and the subsequent movement of posts within those areas (post type, resource stress, relations with native groups) contribute to the overall influence of competition. The first part of the chapter deals with the factors related to nodal area development and post movements. The last section of the chapter discusses how these factors contribute to the overall competition in the nodal areas.

6.2 Factors Related to Post Location and Movement

6.2.1 Resource Access as a Factor in Post Location

This is a broad category that includes many different resources, but the majority of these resources are environmental. The resources of concern here are food, water, building materials and firewood. Having access to these supplies would be an important consideration in the location of a post. I propose that the fur trade companies would be looking for sites in proximity to a wide variety of resources to establish their posts and that these types of locations are where nodal areas formed. Evidence to support this argument can be seen in the nodal areas identified for this thesis.

The Saskatchewan Forks nodal area is abundant in resources, especially in the river valleys, but some more specific examples will be used to illustrate the attraction of this area. The location of Sturgeon Fort on the North Saskatchewan River exhibits several of the traits that make a site desirable for the settlement of a post. Sturgeon Fort was well sited, "... in the vicinity of the river, on fairly high ground for protection against floods and hostile Indians, in a non-marshy area and in a region where trees are numerous, these being the main source of fuel and building material" (Barka and Barka 1976:23-24). We can infer that this is probably a typical location for a fur trade post. It is in a well-protected area with ready access to the resources that a post needs.

The Sturgeon Fort excavations revealed that some of the structures at the post were made from pine planks and a few of the cellars were lined with spruce bark (Barka and Barka 1976:38, 44). The physiography of the Saskatchewan Forks area indicates that different species of spruce, pine and birch trees were present here. A birch-bark basket was also found within the fill of one of the cellars at this post (Barka 1962:6;

Barka and Barka 1976:44). Locally available sources of wood for construction and firewood are important as building sites were often chosen because of their proximity to suitable stands of trees (Ritterbush 1992:22). The availability of certain types of trees in an area may have been a reason for placing a post there and we can see the use of these trees in the archaeological evidence.

Food resources were also important at this post. The excavations revealed that beaver and rabbit were well represented at the site comprising 31 % of the individuals found (Barka and Barka 1976:55). Elk, moose and bison were also in abundance and ducks were the second most numerous faunal remains discovered (Barka and Barka 1976:55-56). On the whole all of these animals would have been present throughout this part of the Saskatchewan River and likely represent one of the main attractions for locating a post here.

The Francois-Finlay post excavations also show the importance of different species of trees for fur trade post construction. All of the logs used to build the walls of this post were determined to be either jack pine or spruce (Kehoe 1978:16). That an area had the right trees for building would have been an important factor in choosing a site for a post. The excavations also show that beaver, elk and moose were quite abundant in the faunal remains (Kehoe 1978:116-120). Once again the environment of this area would have supported all these types of animals.

Another example also illustrates the importance of resources for fur trade posts. This one describes sites on the South Saskatchewan River where it was somewhat unusual to build. There was very little in the way of trees along this river and fur-bearing animals were in short supply. Although buffalo were plentiful in the summer

along this river, during the winter, they abandoned it for the shelter of the parklands to the north (Morton 1939:337). However in the last 100 km or so before the river met with the North Branch, the forest crossed the upper river at two points, near Upper Hudson House and below the Sturgeon River. This provided sheltering woods with great expanses of grass between the two rivers, which were good wintering grounds for bison and, consequently, provisions would be in plentiful supply in this area (Morton 1939:337). The location soon became popular and competition was fierce as Figure 6.1 shows. This part of the South Saskatchewan River had the necessary resources that the traders were looking for, especially for a provisioning post.

The Upper Assiniboine River also contains plentiful resources, which may explain why it developed into a nodal area. Throughout the area seasonal abundances of food sources are present with large amounts of waterfowl available in the spring and fall (Yanchinski 1951:19). As well, deer and moose are common here and the bison herds would shelter in this area during the winter months (Yanchinski 1951:19). Besides the abundance of flora and fauna, the area surrounding the Assiniboine Elbow was supplied with large amounts of wood (Klaus 1968:5; Klimko 1983:16-17). This wood was necessary for constructing fort buildings and canoes as well as for cooking and heating (Klimko 1983:17). Due to the forested nature of the region, the Upper Assiniboine River was potentially well supplied with fur-bearing animals.

Another resource-rich area that hosted a concentration of fur trade posts is the Souris River mouth. The area was a natural choice for the location of a post based on the abundance of resources, especially firewood, construction materials and water

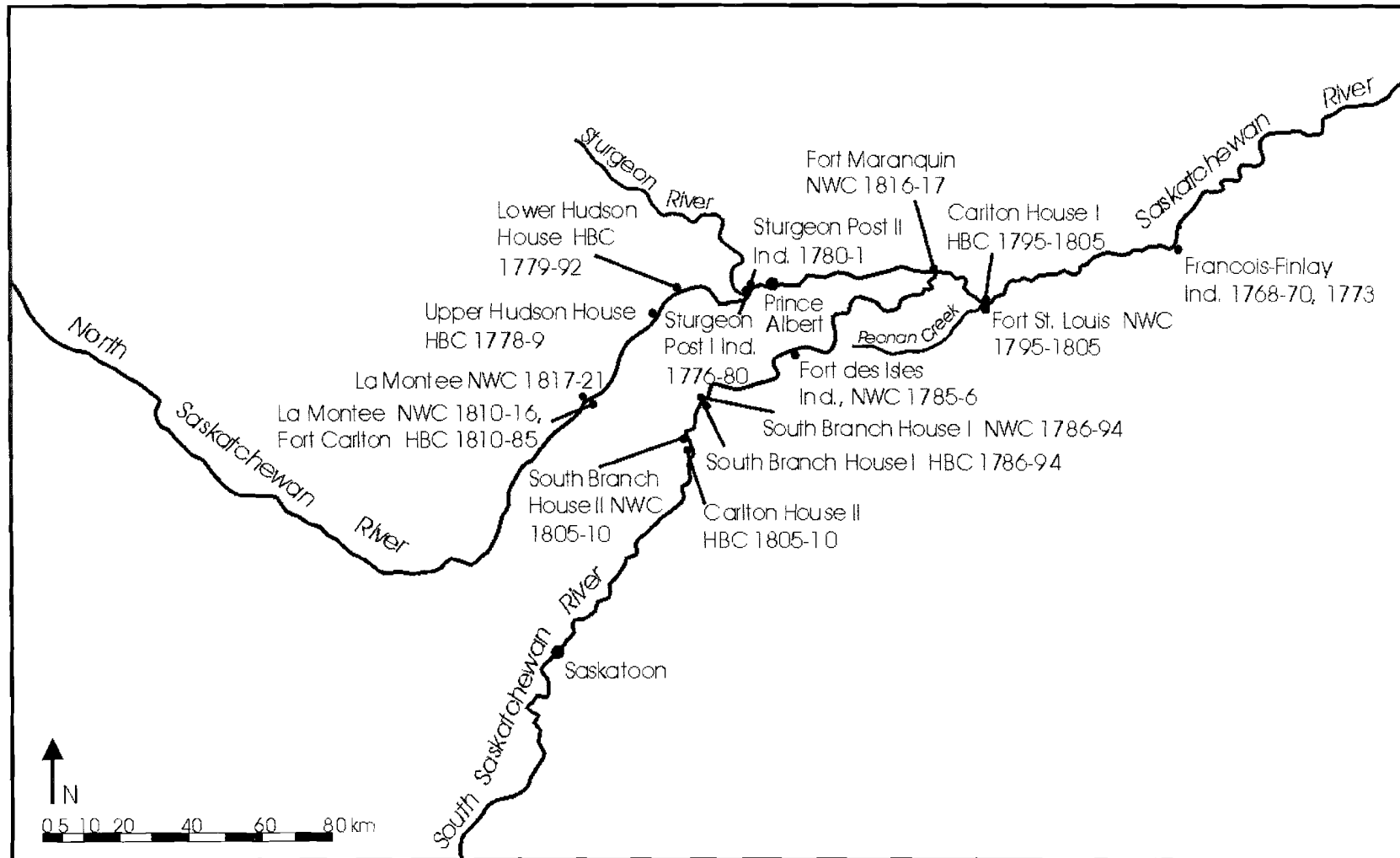


Figure 6.1. Map of the Saskatchewan River forks nodal area.

(Hamilton 1985:7). The traders would be able to exploit resources from both parkland and plains ecozones and were close to the Mandan-Hidatsa villages, where other types of resources, such as agricultural products, could be procured (Jackson 1982). During severe winters, bison were quite abundant in this area as they sought shelter in the river valleys and parklands (Hamilton 1985:54). Due to all these resources, Hamilton postulates that the area attracted groups of people from their home ranges or territories both historically and perhaps prehistorically (1985:6).

The Pine Fort excavations provide ample evidence of the importance of wood in this region. The stockades at Pine Fort were made from spruce and poplar logs and Red Tamarack was primarily used to construct one of the buildings (Tottle 1981:40, 65). Although Red Tamarack is now scarce in the area, it used to be quite common (Tottle 1981:65). The roofs of the buildings here were likely made from shingles of birch bark as this material was found in several of the cellars and pits at the site (Tottle 1981:58). Pine Fort was also quite an important source for wattap, which is the fibre of the small roots of spruce trees. Wattap was used to sew together the bark covering of birch bark canoes (Tottle 1981:15). The bones of large animals and birds were also discovered in great amounts near one of the buildings (Tottle 1981:65). Supplies of wood and food resources would have been a major consideration in choosing a location for Pine Fort.

During a survey of the Souris River mouth area in 1981, Hamilton found a precontact site containing high concentrations of bison bone near an easily accessible river crossing, indicating that it could represent a game trail and river crossing that was regularly exploited (Hamilton 1982:52-53). The high concentration of bison bone suggests easy accessibility to an abundance of food. The site itself is located near many

of the fur trading posts (Hamilton 1982:41, 51-52). The presence of a game trail nearby would be advantageous to a post by providing ready access to food sources.

Another region where we see the relationship between abundance of resources and concentrations of fur trade posts is the Qu'Appelle River mouth. The whole Qu'Appelle River valley is a vast ecological resource base with an abundance of natural resources (Malcolmson 1964:43; Saunders 1977:7). In the spring, ducks, other waterfowl and fish could be obtained (Malcolmson 1964:43). Vast amounts of wood for shelter, heat and cooking were available here that were not present on the open plains (Saunders 1977:7). Additionally, other food sources, such as moose, deer, elk, wolves, foxes, beaver, otter and rabbits, were abundant as well as different kinds of berries (Provo 1984:18).

Further evidence of the benefits of this area is seen in the location of Fort Esperance I and its close proximity to vast bison herds on the plains (Malcolmson 1964:38-39; Provo 1984:20; Saunders 1977:7). The availability of bison resources would have been a major concern in locating a provisioning post. John Macdonnell recorded in his journal that there was a bison pound located near Fort Esperance in 1793 and 1794 (Provo 1984:49-50; Wood 1984:87, 96-97). The existence of a pound might indicate that seasonal herds of bison were present at some time in the past. While the location of the bison pound may have directly resulted from the settlement of the post, other companies likely viewed the Lower Qu'Appelle River as a potentially advantageous location for the provisioning trade.

6.2.2 Transportation Access as a Factor in Post Location

Transportation is a key factor in any business that relies on material items as its chief products and forms of payment. Fur traders definitely had to worry about transporting goods, both to get its products to the inland posts and to bring back the furs that were used to pay for the goods. As a result, access to ready made routes of transportation would be an important factor in locating a post. The river systems of Canada provided such transportation routes (Morse 1979:5). However, not every location along a river produced a concentration of posts. A single transportation link alone cannot explain the development of nodal areas. The use of trails utilized by aboriginal peoples and animals on the plains would also ease the transportation of goods. Nodal areas likely developed around locations that were near to the juncture of two or more transportation links. These transportation links could be the confluence of two rivers or a place where a trail crosses a river. There is a certain amount of evidence to support this view.

The Saskatchewan Forks demonstrates the advantages of multiple transportation routes. Not only is this nodal area at the confluence of the two branches of the river, but also some of the posts here are near to where smaller rivers or streams flow into either branch of the Saskatchewan River. One example of this is Sturgeon Fort, which is located near to where the Sturgeon River meets the North Saskatchewan River. Yet another example is evidenced by the location of the initial South Branch Houses. One explanation for the popularity of this latter locale is the access to pre-existing travel links. The HBC post seems to have been located near a point where an aboriginal trail crosses the river (Morton 1939:338). Such a trail would mean the presence of Native

groups, but it also would be a route that the company could use to move goods or to bring back food from hunting camps. The trail would also provide the fur traders with access to either side of the river, which in turn would make the post more approachable.

The Souris River mouth nodal area is also near the confluence of two rivers. Additionally, a trader could follow the Souris River to the south and, when it began to swing to the west, continue along a course that crossed the Missouri Coteau to reach the Mandan-Hidatsa villages on the Missouri River (Jackson 1982:11). The trading connection between the Missouri and Assiniboine Rivers predated the appearance of European fur traders (Jackson 1982:11). This means that its existence could be one of the reasons why the fur traders located their posts nearby.

Another trail may have been influential in deciding the location of the first post in the Qu'Appelle River area. The location of Fort Esperance I was within five km of a trading "road", which led to the Mandan villages (Provo 1984:30; Wood 1964:111). People who lived in the area would use this "road", which would provide the NWC with trading contacts. As well, the "road" provided the NWC with a ready-made link to the Mandan villages (Provo 1984:30). When one considers the location of Fort Esperance I, it can be determined that it was a good choice in terms of transportation. The Assiniboine River provided the traders with access to the north and east, the Qu'Appelle allowed travel to the west and the trading road gave them an avenue to the south. Other companies could see these advantages and probably chose to exploit them when they established posts on the Qu'Appelle River.

The Upper Assiniboine River nodal area does not exhibit the same pattern as the other nodal areas of being at a confluence of two rivers or of having trails intersecting

the river. However, fur traders refer to the Upper Assiniboine River area as the “Indian Elbow” (Hamilton 1990-91:18; HBCA b.159/a/2, 4-6; Klaus 1968:1; Klimko 1983:9). This indicates that the elbow of the Assiniboine River was known to aboriginal peoples long before contact with Europeans. This location is only about 16 km from a great bend in the Swan River (Klimko 1983:9, 13). The Swan River is a link to Lakes Manitoba and Winnipegosis and forested regions to the north and east. The Assiniboine River would provide contact with groups on the plains to the south and west. It is likely that this connection point for transportation routes was in use for a long time as the place name suggests that native groups used the area first. In any case the transportation advantages would be quite appealing to traders.

6.2.3 Access to Native Groups as a Factor in Post Location

The last key aspect to the settlement of posts is access to customers, which in this case would be native peoples. As aboriginal groups hunted and brought in the furs that the European traders wanted, it was essential to locate their posts near to these groups. Post locations most likely to develop into nodal areas would be those that are near aboriginal aggregating centers or places where significant numbers of native peoples regularly visit. These gatherings could be for ceremonial or trading purposes and the evidence should show that they occurred prior to the arrival of Europeans. As well, the native groups would likely congregate at the same resource locales that the white traders would deem important.

The relationship between nodal areas and access to native groups is examined in Meyer and Thistle’s work on aggregating centers (1995). As they argue, there is good

evidence for six aggregating points along the Saskatchewan River Valley (Meyer and Thistle 1995:411-414). The most westerly of these centers, called Pehonan, is just downstream from the Forks of the Saskatchewan River where Fort St. Louis was built and falls within my Saskatchewan Forks nodal area (Figure 6.1). This area would have provided a convenient meeting place for plains and woodland groups (Meyer and Thistle 1995:414). The fur traders would have access to many customers by locating their posts near to such a place.

The French realized how important Pehonan was as they built a post here in 1753 (Meyer and Thistle 1995:418). During the competitive period of the fur trade, several posts operated near this center, including Fort St. Louis (NWC) and Carlton House (HBC) (Meyer and Thistle 1995:419). As Meyer and Thistle have noted (1995:414), the existence of Pehonan as a rendezvous center may have led the fur traders to recognize the importance of the area early on. Even though many of the initial posts in the Saskatchewan Forks nodal area are located much farther upstream from Pehonan, the fact doesn't detract from its importance. Whether the traders were attempting to intercept native groups going to the rendezvous or whether the existence of Pehonan meant that aboriginal peoples would be travelling consistently up and down the Saskatchewan River, the posts in this area would be guaranteed access to many native customers.

We know that there was probably an aggregating center at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers in what is now Winnipeg. In his District Report for Brandon House in 1819, Peter Fidler makes mention of possible annual gatherings here when he says, "Some of the Stone Indians... have been detached from the main body Who

frequent the plains at no distant period on account of quarrels amongst themselves very few or any visit the Forks or ever Pambina [Pembina] River. Tho' the old Indians say at the former place in their boyish days great numbers resorted but have since been gradually advancing more Westwards" (HBCA B.22/e/1). Although this could simply mean that great populations of natives once lived in the area and that it wasn't a rendezvous point, it shows that many aboriginal peoples were present along the lower reaches of the Assiniboine River in the early stages of the competition period.

It is possible that there were other aggregating points further upriver and that the Souris River mouth nodal area was one of them. If we examine the attributes of rendezvous center and some archaeological evidence, there is good reason to believe that the Souris River mouth was a place to rendezvous. Meyer and Thistle (1995) define an aggregation site as follows:

It should be very large, simply because of the many people who take part in the aggregation.... An aggregating site should also be located where a productive food source would have been seasonally available.... There should be more different classes of artifacts, because a greater total range of activities occurs, since many individuals are present. There should also be a greater variety of features, a result of the larger camp size and the need for more arrangement or structuring of the space and more maintenance of the site (Meyer and Thistle 1995:409-410).

It is also noted that the sites must be convenient in terms of travel distances for a regional band and that the sites tend to be on major rivers (Meyer and Thistle 1995:409-410).

Archaeological evidence to support the view that the Souris Mouth is an aggregating area is present in the Boot site (DkLv-15) that is located in a mixed prairie zone on the north bank of the Assiniboine River, overlooking the mouth of the Souris River (Hamilton 1982:47). Because the site showed evidence of popularity as a

picnicking area in modern times, no subsurface testing was conducted as a precaution against encouraging looters. However, from a surface survey of the area, over 500 lithic fragments were collected and several tools were found that included: unifaces, bifaces, projectile points and a worked flake (Hamilton 1982:48). As well, Knife River Flint (KRF) was in relative abundance here in comparison to the other sites in the area (Hamilton 1982:48). Of the lithic materials recovered from the other sites, most were made from Swan River Chert (Hamilton 1982:40-54). The prominent use of KRF and the extensive amount of lithic flakes and tools at this site indicate long term occupation or repeated visits, which are consistent with aggregating centers. It is unfortunate that subsurface testing was not conducted to look for features or possible evidence of seasonal faunal remains.

Even if the Souris River mouth area was not an aggregating area, aboriginal peoples used it regularly before the Europeans arrived. This is apparent from the high number of precontact sites that have been identified along the banks of the Assiniboine River (Hamilton 1982). Twelve prehistoric sites are located within five km of where the Souris River flows into the Assiniboine River (Hamilton 1982:38, 41). Although the artifacts recovered from these sites do not reflect a high concentration of seasonally abundant food sources, they do suggest that the area was visited frequently. The majority of sites were discovered in cultivated fields and the extensive disturbance of the sites may explain the lack of faunal material found (Hamilton 1982:40). Bone material is more fragile than lithics and is more likely to be destroyed by agricultural activity.

With that said, the sites still provide good evidence of repeated activity by native groups in the area. Two of the sites contained large amounts of core remnants and pecked stones, which suggest that they may have been quarries and primary processing areas used by aboriginal groups (Hamilton 1982:46, 53). Such areas would be visited repeatedly over an extended period of time. Another site mentioned earlier contained high concentrations of bison bone and was near an easily accessible river crossing, indicating that it could represent a game trail or river crossing that was regularly exploited (Hamilton 1982:52-53). Based on these sites one can see that any fur trade company operating in this area would have access to significant numbers of native people who were obviously present throughout the region.

The Upper Assiniboine River may also have been a rendezvous area of sorts. I have already discussed how the river systems in this area would be ideal for plains and woodland groups to come into contact with one another. This alone would suggest an abundance of potential customers here. However, there is other evidence to indicate that more extensive use of this area by native groups is likely. Meyer and Thistle state that many of the rendezvous points along the Saskatchewan River became locational foci for bands when reserves were set up in the late 1800s (1995:431-432). There is a similar association of bands and reserve lands in the Upper Assiniboine River area. Three different bands and reserves are present around the elbow of the Assiniboine River and they are: the Key, Cote and Keeseekoose bands (DEMR 1982, 1993). The location of these reserves was determined after consulting with the different bands on where they wanted to be settled (Benson 1998:6). Thus, one may theorize that this part of the river was an important gathering place in the past with so many native bands laying claim to

the lands surrounding the Elbow. However, the establishment of fur trade posts in this area could also have led to the congregation of bands here. As a result more archaeological work needs to be done in the surrounding area to determine if large prehistoric sites do exist. If there were large precontact sites here that contained numerous and diverse classes of artifacts and features then a better case could be made for the presence of an aggregating center in this area.

There is no conclusive evidence to suggest that the Qu'Appelle River mouth was an aggregating area. However, there are indications that access to native groups was one of the advantages of settling a post in this area. Apparently, at least two groups of Assiniboine peoples were residents in this part of the river valley (Provo 1984:67; Ray 1974:95). The fort occupants were consequently provided with a resident consumer base for their goods, in addition to those groups travelling through the area that would also come in to trade.

6.2.4 Post Type as a Factor in Post Movement

The term used to identify this section refers to the primary function of a fur trade post. The different types or functions of posts were identified in the last chapter. Post movement factors that are related to post type are essentially just concerned with the length of time that a post would remain in one location. The more complicated the role of the post, the larger it is likely to be and the less likely it is to be moved. Those posts that have a more important role in the fur trade (i.e. district posts) should remain in one location longer than posts with less complicated roles (i.e. wintering posts). The analysis below supports this statement.

The nodal areas studied in this thesis contain only three types of posts and they are: wintering post, provisioning post and district post. Most wintering posts seem to only have a maximum lifespan of four years (Tables 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4). However, Pine Fort I in the Souris River mouth area was operated for about 14 years (Table 6.4). The

Table 6.1. Table of post functions for the Saskatchewan River forks nodal area.

Name of post	Years in operation	Post Function	Affiliation	Reasons for Moving or Closing Posts
Francois-Finlay House	1768-1770, 1773	Wintering Post	Independent	Competition located elsewhere
Sturgeon Post I	1776-1780	Wintering Post	Independent	Destroyed (by Natives?)
Sturgeon Post II	1780-1781	Wintering Post	Independent	Competition located elsewhere
Upper Hudson House	1778-1779	Wintering Post	HBC	Competition too fierce + located elsewhere
Lower Hudson House	1779-1792	Provisioning Post	HBC	Competition had shifted elsewhere when destroyed (by pedlars)
Fort des Isles- 2 posts	1785-1786	Wintering Posts	Independent, NWC	Competition located elsewhere
South Branch House I- 3 posts	1786-1794	Provisioning Post	Independent, NWC	After 1st season Independents merged with NWC; then abandoned due to native attacks
South Branch House I	1786-1794	Provisioning Post	HBC	Abandoned due to native attacks
Fort St. Louis	1795-1805	Provisioning Post	NWC	Competition located elsewhere
Carlton House I	1795-1805	Provisioning Post	HBC	Competition located elsewhere
South Branch House II	1805-1810	Provisioning Post	NWC	Competition located elsewhere
Carlton House II	1805-1810	Provisioning Post	HBC	Competition located elsewhere
Fort La Montee	1810-1816, 1817-1821	Provisioning Post	NWC	Fear of native attacks, amalgamation with HBC
Fort Maranquin	1816-1817	Wintering Post	NWC	Competition remained at previous location
Fort Carlton	1810-1821, 1821-1835, 1835-1855, 1855-1885	District Headquarters	HBC	Underwent several building phases, Destroyed during the NW Rebellion

explanation for this long period of operation is that there was no competition during the operation of this post and as long as the resources held, there was little reason to move the post. The post may even be more properly termed a provision post, but it was likely only occupied during the winter and that is why it is considered a wintering post.

Table 6.2. Table of post functions for the Upper Assiniboine River nodal area.

Name of post	Years in operation	Post Function	Affiliation	Reasons for Moving or Closing Posts
Fort Riviere Tremblante	1791-1799	District Headquarters	NWC	Competition located elsewhere
Marlboro House	1793-1794	Wintering Post	HBC	Competition relocated following year
Fort Alexandria	1795-1805, 1807-1821	District Headquarters	NWC	Lack of trade; amalgamation
Elbow Lake Posts	1795-1796	Wintering Posts	Independent, NWC	Peter Grant rejoined NWC and location was no longer necessary
Carlton House	1795-1800	Provisioning Post	HBC	Intercompany competition
Albany House 1	1795-1798	Wintering Post	HBC	Intercompany competition; Destroyed by NWC
Albany House 2	1799-1803	Wintering Post	HBC	Lack of trade
Upper Assiniboine House	1803-1805	Wintering Post	XYC	Amalgamation
Fort Hibernia 1	1806-1807	Wintering Post	HBC	Competition located elsewhere
Fort Hibernia 2	1807-1821	Provisioning Post	HBC	Amalgamation
Fort Pelly 1	1824-1856	District Headquarters	HBC	Flooding and poor soil

As one can see most of the wintering posts lasted only one or two years and their temporary existence is probably due to the fact that they were never intended to be more than outposts for obtaining furs.

Provisioning posts were quite important, especially since the nodal areas examined in this thesis were primarily provisioning areas. The result is that the majority of posts studied seem to be provisioning posts. Generally speaking, provisioning posts operated for anywhere from 2 to 14 years (Tables 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4). However the majority of these posts were in service for four years or more. This definitely suggests

Table 6.3. Table of post functions for the Qu'Appelle River mouth nodal area.

Name of post	Years in operation	Post Function	Affiliation	Reasons for Moving or Closing Posts
Fort Esperance I	1787-1810	District Headquarters	NWC	Possibly burned by Natives
Qu'Appelle	1801-1805	Provisioning Post	XYC	Amalgamation
Fort Qu'Appelle	1810-1814	Provisioning Post	NWC	Competition located elsewhere
Fort Qu'Appelle	1813-1816	Wintering Post	HBC	Burned by NWC twice
Fort John	1814-1816	Provisioning Post	NWC	Abandoned for more defensible location
Fort Esperance II	1816-1819	Provisioning Post	NWC	Fear of native hostility/attacks
Beaver Creek Post	1816-1824	Provisioning Post	HBC	After amalgamation it became uneconomical
Beaver Creek Post	1819-1821	Provisioning Post	NWC	Amalgamation

that a provisioning post has a longer lifespan than a wintering post or is more likely to stay in one location longer than a wintering post. Four of the provisioning posts only remained in one location for 2 to 3 years (Tables 6.3, 6.4). These cases may be different because competition was a strong influencing factor in the decision to move these posts.

District posts or regional headquarters are most likely to stay in one place for the longest period of time. However there can still be much variation in the life spans of these posts. A comparison of the nodal areas shows that district posts operated for as

little as three years and up to 75 years (Tables 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4). Only one area exhibited a case where the district post operated for only three years (Table 6.4). In every other area district posts operated for no less than 10 years (Tables 6.1, 6.2, 6.3). One can see that post type definitely played a role in how long a post would remain in a single location.

However, other factors also played a role and the overall determining influence of the post type factor is discussed further in the next chapter.

Table 6.4. Table of post functions for the Souris River mouth nodal area.

Name of post	Years in operation	Post Function	Affiliation	Reasons for Moving or Closing Posts
Pine Fort I	1767-1781	Wintering Post	Independents, NWC	Restructuring of independents into NWC
Pine Fort II	1785-1794	District Headquarters	NWC	In same location as Pine Fort I; Competition located elsewhere
Brandon House I	1793-1811	District Headquarters	HBC	Diminishing resources such as firewood, theft by Natives
Assiniboine House	1793-1805	Provisioning Post	NWC	Amalgamation
Fort Souris	1793-1798, 1798-1805	Provisioning Post	Independents, XYC	Restructuring of independents into XYC
Fort Souris	1805-1807	Provisioning Post	NWC	Fort rafted to old Pine Fort due to lack of firewood/building materials?
Pine Fort III	1807-1811	Provisioning Post	NWC	Competition located elsewhere
Brandon House II	1811-1816, 1817-1821	District Headquarters	HBC	Destroyed by NWC; After amalgamation moved to NWC fort
Fort La Souris	1811-1821	Provisioning Post	NWC	Amalgamation, occupied by HBC in 1821
Brandon House III	1821-1824	District Headquarters	HBC	District Headquarters moved to Upper Assiniboine
Brandon House IV	1828-1832	Wintering Post	HBC	Minimal trade and uneconomical after reorganization of Assiniboine River area

6.2.5 Resource Stress as a Factor in Post Movement

Another factor that effects whether a post is moved or not is resource stress. Resource stress refers to the depletion of natural resources that are important in choosing a location for a post. The reduction of an important resource or several resources may cause a post to be moved to a new location. Examples are presented below that show how resource depletion could affect a change in the location of a post.

Diminishing supplies of resources, especially of firewood and building materials, are best described at Brandon House in the Souris River mouth area. The wood supply situation was already coming to a head here before the 19th century as Sutherland's statement on October 2, 1797 indicates, "... took a walk up the River, could see no place where on to rebuild this House on for want of wood as this place will be soon out of firewood the Canadians cutting down all round us" (HBCA B.22/a/4). The situation continued to get worse as it appears the NWC was deliberately using wood to make things more difficult for the HBC. On March 14, 1797, Sutherland writes:

The Canadians having begun to fall wood near our House, sent 6 men to fall and cut down all before them otherwise we will not have a stick near the House that we can call our own, and in two years more there will be no firewood near this House as the Canadians are to numerous they will cut down all the wood for building house and for firewood having no lefs than 6 Chimnees daily burning wood [HBCA B.22/a/4].

Apparently wood was becoming a scarce commodity on the north side of the Assiniboine River during the early 1800's. It may be for this reason that the NWC moved across the Assiniboine River in 1805, after the XYC rejoined them. The NWC only remained in this new post until 1807, at which time the fort was dismantled and rafted down the river to the old site of Pine Fort (Brown 1964:85-86). If building

materials were in short supply, then it would make sense to take what materials they could salvage and use them to build a new post.

Eventually Brandon House was moved further upriver and it appears resource depletion was the reason (Figure 6.2). The move was partly because some of the aboriginal people were stealing horses from the HBC, but also because there was a shortage of firewood (Hems 1986:25). This is probably a clear indication of the reason

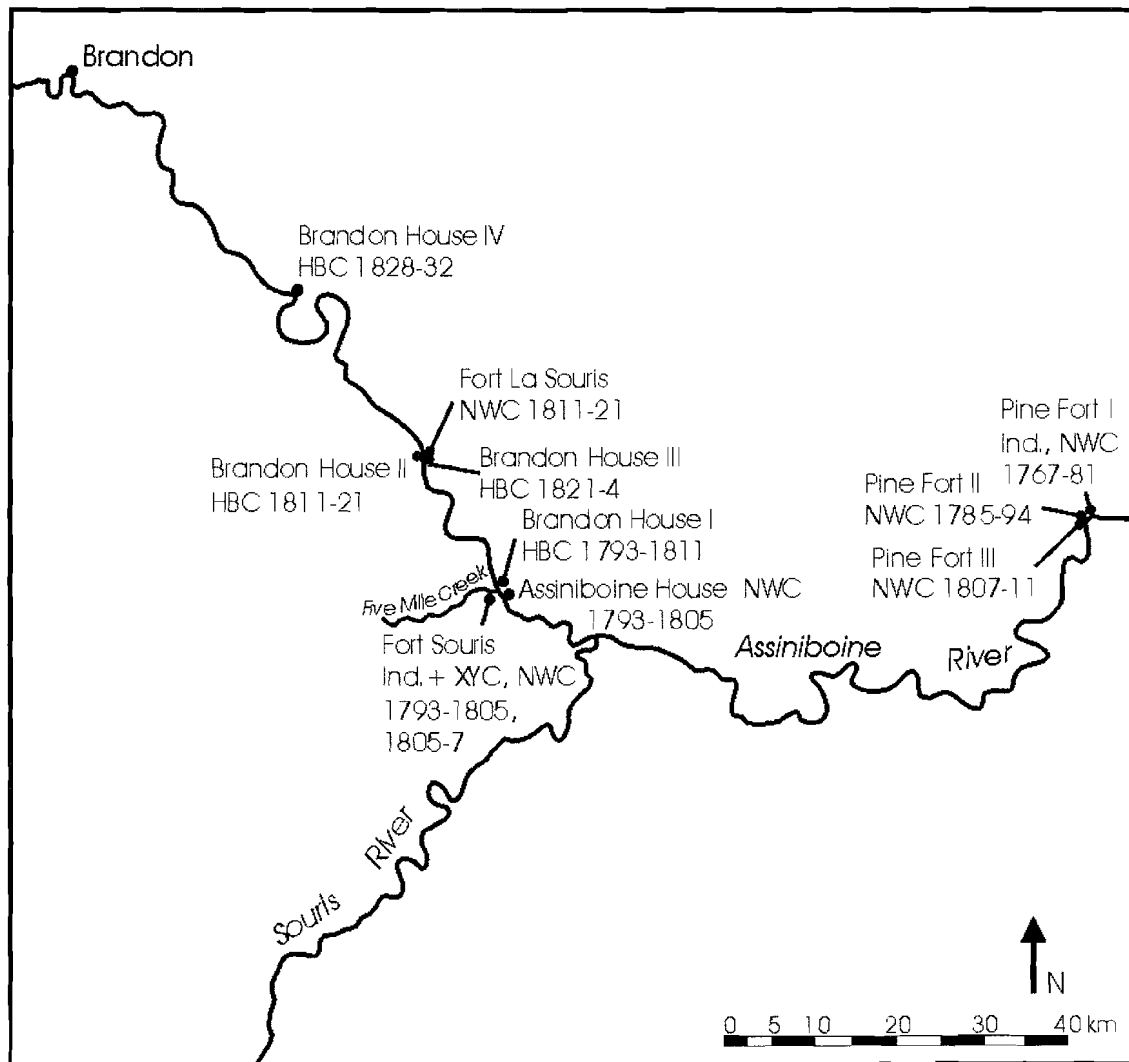


Figure 6.2. Map of the Souris River mouth nodal area.

for the move as the NWC had left the immediate area in 1807 and the HBC was alone at the Souris River mouth. The HBC would have had a distinct advantage without neighbours as direct competitors and as a result the move would not have been done for competitive reasons. However, because the company moved they were able to establish the post in an area that had resources that they were running short of in their current location and, as an added bonus, provided more separation between themselves and the NWC.

Another area where reduction or lack of access to resources was a problem is in the Upper Assiniboine River nodal area. In this case the problem wasn't so much stress on the natural resources needed to run the post, but rather on the commodities for which the Europeans were trading. Both the NWC and the HBC abandoned this nodal area for a period of two to three years, starting in 1805. The reason for leaving the area seems pretty clear as John McKay writes in the Brandon House journal on July 6, 1805:

I asked la Frain what he wanted with me, that I came on purpose to Know, he said he wanted me to send back to the Elbow, as the Canadians has thrown it away, he means to throw them away. I told him he was but one Man and that I did not think that any Trader would settle a place for the sake of lefs than ten or twelve good hunters, that if he really wanted the English at the Elbow again, he would not at this time, so nigh Brandon House, be hunting for the Canadians that he Knew as well as myself if I sent Men the Canadians would send likewise, which perhaps, was the very thing he wanted, as he never gave a skin to us in his life [HBCA B.22/a/13].

This abandonment was much to the chagrin of the native groups in the area as they were forced to travel farther to trade their furs. However, the move seems to have been made because there was not enough trade to keep the companies operating there. There is a certain amount of uncertainty here because both companies returned in 1807 and it is unlikely the resource situation would have changed that much in so short a time. In this

case, the reason for leaving may have been less to do with a lack of fur resources and more to do with a lack of native hunters to obtain provisions. As the upper Assiniboine River did figure prominently as an area for obtaining provisions, then a lack of hunters would be a great concern and may have been sufficient reason for leaving the area.

6.2.6 Relations with Native Groups as a Factor in Post Movement

Relationships with various native groups were the bread and butter of the fur trade. If a company could not maintain good trading relations with aboriginal peoples then they would have a very difficult time securing furs. Not only would good relationships help a company in trading for furs, but they could also help a company defend itself against the actions of its competitors. On the other hand, if a company had a bad relationship with a native group for any reason then it could greatly hurt their chances of successfully trading in an area. In all likelihood, having a good relationship with a native group would keep a fur trade company's post in the same location longer than if the relationship was unfavourable. Of course there is the added qualifier that good native relations for one company likely meant bad relations with that native group for their competitors.

The first of the discussion in this subsection deals with the evidence for bad relations with native groups and how this could have a detrimental effect on a post location. The Qu'Appelle River mouth provides a couple of different examples. The first is the case of Fort Esperance I. It is unclear why this post was first moved but it has been suggested that the NWC was experiencing difficulties with native groups in the area and that these groups may have burned the post to the ground (Malcolmson

1964:45; Priess 1997:2). The time of the post movement (1810) was a period during which the nature of the fur trade was quite different than before. Until this time, aside from some isolated incidents of violence, relations between rival traders had been generally amicable. Competition at this time became much more predatory and the reorganization of the HBC led the NWC to become much more aggressive (Carlos 1982; Carlos and Hoffman 1986). As a result of this new aggressiveness, the relations between the NWC and the various aboriginal groups that they traded with became very strained and the native tribes from the area probably destroyed Fort Esperance I (Malcolmson 1964:45).

The second example from this nodal area is connected to Fort Esperance II. When the NWC did eventually move to Beaver Creek in 1819, it was due to native groups giving them trouble at Fort Esperance II (Malcolmson 1964:49). In fact, Peter Fidler outlines the trouble in his journal entry for December 6, 1818, where he says, "... it is said the NW intends next spring to build close to us at Beaver Creek & abandon their House at Qu'appelle as the Indians are so very troublesome to them every summer when they are alone- they have also lately had many Horses stolen & besides their men refuses to summer again at their old place" (HBCA B.22/a/21). According to the entry, the trouble mainly occurred in the summer and was primarily due to the fact that the NWC were alone in this location. By moving their post next to the HBC at Beaver Creek, they seem to have hoped that the trouble would go away. Perhaps the NWC hoped that the aboriginal groups would start harassing the HBC instead. Whatever the case, it definitely appears that the post location had to be changed because the relationships with the native groups in the area were not very good.

The HBC experienced a similar problem at Brandon House I in the Souris River mouth nodal area. Brandon House was re-established further upriver partly because some of the aboriginal people were stealing from the houses (Hems 1986:25). Once again it appears that difficulties with native groups could contribute to the decision to relocate a post.

Another set of examples from Brandon House I shows how the HBC traders were sometimes treated very badly by the aboriginal peoples, especially when the company was short of trade goods. Two entries in the Brandon House journal of 1796-1797 reflect the unfavourable treatment of the HBC by the native groups. The first entry is dated July 29, 1796 and reads, "...I am Sorry to see the furs carried out of the House for want of goods which makes us only a laughing stock to Indians, when our neighbours has plenty of everything Liquor excepted" (HBCA B.22/a/4). The second entry is from September 8 of the same year and states, "In the evening 20 large Canoes belonging to the N.W. Company arrived, the Indians immediately move their Tents to the Canadians Houses and abusing us, because we are poor in comparison of them" (HBCA B.22/a/4). Thus, the HBC wasn't always in a favourable position and quite often not enough goods were sent inland for the traders to occupy every location they would have liked to. The result is that their relationship with the native groups in the area become strained and made it much more difficult to maintain a post at that location. Although, these incidents did not result in the HBC moving, it did provide their competition with more trade and likely if the situation had continued for a few more years then the HBC may have been forced to move.

Rival companies sometimes located their posts next to each other for mutual defence because alcohol was being used on a more regular basis to entice the aboriginal peoples to trade. The result was that some groups were becoming more unruly to deal with and their relationship with the fur trade companies was becoming more strained. One example of troubles with native groups is provided in the Carlton House journal on the Assiniboine River, where the HBC post was located 130 m from the NWC post (Morton 1939:436). Robert Longmoor mentions on September 23, 1796 that the native peoples were very troublesome and would only trade for liquor (HBCA B.28/a/3). Usually the traders were able to calm these situations down. Still the concern was genuine and the traders had to protect themselves.

Another incident involving alcohol occurred on March 4, 1781 that caused much concern at Hudson House on the North Saskatchewan River. According to Robert Longmoor, the incident occurred as follows:

... the Indians all drunk, At 8 PM they wanted to force the Gates and come in to take what they pleased, they had ten Guns loaded. Some with Ball, some with Slugs and some Bristol Shot, they cut the gates and likewise some of the Stockades the first gun presented I broke, and then took all the rest from them, and their Knives and Bayonets, and four I confined in the House, which was the Ringleaders, for sometime, and then as I had all their Arms I let them out. Those is the same villains that killed the Frenchmen and Robbed them, two years ago, but if in Case one Englishman should be killed I will not spare one Indian, that I know has any hand in it but as they was smartly received, and having no Benefit, only some hard words and one Gun broke and all their Knives and Bayonets taken from them, I think it is over, But I am all ready if it should happen, and every Man here the same, for to defend our Masters property and our own Lives [Rich and Johnson 1952:182].

While the situation was dealt with swiftly and without major incident, it still brings to bear the knowledge of the traders that they were never entirely safe. Had this situation

not been dealt with as quickly and efficiently as it was, it is likely that the post would have been destroyed.

Not all the bad relations between aboriginal people and Europeans were caused by alcohol. Sometimes the fur traders, especially the NWC, treated the natives very badly and this caused many problems. One incident recorded on April 25, 1780 in the Hudson House journal outlines the result of such treatment, “This day four Indian men arrived here from the french House, and told all the Indians here that they was defied by the Canadian Traders, to acquaint all the Indians here a building of Canoes, that if they had a mind to Live to leave off and go away; for it was their Intentions to Stop the River, and kill all the English in going down and Indians if in Company; to go to any of our Forts below” (Rich and Johnson 1952:99). When the traders returned that fall, they found that Sturgeon Fort had been burned down (Barka and Barka 1976:19-20).

Bad relations between native groups farther up the North Saskatchewan River led to troubles at the South Branch Houses on the South Saskatchewan River. Here a group of Gros Ventres had been attacked and killed by a band of Cree. In retaliation the Gros Ventres decided to attack the traders who they saw as being allies of the Cree because they supplied the Cree with guns (Morton 1939:456). James Bird was the master at South Branch House in 1793-4 and his correspondence with William Tomison, who was in charge of Cumberland House, describes what was happening. The first is a letter from Tomison to Bird dated Oct. 25, 1793 in which Tomison had sent some men to the “Island House” (Pine Island):

... on their arrival they found the Ho. robbed of every article ... by a large body of fall Inds.... These fell on the french People first, but after a while being repulsed they desisted & immediately fell on our People.... These always having been a peaceable People till now & what they have done I judge to be out

of spite as they could not be revenged on the South & the Stone Inds for murdering so many of them last Summer (HBCA B.205/a/8).

The second is another letter from Tomison to Bird dated Jan. 27, 1794:

.... There has been a large band of Blackfeet Inds in at both Hos. many of which were v. ill-behaved, several of them were cloathed in our Cloth and had a great many new Guns with them; these I judge to have been conjunct with the fall Inds in the robbing of Manchester Ho. last fall....

W. Shaw says that he will not have any men at the S. Branch this summer as they intend to abandon that place if so be we must do the same, our Hunters have left us and gone off... (HBCA B.205/a/8).

During the summer of this year both the South Branch Houses of the HBC and the NWC were attacked and destroyed by this same group of native people (Morton 1939:457).

As we can see bad relations with native groups led to the abandonment and relocation of posts.

Another example from the Saskatchewan Forks area shows the movement of a post because of fear of native groups. The NWC established Fort Maranquin by itself at the forks in 1816 (Figure 6.1). The impetus for the move was that the NWC felt that a native attack was imminent and decided to secure themselves in a safer location (Dyck 1978:18). When the HBC remained at their location of Fort Carlton farther up the North Saskatchewan River and no attack came, the NWC realized they would be safe and returned to compete directly with the HBC.

On the other side of the coin, good relationships with native groups could enable a post to remain at a location longer even when the competition threatened violence.

From one account of Peter Fidler it is evident that the native groups had a strong influence in keeping the HBC on the Qu'Appelle River. Writing on November 6, 1815 from Brandon House, Fidler states:

...a short time since Mr. Jn. Rd McKay who had gone up with several men to

rebuild our Houses at Riviere Qu Appelle that the Canadians had recently burnt down after we left them in April. When he was beginning to build McDonell the Canadian Master there sent word for us as we very naturally might suppose... a ½ breed with orders to our people to immediately desist from building, but for them all to retire to Brandon House, or if they all did not leave the place in 24 Hours, the Canadians would blow them to pieces. The Canadians immediately after this message delivered to us, began to cut out loop holes in their Pickets and made every demonstration of doing as they had said if our people remained; however our men were determined to stand firm being urged to it by many Indians who luckily were at the Houses at the Time, saying they would support them to the last & would not allow the NWC to drive us away. The Indians immediately sent away their Women & Children for safety. The NWC seeing the determination of the Indians to assist us desisted from their intended purpose of driving away all our people from Qu'appelle... (HBCA B.22/a/19).

As the aboriginal groups were opposed to them, the NWC could not be as overt in their trading rivalry with the HBC as they would have liked. Because they had the native groups on their side, the HBC was able to avoid being attacked and was able to keep their post operating at this location.

Other journal entries provide examples of the beneficial relationships between individual aboriginal people and the European traders. William Tomison, the chief trader at Lower Hudson House, provides one such example in his journal entry of April 13, 1786, "...Holmes [NWC] sent four Men away last fall with Rum and tobacco to debauch the Man that James Gaddy was with, but could not obtain his Ends, the Indian being a steady Man & has used James Gaddy as his own Son" (HBCA B.87/a/8).

Further evidence of the value of these relationships is present at Brandon House, where the entry for December 22, 1797 states:

... yesterday arrived at my Neighbours house, the late Grand Chief of Lac la Pluie, ... with 3 other Indians (sic) this morning he visited me. After taking a dram and smoking a pipe of Tobacco, the old Man said, my Friend, the account I heard of you from the Canadians made me believe you was a perfect Devil notwithstanding yesterday I wanted to see you, but the Big English man (meaning McDonele) would not let me. This morning determined to see you I

came against his will, and since I find you to be quite the contrary to what I heard, I will bring you 10 Beaver should I be obliged to return some of the goods I have Tarded [sic], as a mark that I have been here. He accordingly went off, and in less than an hour returned with 20 prime Beaver Skins. I in return made him a present of 2 guns and a small keg of Brandy (HBCA B.22/a/5).

The advantages of favourable relationships can plainly be seen. By having such strong relationships, traders at fur posts could obtain more business, which probably kept them in those locations longer.

It was usually by the suggestion of aboriginal groups that the traders would go to certain areas. Sometimes, though, the reaction of the traders would be delayed for various reasons and it would be several years before they established a post in the recommended locations. Such a situation occurred at Brandon House where a lack of resources and manpower prevented the HBC from following the advice of the native groups sooner. Robert Goodwin outlines the situation in the Brandon House Journal on April 6, 1799, "...Captain Pepetuca (alias Big Head) came in to talk to me... wants me to settle at Capple [Qu'Appelle] Lake, plenty of Ind. there and good furs, the want of Men & Craft prevents me from giving him a positive answer our hands are too much tied up to increase the Trade Inland" (HBCA B.22/a/6). It was still another fourteen years before the HBC went to the Qu'Appelle River (Table 6.3). It seems that they were not given enough support inland to increase the trade until this time, so the postmaster at Brandon House just concentrated on the Assiniboine River. However, the traders usually followed the suggestions of the aboriginal groups if they could spare the men and goods and as a result, the native groups had an impact on the locations of fur trade posts.

6.3 Competition

While the above-mentioned factors all had individual influences on the fur trade, the combination of these factors resulted in the fierce competition between posts in the nodal areas. The drive to control access to native groups, transportation and resources is what formed the nodal areas and caused the competition in the fur trade to become so intense. Additionally, the response to factors such as post type, changing relationships with native groups and resource stress also reflect the ferocity of competition that resulted. An example of this competition is the NWC's strategy in most places of increasing their number of posts, when faced with competition, in order to strain the resources of the area and put their competitors out of business (Klimko 1983:18). Evidence of this strategy can be seen in the Souris River mouth area, the Qu'Appelle River mouth and the Upper Assiniboine River.

Other evidence of the resultant competition can be seen in the settlement patterns of the nodal areas. As mentioned in Chapter 3 the leapfrogging pattern that is seen in several areas is explained somewhat by spatial duopoly. When the HBC did move into an area they usually leapfrogged over the NWC's or independents' posts in a possible attempt to deflect trade going to these other posts. The NWC would then respond by locating upstream from the HBC or right beside it in an attempt to regain their share of the trade or to increase it. The leapfrogging settlement pattern is primarily a result of the expansion phase in the fur trade during the early competitive period.

The leapfrogging pattern is what Freeman and Dungey (1981) talk about with their spatial duopoly model. The leapfrogging settlement pattern seems to account as the impetus for the first company to move its post after the competition moves in. It is

interesting that in a place like the Qu'Appelle River mouth, where the NWC had a virtual monopoly for 14 years, Fort Esperance stayed in the same location for 23 years. When the XYZ did move in, the NWC did not move their post, but this could be due to the fact that the XYZ did not leapfrog Fort Esperance in location (Figure 6.3). The XYZ post was established slightly downstream (about 2.5 km) from the NWC (Malcolmson 1964:47). In the other nodal areas the initial fur trade posts remain in the same location until the competition locates upstream.

When the HBC first moved into the Qu'Appelle River valley in 1813, they located their Fort Qu'Appelle downstream from the position of the NWC post (Figure 6.3). The following year the NWC moved to a location about 90 meters downstream from the HBC's Fort Qu'Appelle (Malcolmson 1964:48). The post movements were due to the location of the competition and the leapfrogging pattern can be seen to have moved in a downstream direction. The leapfrogging pattern is present in this area at a later time than the other areas because expansion into the Qu'Appelle River occurred at a later time.

In the Souris River mouth area the HBC decided to leapfrog the NWC in an upstream direction. However, it appears that when the HBC first settled at the Souris River mouth, the independents and the NWC may have already had establishments here. The HBC did leapfrog the location of Pine Fort though, which was still operating when Brandon House I was established (Figure 6.2). The fact that Brandon House I was positioned near to already established posts shows that competition played a role in why the post was put in this area. The establishment of Brandon House I was also during the expansion phase in the fur trade.

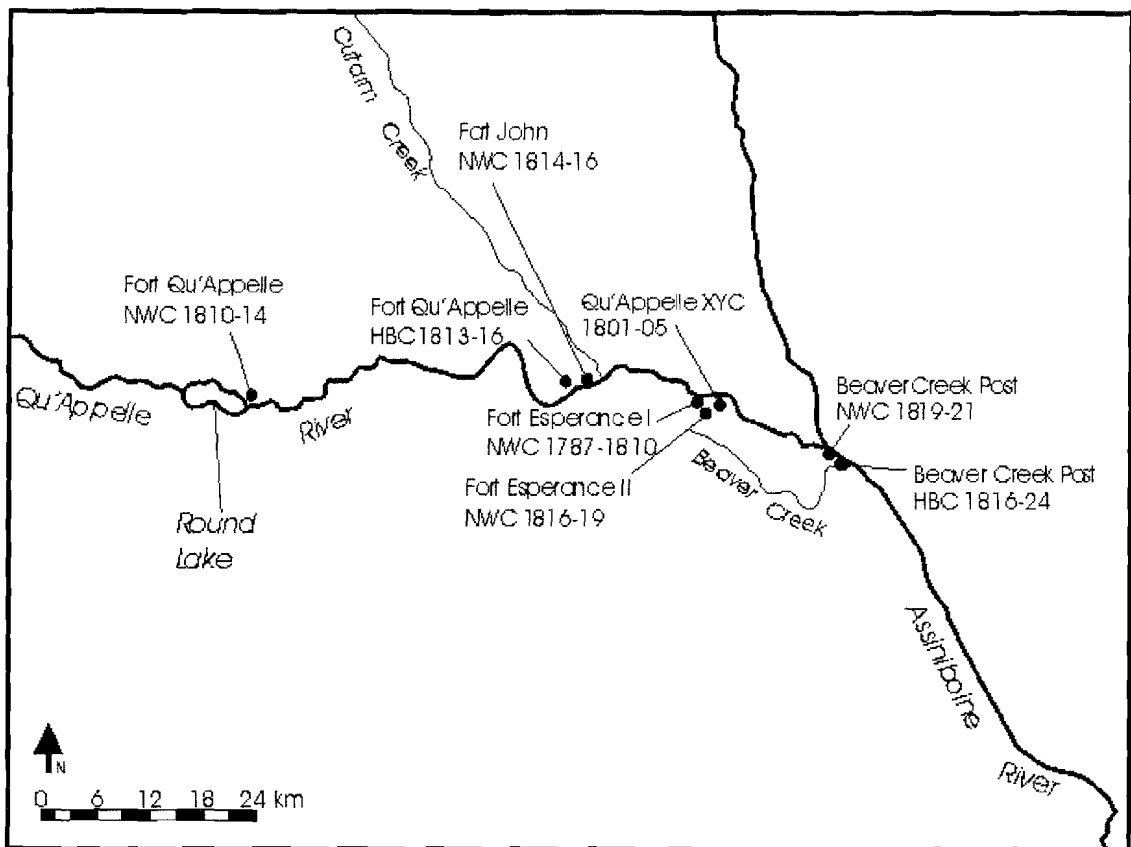


Figure 6.3. Map of Qu'Appelle River mouth nodal area.

Later on resource stress forced the NWC to move away. However in 1811 the HBC moved up the Souris River to the location of Brandon House II (Figure 6.2). The NWC also moved to the same area, but this was happening during an entrenchment phase of the competitive period when competitors' posts were often moved at the same time to the same location. The NWC post was located across the river at the top of a steep bank in an obvious attempt to gain a vantage point over Brandon House II (Hems 1986:26). This vantage point and the competitive edge it provided must have been the reason behind moving the NWC post to this location. The site of the post is near a swamp that made access from the landward side difficult and the steep bank would have made for a laborious climb from the river (Hems 1986:26). The muskeg also required

the building of a “corduroy” road in order to provide access to the plains north of the river and to reach dry ground (Brown 1964:89; Hems 1986:26). These measures would probably not have been taken if the fur trade competition was not so intense.

The Saskatchewan Forks nodal area also exhibits the spatial duopoly pattern during the expansion phase. As Figure 6.1 shows the HBC went upstream from the location of Sturgeon Post I when they established Hudson House. The location ended up being where other traders were already established and as the following journal entries from Robert Longmoor in 1778 indicate, competition was a factor in the post settlement, “... arrived at the Canadians Settlements The Masters came to me, and told me, that If I Cused to stay any were Nigh, it was very Agreeable, if not they would go as far as I did, that they should be close by me, and as I had no Provisions for the men, I thought It best to Stay” (HBCA B.87/a/1). This indicates that if Longmoor had decided to settle farther up the river then the other traders would have followed him, which is further evidence of the ferocity of the fur trade due to the influence of trying to control the post settlement factors.

On the South Saskatchewan River in 1786, the HBC leapfrogged the NWC in locating their South Branch House I upriver. The NWC soon followed and located their South Branch House I directly across the river (Figure 6.1). Competition influenced the HBC move to this branch of the Saskatchewan River and the subsequent NWC move was also the result of competitive influences.

During the expansion phase in the Upper Assiniboine River area the pattern also moved in an upstream direction. When traders from the HBC first moved into this area, they located Marlboro House upstream from the NWC post of Riviere Tremblante

(Figure 6.4). The NWC followed and located a small outpost next to Marlboro House. The following year (1795) the NWC moved several kilometres upstream and the HBC traders quickly followed to establish Carlton House right beside their Fort Alexandria (Figure 6.4). The HBC also had posts located downstream that may have been an attempt to bracket Fort Alexandria. We can see from these settlement patterns that competition influenced the movements of posts in this area as well.

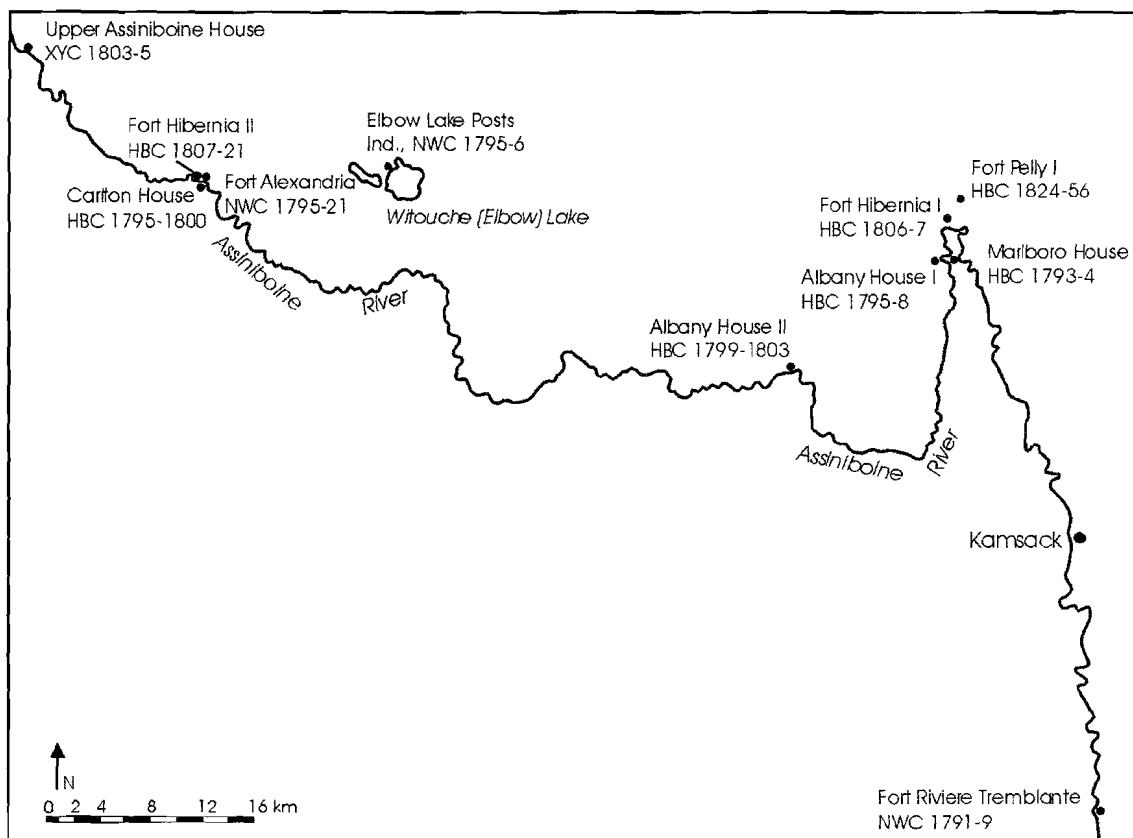


Figure 6.4. Map of the Upper Assiniboine River nodal area.

The Upper Assiniboine River nodal area is unique in this study because while there was much competition between companies there was also competition within the HBC. As Table 6.5 shows, two factories (main depots) of the HBC had several posts in this area at various times and they were often competing against one another. The two

depots involved were York Factory and Albany Factory. Both depots were expanding their trading areas to compete with the NWC and independent traders; the Upper Assiniboine River area is where the two paths of expansion met.

York Factory traders eventually left the area in 1800, which was due to the intervention of the Committee of Governors for the HBC in London. The Committee strongly disapproved of two of its main depots operating competing posts within 25 km of one

Table 6.5. Factory affiliations for HBC posts in the Upper Assiniboine River nodal area.

Name of post	Years in operation	Post Function	Factory Affiliation
Marlboro House	1793-1794	Wintering Post	York Factory
Carlton House	1795-1800	Provisioning Post	York Factory
Albany House 1	1795-1798	Wintering Post	Albany Factory
Albany House 2	1799-1803	Wintering Post	Albany Factory
Fort Hibernia 1	1806-1807	Wintering Post	York Factory
Fort Hibernia 2	1807-1821	Provisioning Post	York Factory

another (Rich 1960:183). Although the rebuke of the Committee was mainly directed toward the traders of Albany Factory, it was York Factory that left the area first (Rich 1960:183-184; Table 6.5). This time the factor that led to the movement of a post was internal competition within the HBC. Albany remained to compete with the NWC, but after also having to compete with the XYC in the area, traders from Albany Factory also left to pursue interests elsewhere.

The NWC and the XYC remained in the area for another two years, but after those two companies amalgamated in 1805, they abandoned the area as well. The York Factory traders of the HBC did return in 1806. When they returned they established their post near the “Elbow”. However, with their return, the NWC also came back, but located upstream at their old location, prompting the HBC to move there the following year (Figure 6.4). Once again we see how factors combined to cause companies to compete not only with each other but with themselves as well.

The Souris River mouth area provides many other examples of how competition had an influence on post movements. John McKay, who was the postmaster at Brandon House in 1797-1798, provides one example of the suffocating actions of the NWC. In his journal entry for February 7, 1798, McKay states, “... the Canadians keeps such a close eye on me, that I must carry on all the businefs I have with their Indians on the night” (HBCA B.22/a/5). It is clear that one of the reasons for locating posts in such close proximity was an attempt to keep an eye on the competition and try to disrupt anyone from trading with a rival company. Although the view presented here is from the perspective of the HBC, it is likely that they employed similar tactics against the NWC and the XYC.

When the HBC first moved into the Souris River mouth area they chose to settle near the NWC post; the NWC decided to surround Brandon House so that any customers would have to go through the NWC first in order to get to the HBC. As a result, the NWC built a post right in the middle of the trail that led to the HBC post (Hamilton 1982:89). Thomas Millar was in charge of Brandon House during the summer and his entry of July 12, 1796 is telling: “The Canadians laid the foundation of

a large House, right on the Indian path to this House and among our logs; as they wer in possession first I cannot stop them expecily as they are two men to our one, nor has any orders for so doing” (HBCA B.22/a/4). Even though Millar would have liked to do something about the actions of the NWC, he could not because he did not have orders from London to do so. Later that summer, the NWC post burned down and they had to rebuild it (Hamilton 1982:89-90; HBCA B.22/a/4).

In doing an archaeological reconnaissance of the Souris River mouth area in 1981, Hamilton found the site of the NWC post mentioned above (1982:89). The site was situated well back from the river and, in order to reach the river, the inhabitants of the post had a long detour around a bog (Hamilton 1982:89). Here we see that competition was the driving force in the location of this post as access to resources such as water and transportation would be rather difficult. In this instance the journals written by the fur traders were useful tools for explaining the archaeological evidence. The positioning of a post at this location did not make sense otherwise.

With the entrance of the XYZ into the Souris River mouth area the situation seemed to get worse. The addition of another company caused even more problems for Brandon House I. On September 26, 1801, McKay writes, “...it is with the greatest difficulty, that anything can be made here this year, as what they the little Company is very formidable there is no lefs than 3 houses against, 2 belong’g to the NW Company & 1 to the little Company” (HBCA B.22/a/9). Again on December 24, 1801, McKay makes another journal entry, where he appears to be talking about an associate in some other place. The entry reads as follows, “... a Canadian of the XY Comp’y arrived. I understand by him that Miller has plenty of provisions, but is making no furs, there is no

lefs than 9 Settlements, in that small place, Miller has 2, Henry 4 & the XY 3, the man tells me there is a house for every 2 Ind & those Ind doing nothing” (HBCA B.22/a/9).

We see that multiple posts were being established and positioned for competitive purposes. However, this strategy of surrounding the HBC seemed to be working almost too well, as all the fur companies were having trouble getting furs.

In a twist of fate, the XYC also adopted the strategy of surrounding the competition and seemed to turn it around on the NWC. This journal entry of John McKay from November 15, 1801 is telling of the turn in fortune:

...the two houses at the Hairy Mountain have cut off all the Ind. from this place & I have no horses to follow them the NW Company thought themselves very wise, in cutting off all the Ind from this place, but in my opinion they were much mistaken for they were no sooner settled, than the XY follow’d them & as I understand have every advantage over them. I only await the arrival of the Mandan men with horses, I think that they will both be oblig’d to move their quarters [HBCA B.22/a/9].

The XYC was giving the NWC the same problems that the NWC had given to the HBC. With all of the posts that were constructed during this time and the ruinous effect it was having on the trade, it is no wonder that the NWC and the XYC soon amalgamated (1804). Although this strategy of saturation ultimately didn’t work (as the HBC in most cases remained to trade despite the difficulties), one can see how a post might be moved in order to avoid the competition.

A strong example of an instance where competition led to the abandonment of a post and subsequent movement to another location occurs in the Qu’Appelle River mouth area. Here the HBC was forced to leave due to attacks instigated by the NWC. On March 26, 1816, Fidler describes the forewarning given to the native groups in the area, “As the NWCo find they cannot prevail on the Indians to assist them, tho’ they

have used every means to get them to drive us away, they have told them not to go near the Forks in the Spring, as they tell them that there will be bloody work” (HBCA B.22/a/19). Shortly after this entry, the HBC’s Fort Qu’Appelle was attacked and destroyed by parties affiliated with the NWC as part of the events leading to the Seven Oaks Massacre. It was for this reason that the HBC post was relocated the following trading season at Beaver Creek near the confluence of the Assiniboine and Qu’Appelle rivers (Figure 6.3).

The Upper Assiniboine River also provides examples of posts being located due to competitive reasons. One such example is in a letter written by John Sutherland, at the Indian Elbow, to James Sutherland, at Brandon House, on February 13, 1797, which states, “The N W Company has built a House about 5 or 6 miles to the Northward of me and another to the Westward right in the road of the Indians to cut off my Trade if they could...” (HBCA B.22/a/4). Another letter dated on November 15, 1797 from Thomas Millar to John McKay at Brandon House laments, “...Richards... he is up the River at present with that diabolical rascal Chaboiller building another House to keep all the Indians from this place. They have likewise a House below so that this place is guarded on every side, and I have reason to think there wile very few Indians visit me here” (HBCA B.22/a/5).

6.4 Summary

The objectives of this thesis are to understand patterns of post settlement, movement and concentration and why this occurs only in certain areas. By understanding what factors are important for initially establishing a post in a certain

area, one can better envision what influences post movement. Due to the complexities of the fur trade and the events that occurred, it is often difficult to determine which factor was the most influential in the movement of a post. However, as we have seen from the above discussion we can understand that competition is the critical factor.

Resource stress, native relations and post type all contribute to the movement of posts, but none of these factors were as important as competition. This does not diminish the effect of these factors. Resource stress is present because competition necessitates the building of more posts in an area and the burning of more firewood. It also requires the exploitation of more animal resources. Good relationships with native groups are essential with competition because the company that has the most aboriginal people trading with them will be more successful than their competitors. Post type also contributes to competition because all of the types would not need to be as prevalent in a monopoly situation. The relative ease of establishment and movement of a wintering post enabled ready adjustment to competition.

Initial post settlement is also influenced by competition. Access to transportation, resources and native groups all contribute to the overall effectiveness of competition. The company that has better access to the above resources will be more effective in the fur trade and may eventually be able to drive their competitors out of business. The combination of these resources would be attractive to any fur trading company and, as a result, competitors would flock to the same areas, further increasing competition.

Chapter 7

Summary and Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

This thesis has been a presentation and analysis of information dealing with the fur trade in specific areas in western Canada. Large amounts of data have been presented in an attempt to understand the development of nodal areas and the causes behind post movements. This chapter presents some conclusions that can be made about the data and the analysis in Chapter 6. The concluding remarks also reveal ideas of how the determinations made in this thesis are useful and important to the studies of fur trade archaeology and history.

7.2 Conclusions

7.2.1 Development of Nodal Areas

All of the areas discussed in this thesis exhibit the presence of all of the factors I identified as important for post settlement. The nodal areas all have an abundance of resources of the types necessary to the fur trade. Furthermore each of the nodal areas in this thesis was able to adapt to the provisioning trade and excel in this function when the furs throughout these areas were becoming scarce. The result was that all of the fur trade companies wanted to exploit the same resources and nodal areas developed as a consequence.

Access to transportation is also important and this factor is also significant in all of the nodal areas studied throughout. The Saskatchewan Forks nodal area was “easily” accessible from Hudson Bay and the traders from Montreal were also able to reach it through a system of lakes and rivers. The nodal areas along the Assiniboine River were also accessible to most of the companies and traders. The Upper Assiniboine River area had the added advantage of accessibility by two different routes from Hudson Bay. One route came in from the northeast and the other led up from the southeast.

Several of the nodal areas have records indicating the presence of trails nearby. Whether these trails resulted because of the presence of the fur posts or whether they were in existence prior to the settlement of the posts is uncertain. However, the settlement of the first post in these areas would ensure the formation of a trail, if one did not already exist. This would attract other companies to the area and a nodal area would subsequently form. This is a likely scenario when coupled with the advantage of an abundance of resources located nearby.

The final element that would influence nodal area development is the presence or access to aboriginal peoples. These people were the customers in the fur trade and were also the suppliers of the furs that the Europeans coveted. As a result no fur trade post would be successful without the ability to access as many native persons as possible. Thus, those locations that had good access to native groups would be successful and attract other trading establishments, which would result in the development of a nodal area. Combined with an abundance of resources and the presence of transportation routes, areas with many resident native groups or frequent visits by native groups would be highly desirable locations for fur trade posts.

This leads us to one of the main arguments of the thesis, which is that combinations of the post settlement factors could demonstrate why some post locations developed into nodal areas and others did not. Not all of the sites where posts were established had the necessary composition of advantages that would attract multiple fur trade posts. The conclusion is that in order for nodal areas to develop many factors that are advantageous to fur trade competition and post settlement need to be present in an area.

7.2.2 Post Movements

While the previous section is concerned with what can be concluded about nodal area development, this section examines what has been resolved in terms of the reasons for post movements. As was seen in the last chapter, several factors are involved in the movement of a fur trade post. I do not go into a post-by-post discussion here to determine which factors are responsible for the change in location of a certain post. Instead I am providing general conclusions about the relative importance of each post movement factor and any trends that might be discernable suggesting that certain nodal areas are susceptible to a particular factor or combination of factors.

Some quantitative discussion is useful in this section to draw conclusions about the importance of each post movement factor. Trends in the post movement factors are identified by nodal area. In the Saskatchewan Forks nodal area the most significant factor is the movement of competing posts to new locations. Nine of the fifteen posts in this area were moved because the competition had located to a different site (Table 7.1). The second most important factor was the destruction of posts, either by native

groups or European competitors. Five of the posts changed location as a result of being destroyed (7.1). Three of the posts were closed either because of the amalgamation of companies or the fact that the competition did not follow to a new location (Table 7.1).

Table 7.1. Reasons for movement of posts in the Saskatchewan River forks nodal area.

Name of post	Years in operation	Post Function	Affiliation	Reasons for Moving or Closing Posts
Francois-Finlay House	1768-1770, 1773	Wintering Post	Independent	Competition located elsewhere
Sturgeon Post I	1776-1780	Wintering Post	Independent	Destroyed (by Natives?)
Sturgeon Post II	1780-1781	Wintering Post	Independent	Competition located elsewhere
Upper Hudson House	1778-1779	Wintering Post	HBC	Competition too fierce + located elsewhere
Lower Hudson House	1779-1792	Provisioning Post	HBC	Competition had shifted elsewhere when destroyed (by pedlars)
Fort des Isles- 2 posts	1785-1786	Wintering Posts	Independent, NWC	Competition located elsewhere
South Branch House I- 3 posts	1786-1794	Provisioning Post	Independent, NWC	After 1st season Independents merged with NWC; then abandoned due to native attacks
South Branch House I	1786-1794	Provisioning Post	HBC	Abandoned due to native attacks
Fort St. Louis	1795-1805	Provisioning Post	NWC	Competition located elsewhere
Carlton House I	1795-1805	Provisioning Post	HBC	Competition located elsewhere
South Branch House II	1805-1810	Provisioning Post	NWC	Competition located elsewhere
Carlton House II	1805-1810	Provisioning Post	HBC	Competition located elsewhere
Fort La Montee	1810-1816, 1817-1821	Provisioning Post	NWC	Fear of native attacks, amalgamation with HBC
Fort Maranquin	1816-1817	Wintering Post	NWC	Competition remained at previous location
Fort Carlton	1810-1821, 1821-1835, 1835-1855, 1855-1885	District Headquarters	HBC	Underwent several building phases, Destroyed by Natives + Metis in NW Rebellion

In the Upper Assiniboine River nodal area amalgamation was the most common reason for the closing of a post accounting for four of the eleven posts in the region (Table 7.2). The movement of competitors' posts is second at three, which shows how significant competition was in the fur trade (Table 7.2). Two of the posts in this area were closed because they both belonged to the HBC and were competing for the same trade. Two other posts were closed for a few years because there was an apparent lack of trade, which might indicate resource stress in the area (Table 7.2). Only one post was destroyed and it belonged to the HBC (Table 7.2). The NWC burned it down while it was unoccupied during the summer season. We can see the strength of competition in this area as a significant number of posts were closed once they became redundant after amalgamation.

The Qu'Appelle River mouth nodal area also exhibits the closing of posts due to amalgamation. There were three posts out of eight that were closed for this reason (Table 7.3). However, if one combines the destruction of posts (2) with fear of native hostility (2) then half of the posts in this area were affected by these factors (Table 7.3). The instability of this area during the competitive period is shown by the number of posts abandoned due to destruction or moved because of fear of destruction. Only one post in this area was moved because the competition had relocated (Table 7.3).

For the Souris River mouth nodal area almost half (5 out of 11 posts) of the establishments were closed due to amalgamation (Table 7.4). A further two posts were moved after the competition had relocated to new sites (Table 7.4). This area also shows how much influence competition had on the movement of a post. Resource stress

Table 7.2. Reasons for movement of posts in the Upper Assiniboine River nodal area.

Name of post	Years in operation	Post Function	Affiliation	Reasons for Moving or Closing Posts
Fort Riviere Trenblante	1791-1799	District Headquarters	NWC	Competition located elsewhere
Marlboro House	1793-1794	Wintering Post	HBC	Competition relocated following year
Fort Alexandria	1795-1805, 1807-1821	District Headquarters	NWC	Lack of trade; amalgamation
Elbow Lake Posts	1795-1796	Wintering Posts	Independent, NWC	Peter Grant rejoined NWC and location was no longer necessary
Carlton House	1795-1800	Provisioning Post	HBC	Intercompany competition
Albany House 1	1795-1798	Wintering Post	HBC	Intercompany competition; Destroyed by NWC
Albany House 2	1799-1803	Wintering Post	HBC	Lack of trade
Upper Assiniboine House	1803-1805	Wintering Post	XYC	Amalgamation
Fort Hibernia 1	1806-1807	Wintering Post	HBC	Competition located elsewhere
Fort Hibernia 2	1807-1821	Provisioning Post	HBC	Amalgamation
Fort Pelly 1	1824-1856	District Headquarters	HBC	Flooding and poor soil

was also a significant factor in this area with two posts relocating as a direct result of depleted resources (Table 7.4). Only one post was destroyed and it was at the hands of the NWC as part of the events leading to the Seven Oaks Massacre (Table 7.4). The other two posts in the area existed during the HBC monopoly of the fur trade and were mainly closed due to restructuring and reorganization efforts to streamline the fur trade (Table 7.4).

The post type or function factor is important as it has impacts in each of the nodal areas. The general conclusion about this factor is that district headquarters posts

Table 7.3. Reasons for movement of posts in the Qu'Appelle River mouth nodal area.

Name of post	Years in operation	Post Function	Affiliation	Reasons for Moving or Closing Posts
Fort Esperance I	1787-1810	District Headquarters	NWC	Possibly burned by Natives
Qu'Appelle	1801-1805	Provisioning Post	XYC	Amalgamation
Fort Qu'Appelle	1810-1814	Provisioning Post	NWC	Competition located elsewhere
Fort Qu'Appelle	1813-1816	Wintering Post	HBC	Burned by NWC twice
Fort John	1814-1816	Provisioning Post	NWC	Abandoned for more defensible location
Fort Esperance II	1816-1819	Provisioning Post	NWC	Fear of native hostility/attacks
Beaver Creek Post	1816-1824	Provisioning Post	HBC	After amalgamation it became uneconomical
Beaver Creek Post	1819-1821	Provisioning Post	NWC	Amalgamation

tend to remain in one location for a long time as they are more difficult to move. When this particular post function is combined with a lack of competition, the posts can remain static for two decades or more.

There is some confusion as to exactly how long some of the posts can be considered operating in one location. In the Upper Assiniboine River area, Fort Alexandria was initially operated for 10 years and then the NWC left the area for two years (Table 7.2). When they returned they rebuilt at the same site as before and remained in operation there for another 14 years. Thus, the total operating time of Fort Alexandria at this location was 24 years not including the two-year hiatus. One could also consider this to be two distinct occupations of 10 and 14 years. For this study the first scenario is used since the location remained the same.

Table 7.4. Reasons for movement of posts in the Souris River mouth nodal area.

Name of post	Years in operation	Post Function	Affiliation	Reasons for Moving or Closing Posts
Pine Fort I	1767-1781	Wintering Post	Independents, NWC	Restructuring of independents into NWC
Pine Fort II	1785-1794	District Headquarters	NWC	In same location as Pine Fort I; Competition located elsewhere
Brandon House I	1793-1811	District Headquarters	HBC	Diminishing resources such as firewood, theft by Natives
Assiniboine House	1793-1805	Provisioning Post	NWC	Amalgamation
Fort Souris	1793-1798, 1798-1805	Provisioning Post	Independents, XYZ	Restructuring of independents into XYZ
Fort Souris	1805-1807	Provisioning Post	NWC	Fort rafted to old Pine Fort due to lack of firewood/building materials?
Pine Fort III	1807-1811	Provisioning Post	NWC	Competition located elsewhere
Brandon House II	1811-1816, 1817-1821	District Headquarters	HBC	Destroyed by NWC; After amalgamation moved to NWC fort
Fort La Souris	1811-1821	Provisioning Post	NWC	Amalgamation, occupied by HBC in 1821
Brandon House III	1821-1824	District Headquarters	HBC	District Headquarters moved to Upper Assiniboine
Brandon House IV	1828-1832	Wintering Post	HBC	Minimal trade and uneconomical after reorganization of Assiniboine River area

The correlating trend between post function and time of occupation also applies to provisioning posts and wintering posts. We have seen that provisioning posts were occupied for a medium length of time and wintering posts were used for a very short time span. We can conclude from this that the more elaborate and the higher the function of a post, the longer it is likely to remain in a location. This is important because it means that these higher function posts are likely to leave more evidence behind for the archaeologist to discover.

In terms of the importance of the post type factor, it is quite significant because it is present in every area. The majority of posts that were moved were either provisioning posts or wintering posts. District Headquarters were rarely moved except in extreme circumstances when there was a significant lack of necessary resources, competitors were at a different location and were severely affecting the trade returns, or the fort was attacked and destroyed. However, the post type factor cannot explain the movement of a post on its own. In almost every case, other factors show stronger correlations with the movement of a post than does post type. As a result, the post type factor is considered to be a secondary element.

The next factor to consider is resource stress. Obviously this is an important factor as without subsistence resources, a post would not be able to stay in operation. However, like post function, resource stress appears to be a secondary consideration in the movement of a post. As well, evidence for the resource stress factor seems to be restricted to only two of the four nodal areas. This does not necessarily mean that it wasn't important or present in the other areas; it just means that there is currently no evidence of it in those other areas.

The Souris River mouth nodal area provides the most compelling evidence for resource stress. The journal records for Brandon House I indicate that firewood was becoming a major issue at that location. However, it is curious that the problem was first identified in 1797 and the post was not moved until 1811. The conclusion to be drawn from this is that because the competition moved away from the immediate area, the demand for resources was lessened and Brandon House I was able to maintain its location for a few more years. However, it may also indicate that while resource stress

is an important consideration, it may not be the sole reason behind the decision to move a post. Combined with other factors such as competition or relations with native groups, resource stress may result in the movement of a post.

The last factor to be considered in post movements is native group relations and these would be a primary influence. One of the reasons that native group relations are considered primary factors is because aboriginal people formed a crucial part of the fur trade. If the Europeans could not cooperate with these groups then the trade would fail and a post would not be able to operate. Thus, the maintenance of these relationships was of utmost importance and a direct result was that a breakdown in these relationships would force a post to move. This factor is also evident in every single nodal area.

We have seen in the Saskatchewan Forks nodal area the impact of a bad relationship with native groups. In this case the destruction of South Branch House (HBC) happened and this conflict with a native group was the direct cause of the post being moved to a new location the following year. The Qu'Appelle River mouth area showed the advantage of having good relationships with aboriginal people. Here the native groups prevented the NWC from attacking the HBC post and possibly destroying it. In this instance the native group relation factor directly resulted in a post remaining in its location. However, this nodal area also provides evidence of the impact of bad relations as three of the NWC posts were moved due to native hostility. The Qu'Appelle River mouth nodal area illustrates the point that relations that might be good for one company can often be bad for their competition.

The above paragraph provides just a few examples of the importance of native relations to post movement. This factor, as seen in the examples, was a direct correlate

to the posts either moving or not and can be linked to several posts in every nodal area. The conclusion is that the relationship with a native group or groups is a primary factor for post movement.

7.2.3 Competition

Competition is the most important factor to consider when looking at post settlement and movement in nodal areas. The majority of posts in this study were moved either as a direct result of competition or as a result of this factor combined with another. The combination of factors is important because it contributes to the development of intense competition, which led to the circumstances of post movements in the nodal areas.

In many cases posts are moved at the same time as the competition's posts and usually to the same location. This scenario is the most prevalent situation in the Saskatchewan Forks nodal area. At other locations one post might be surrounded by a number of the competitor's establishments or the establishments of more than one competitor. Often in these situations we see posts remaining in those locations for several years, but eventually they are moved to gain an advantage over the competition. The result is that the competition factor is the most often cited reason for changing post locations and can be considered the most important.

The final conclusions to be drawn are that combinations of different factors lead to the development of nodal areas and that combinations of factors are also the reason behind moving a post. Not all of these factors are of equal importance as competition is the most important. However, the combination and interaction of all the factors

contributed to the growth of competition. Thus, every factor was influential to the fur trade competition in nodal areas.

7.3 Implications for Archaeology and History

This final section of the chapter discusses what this thesis means to the fields of archaeology and history. Undertaking a historical archaeology study necessarily involves elements from both of these subjects. The conclusions implied by this thesis should have relevance to future studies in either profession.

The thesis is important to history because it provides a better understanding of the fur trade in general. By understanding how nodal areas form one can then identify the historical processes that are significant to this formation. As well, nodal area formation helps the researcher to understand the history of fur trade settlement and why these patterns developed in the way that they did. Future historians can use these data to examine other areas of the fur trade and see if the same patterns exist there. It is also hoped that the spatial concepts presented here will provide an alternative explanation to some of the more economical models that have so far been used.

The history of many of these areas is weak or forgotten. Often they are brushed aside and given little more attention other than the fact that they were necessary to the provisioning of the fur trade. It is hoped that this thesis sheds some new light on these areas and provides a little more information on the history of the fur trade as well as the history of these areas.

Much of the data discussed in this thesis have been historical or geographical. Where it could be done, archaeological data were brought in to strengthen the points that

were being made. One of the largest implications of this thesis for the field of archaeology is that more work needs to be done in these nodal areas. Although some of the areas have been surveyed relatively well, other areas are severely lacking in archaeological data.

One aspect that would be extremely helpful to explore further is evidence for large prehistoric sites in these nodal areas that would indicate the possible proof of pre-contact aggregation centers. The discovery of such sites would further strengthen the concept that nodal areas develop in locations where there were existing aggregation centers. This information might then be helpful in finding other areas where there are concentrations of fur trade posts.

More complete excavation of the posts in these areas also needs to be done. Those sites that have been excavated need to be published more so that this information is available and does not fade into obscurity. These excavations may refute or support the arguments presented in this thesis, but without the information one can never be sure.

The determination of the reasons for post movements can also be useful to the archaeologist. By having a plausible explanation for the movement of a post, it may help the archaeologist explain some of the evidence left behind at a site. The HBC journals have helped to explain the sites of some fur trade posts in the past and it is believed that this thesis could also help to explain post locations as well as to provide better interpretations for the remains recovered.

Finally, the thesis may not present totally brand new concepts to the field of fur trade archaeology, but it does focus these concepts on new areas. Another result is that

the thesis also identifies the need for further archaeological study of these areas. We do not fully understand everything that occurred in many of the nodal areas and are especially lacking data for the Qu'Appelle River. The basic message of this work is that it provides a good starting point for examining these nodal areas, but there is still more work that needs to be done.

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