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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Kerry Alcorn

The Graduate School
University of Kentucky
2008

BORDER CROSSINGS: US CONTRIBUTIONS TO SASKATCHEWAN
EDUCATION, 1905-1937

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the College of Education
at the University of Kentucky

By
Kerry Alcorn

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Richard Angelo,

Associate Professor of Educational Policy Studies and Evaluation

Lexington, Kentucky

2008

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

BORDER CROSSINGS: US CONTRIBUTIONS TO SASKATCHEWAN EDUCATION, 1905-1937

Traditional histories of Canadian education pursue an east/west perspective, with progress accompanying settlement westward from Ontario. This history of Saskatchewan education posits, instead, a north-south perspective, embracing the US cultural routes for the province's educational development from 1905 until 1937. I emphasize the transplantation of US Midwestern and Plains culture to the province of Saskatchewan through cultural transfer of agrarian movements, political forms of revolt, and through adopting shared meanings of democracy and the relationship of the West relative to the East. Physiographic similarities between Saskatchewan and the American Plains fostered similar *moralistic* political cultures and largely identical solutions to identical problems.

This larger cultural transfer facilitated developments in Saskatchewan K-12 education that paralleled movements in the US milieu through appropriating into the province's system of schooling American teachers into classrooms, American school textbooks, teacher training textbooks written in the US, and through the pursuit of American graduate training by Saskatchewan Normal School instructors. This resulted in the articulation in the US and Saskatchewan of a "rural school problem," consolidation as its only solution, and the transplantation of a language of school reform identified by Herbert Kliebard as "social efficiency." The invitation issued by the government of Saskatchewan in 1917 to an American expert on rural schooling, Harold Foght, to survey the province's system of schooling and make recommendations for its reform, marked a high point in American influence in the province of Saskatchewan's system of schooling.

In higher education the province's sole university, the University of Saskatchewan, mirrored even more closely American Midwestern and Plains

models. Essentially, the U of S was a transplanted version of the University of Wisconsin. Under the guidance of the University's first President, Walter C. Murray, the "Wisconsin idea" permeated the practice and meaning of his University. His persistent pursuit of Carnegie Foundation financial support throughout his tenure meant Murray had to pattern his university after its American antecedents. Though Murray largely failed to gain substantial financial support for the U of S, the result was a university identical to many American land grant and public universities.

Keywords: History of Education in Canada, History of Education in Saskatchewan, the rural school problem, history of higher education in Saskatchewan, cultural transfer and reception

BORDER CROSSINGS: US CONTRIBUTIONS TO SASKATCHEWAN
EDUCATION, 1905-1937

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The greatest compliment one can pay to a committee, in my mind, is to confirm that there is a part of each of them in the work I have completed. In Dr. Stephen Clements I found someone who I wished I could be when I grew up – an industrious political scientist who maintains a deep interest in K-12 educational policy. His comments and patient support throughout much of my course work and all my writing has made me a better writer and researcher, and reassured me that K-12 schooling is the place to be. Dr. Beth Goldstein was the first member of the EPE faculty with whom I met, and from that time forward she has served me with uncommon grace and intellect. It was she who suggested I investigate the University of Wisconsin as a possible model for the U of S. As Chapter Four will attest, she was absolutely correct. Dr. Ellen Furlough of the History Department encouraged me to move beyond the realm of History to consider culture, its transfer, and reception, as a starting point for understanding how ideas and policies move from one part of the world to another. Her tenacity for asking a difficult question and demanding a rigorous answer challenged me, but helped confirm, in my own mind, that I could do the work of a historian. Dr. Richard Angelo was the first EPE faculty member with whom I worked in the summer of 1999. His wisdom and foresight are obvious in many ways, not least of which was his selection of books for my introduction to the History of American Education. Two of those works, Kliebard's, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum*, and Cremin's, *The Transformation of the School*, form the backbone to my understanding of American schooling in the progressive age. His guidance through the writing process was patient and meticulous, and always with my interests and academic success at the forefront. I could not have had a better or more supportive supervisor. Finally, I wish to thank my external reader, Dr. George Crothers of the Department of Anthropology, for his comments and

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Chapter One Introduction and Review of the Literature

I Introduction

Histories of the province of Saskatchewan's system of education typically depict the province's public school roots as emanating from Canada's center and, correspondingly, from Great Britain. Like most broad histories of Canada, Canadian historiography of Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) education represents progress in education as something that devolves in a westerly direction from the province of Ontario, thereby producing a replica of eastern education on the Canadian prairie. In a rather different fashion, Canadian historians of higher education admit that universities in the West were largely akin to US state colleges, fashioned free of denominational influence and designed to serve the entire province in which they were located. These historians agree that higher education west of Ontario rejected eastern models. While such histories acknowledge the debt owed to the American land grant university, sustained examination of the relationship between the University of Saskatchewan and US campuses, especially those located among Midwestern states, is missing. Rather than maintain a historical analysis along this east to west axis, the history that follows instead looks in a north-south direction for contributions to education in the province of Saskatchewan. With this change in orientation, a different history emerges from the few already written. Though seldom mentioned in the historiography of Saskatchewan and Canadian education, US models of K-12 schooling and higher education made significant contributions in the formative development of Saskatchewan education from 1905 to 1937.

In pursuing a north-south perspective that embraces the US cultural routes for the province's educational development, I focus first on the transplantation of Midwestern and US Great Plains culture to the province of

Saskatchewan through cultural transfer of agrarian movements and political forms of revolt, and through the adoption of shared meanings of democracy and the relationship of the West relative to the East across the continental Great Plains. Physiographic similarities between Saskatchewan and the US Plains resulted in similar *moralistic* political cultures and largely identical solutions to identical problems.

This larger cultural transfer facilitated developments in Saskatchewan K-12 education that paralleled movements in the US milieu through appropriating into the province's system of schooling and classrooms, US teachers and school textbooks, teacher training textbooks written in the US, and through the pursuit of graduate training by Saskatchewan Normal School instructors on select US campuses. Saskatchewan educators also conducted frequent sociological tours to the US, returning with news of reform and new school practice. The invitation issued by the government of Saskatchewan in 1917 to an American expert on rural schooling, Harold Foght, to survey the province's system of schooling and make recommendations for its reform, marked a high point in United States influence in the province of Saskatchewan's system of schooling. This resulted in the shared articulation in the US and Saskatchewan of a "rural school problem," consolidation as its only solution, and the transplantation of a language of school reform identified by Herbert Kliebard as "social efficiency." It also verifies, I argue, the existence of a shared democratic language between the US Plains citizens and the people of Saskatchewan that is Populist and Jeffersonian in meaning.

In higher education the province's sole university, the University of Saskatchewan, mirrored even more closely US Midwestern and Plains models. Essentially, the U of S was a transplanted version of the University of Wisconsin. Under the guidance of the University's first President, Walter C. Murray, the "Wisconsin idea" permeated the practice and meaning of his University. His persistent pursuit of Carnegie Foundation financial support throughout his

tenure meant Murray had to pattern his university after its US antecedents. Though Murray largely failed to gain substantial financial support for the U of S, the result was a university identical to many American land grant and public universities.

II *Review of the Literature*

The history of K-12 education in the province of Saskatchewan occupies a minor place in larger histories of Canadian education, and similarly assumes a secondary role in histories of Western Canadian education. Canadian histories of education, particularly those that emerged in the middle of the twentieth century, mentioned schooling on the prairies only briefly, thereby implying there was little new to report and that schools there were largely similar to their eastern predecessors. Historians of education in the West responded to this asymmetry in reporting somewhat, but focused a great deal on themes like the evolution of minority schooling in the province of Manitoba, for example, where the great battle over minority rights to education was fought in the 1890's, a decade before the province of Saskatchewan came to exist. With the solution to the "Manitoba's Schools Question" complete, and minority schooling rights guaranteed in the *Saskatchewan Act* of 1905, there was again nothing new to report—the battle waged and won. Essays on the schooling experiences of minorities, like Ruthenians in the province, for example, or on the experiences of teachers in the harsh climate of the prairies, abound, but limited attention is paid to the influence of American models on the province's system of schools. Recent scholarship regarding the lack of reporting on rural schooling within the historiography of American education also applies to the Canadian context.¹

¹ Tracy L. Steffes, "Solving the 'Rural School Problem:' New State Aid, Standards, and Supervision of Local Schools 1900-1933," in *History of Education Quarterly* Vol. 48, No 2 (May, 2008): 181-220.

Despite the fact a majority of students in Canada attended rural schools in the early twentieth century, historians of education have paid scant attention to the uniqueness of that experience relative to urban students.

One historian who does address American influences in Canadian education is Allison Prentice, who confirms that the evolution of Canadian education cannot be explained in isolation from related developments in the southern republic. She traces the evolution of American education from the colonial period through to the advent of Dewey-style education reform in the mid twentieth century. At the outset she clearly warns, “there is no such thing as an ‘American system of education.’”² Once completed, however, the reader cannot help but wonder if she sees a Canadian system of education either? Despite arguing that Canadian education cannot be explained without reference to the American model, Prentice does conclude that the history of Canadian education is different from the American because Canadian development occurred later and evolved more slowly. Prentice argues: “When the English did come in numbers to Canada, they were often the products not of a quest for a revolutionary new society, but of a counter-revolutionary preference for traditional patterns.”³

² Alison Prentice, “The American Example,” in *Canadian Education: A History*, ed. J. Donald Wilson, Robert M. Stamp, and Louis-Philippe Audet (Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1970), 41-68.

³ Prentice, 66. At the close of her chapter Prentice invokes this decidedly political cultural argument in articulating what differentiates Canadian education from American forms. Such an argument emanates from the distinguished American political scientist, Seymour Martin Lipset, who studied the political culture of Saskatchewan while completing doctoral work at Columbia University in the late 1940’s, and later pursued a comparative approach in his study of the Canadian and American political cultures throughout his academic career. Prentice’s argument relies upon Lipset’s later work which emphasizes the inherent contrasts between Canadian and American political cultures. This was quite at odds with his initial study of political culture in Saskatchewan which he viewed as very similar to US Midwestern and Great Plains political orientations. Employing political culture as a backdrop to educational development, as

The one history of Canadian education that best captures the inherent tension between traditional patterns of schooling that emerge in Canada's East and the pluralistic responses to diverse populations in Canada's West, both within the practice of education and within its historiography, is George S. Tomkins', *A Common Countenance*.⁴ In regard to its focus on curriculum, its national scope, and the minute details the author attempts to unite into a single whole, one cannot help but think of Tomkins's book as a hybrid of Herbert Kliebard's, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum*, and Lawrence Cremin's, *The Transformation of the School*.⁵ Tomkins acknowledges the difficulty associated with finding a truly national curriculum given the regional distinctiveness of the Canadian polity and the fact K-12 education exists entirely under provincial jurisdiction. Canadian cultural survival, which Tomkins suggests began in the

Prentice does in her chapter, becomes a linchpin for my own argument in subsequent chapters. If the historian interprets Saskatchewan political culture to be different from the American, then one expects divergent patterns of education to develop. If, instead, one finds evidence that Saskatchewan political culture is closely akin to American forms, particularly those originating in the American Midwest and Plains, then one can expect the development of K-12 schooling in Saskatchewan to parallel developments on the American Great Plains. This history deploys the latter interpretation. Lipset's first book was the culmination of his doctoral dissertation and 50 years later remains the quintessential examination of Saskatchewan's political culture. See Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism: The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan (A Study in Political Sociology)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971). His later work includes "Revolution and Counterrevolution: The United States and Canada," in *Revolution and Counterrevolution* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1968). Lipset extends this argument still further in *Continental Divide: The Values of the United States and Canada* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

⁴ George S. Tomkins, *A Common Countenance: Stability and Change in the Canadian Curriculum* (Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1986).

⁵ Herbert M. Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum, 1893-1958* (New York: Routledge, 1995), Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964). Despite the fact Kliebard disagrees with Cremin as to whether there ever was a unified movement of reform known as *progressivism*, both authors will figure prominently in my discussion of American-style school reform between 1905 and 1930.

mid-nineteenth century, even before Confederation, led to a retention of group characteristics as they were expressed in social, ethnic, linguistic, and religious forms of cultural identity. Tomkins asserts: "For the dominant Anglo-Celtic majority, survival meant socialization to Protestant Christian and British patriotic norms, and resistance to external, mainly American, cultural hegemony; secondarily it meant resistance to the claims of the various minorities, especially the francophone minority within the Canadian 'mosaic.'"⁶

While Tomkins' argument holds true for the province of Ontario and its Maritime neighbors prior to Confederation, his Anglo-Celtic majority never emerged in Saskatchewan after 1905. His centralist interpretation therefore falters, I will argue, in the face of a pluralistic interpretation that acknowledges the affinity between prairie Canadian pioneers and their American Plains cousins.

Despite Tomkins' nationalistic and centralist perspective, he provides much evidence throughout his work indicating the existence of, and at times preference for, American influences on the Canadian curriculum. Specifically, he notes Robert S. Patterson's argument in regard to the influence of American-style progressivism in the province of Alberta in the interwar years, and the concomitant impact this had on the province of Saskatchewan. Furthermore, Tomkins asserts that the 1918 *Foght Survey* of Saskatchewan K-12 public schooling signaled a preference for American models of education reform, particularly among western Canadian provinces. He also chronicles concerns over American textbooks north of the border, the Americanization of Canadian educational leadership, the propensity for Canadian educators to study in American universities, particularly at Teacher's College, Columbia University, and generally provides detailed accounts of a host of American theory and practice adapted to meet the needs of Canadian schools and schools systems.

⁶ Tomkins, 2.

Despite these obvious American contributions to Canadian education, Tomkins still sees a “common countenance” throughout the Canadian curriculum.

Other Canadian historians of education support the centralist perspective of Prentice and Tomkins. Neil Sutherland sees English Canadian schools as inculcating a more traditional, patriotic, and imperial spirit into the nation’s students.⁷ Unlike Prentice, however, there is little acknowledgement of the debt owed to American education in this “new” reform movement. Furthermore, he concludes that in the 1920’s, [m]uch of the change in the educational system had come from within.” These changes occurred in response to rapid industrialization and modernization, but in Sutherland’s mind, were in no way beholden to related reforms outside Canada.

A similarly centralist perspective is maintained by Walter C. Murray – the first President of the University of Saskatchewan.⁸ His “History of Education in Saskatchewan” appeared in 1914 with the province and its public education system in its infancy. Murray examined the material conditions of the province’s schools and found several signs of progress and indicators of efficiency, including increased school expenditures, longer school years, standardized courses of study, rising totals of school-age pupils, a growing number of satisfactory school wells, etc. Furthermore, he expressed concern around the province’s inability to produce enough qualified teachers to teach in the schools, but lauded the efforts of those trained outside the province who came to Saskatchewan to help Canadianize the incoming masses of immigrant students. In the midst of his essay Murray boasts that the province’s educational ideals were largely Canadian and particularly Ontarian.

⁷ Neil Sutherland, “The ‘New’ Education in Anglophone Canada: ‘Modernization’ Transforms the Curriculum,” in *The Curriculum in Canada in Historical Perspective*, CSSE Yearbook, 1979: 49-59. The majority of these reformers existed outside education and the schools.

⁸ Walter C. Murray, “History of Education in Saskatchewan,” in *Canada and Its Provinces*, ed. Adam Shortt and Arthur G. Doughty (Toronto: Glasgow, Brook & Company, 1914), 462.

Long time educational historian from the University of Saskatchewan, John Lyons, agrees.⁹ Lyons identifies the territorial school system before the creation of Saskatchewan in 1905 as one dominated by David J. Goggin, a disciple of Egerton Ryerson in Ontario (Ryerson is universally viewed as the Horace Mann of Ontario schools in the mid nineteenth century). By the time of the *Foght Survey* in 1918, Lyons writes, a potential new influence appeared on the horizon of the province's educational landscape.

Some of Saskatchewan's educational leaders wanted the province's school system to adopt progressive education which was then popular among American educators. The progressives promoted child-centered schooling in a co-operative, supportive classroom environment using curricula geared to the learner's interests and maturational level. John Dewey, the American philosopher whom many looked upon as the leading figure in this movement, advocated abolishing many of the traditional practices such as drill, competition, corporal punishment, and compulsory courses. ...While by the late 1920's some Saskatchewan educators were expressing interest in the more successful progressive experiments such as the individual learning approaches of the Dalton and Winnetka plans, most people were not ready for such ideas. The province's leaders in the post-war period had grown to adulthood within the British Empire, held traditional views, and were unwilling to look to the Americans for direction.¹⁰

Lyons goes on to suggest that although Saskatchewan successfully experimented with various forms of cooperative grain marketing and reform-minded political movements for some time, such reform did not spill over into the field of education.

Robert S. Patterson, perhaps the most devoted historian of education on the Canadian prairies, and certainly the one historian who most acknowledges the influence of American progressivism on Western Canadian education, disagrees with Prentice, Tomkins, and Lyons. Patterson examines the evolution

⁹ John Lyons, "Professional Decision Making and Educational Reform: The Saskatchewan Tradition," in *So Much for the Mind*, ed. Don Cochrane (Toronto: Kagan and Woo, 1987): 16-36.

¹⁰ Lyons, 23.

of education in English Canada between the World Wars in “Society and Education During the Wars and Their Interlude: 1914-1945.”¹¹ Patterson pursued his graduate work at Michigan State University and returned to Alberta as a faculty member in the College of Education, University of Alberta, and argues that Ontario played a particularly influential role in the early stages of education in the Canadian northwest (what would become the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan) before 1905. “But just as the West turned away from the East in political and economic affairs, it did so in education as well.”¹² He goes on to suggest that Alberta led the way among Canadian provinces in adopting American progressivism, particularly in the realm of curricular reform, with Saskatchewan following suit shortly after. Patterson also posits that the “rural school problem,” despite its challenges—challenges that led to the Foght *Survey* in Saskatchewan—also brought benefit to the western provinces, largely because it focused attention on education reform which, Patterson believes, led to a greater acceptance of progressive education in the West. Though an interesting proposition, Patterson fails to follow this line of reasoning to clearly establish how the rural problem led to greater levels of progressive reform among prairie schools.

Patterson later wrote an essay on the affect of American-style progressivism on the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Entitled, “Progressive Education: Impetus to Educational Change in Alberta and Saskatchewan,” it was a historical repudiation of Hilda Neatby’s condemnation of progressive education in Canada, *So Little for the Mind*, first published in 1953.¹³ Patterson identifies a myriad of American practices to appear within the

¹¹ Robert S. Patterson, “Society and Education During the Wars and Their Interlude: 1914-1945,” in *Canadian Education: A History*, 360-382.

¹² Patterson, 374.

¹³ Robert S. Patterson, “Progressive Education: Impetus to Educational Change in Alberta and Saskatchewan,” in *Education in Canada: An Interpretation*, ed. E. Brian Titley and Peter J. Miller (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1982): 169-196. At the

two westernmost prairie provinces. He concludes, in sharp contrast to Lyons, that the 1918 Foght *Survey* established a trend on the Canadian prairies:

The action taken by the Martin Government [calling for the Foght *Survey*] is part of a trend that became increasingly apparent in both Alberta and Saskatchewan in the ensuing years in educational matters. First, there was the matter of seeking expertise and reform ideas in the United States. Second, was the belief that solutions developed in a foreign context could be applied, generally with modest modifications to a Canadian situation that appears to bear considerable resemblance to the American problems that stimulated the development of the new ideas.¹⁴

Patterson supports such an assertion by highlighting, for example, two appropriations of American practice by Saskatoon educators. The first included the adoption of the Winnetka Plan by elementary school teachers within the Saskatoon Public School Division following their sociological tour to Winnetka, Illinois, in the summer of 1929. The Plan was first created by Dr. Carleton Washburne while working at Dewey's Laboratory School, University of Chicago. The second included the promotion of the "mental hygiene movement" by U of S Professor of Education Psychology, Dr. S. R. Laycock. Laycock's studies were made possible through a grant provided by the Laura Speelman Rockefeller Foundation to the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene.¹⁵ This grant from an American philanthropic organization, along with others to the University of Saskatchewan from American sources, is but one hint of the extent of American influence over the province's only university.

Despite the fact there is little in the historiography to confirm Patterson's arguments in regard to American contributions to prairie Canadian education,

time of Neatby's book she was the sole female member of the Massey Commission, a federal commission established in 1950 to examine the status of Canadian culture. Neatby was to become Head of the Department of History, University of Saskatchewan, in 1958.

¹⁴ Patterson, 172.

¹⁵ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report of the Department of Education of the Province of Saskatchewan, 1929*, 115. Reliance on grants from American philanthropic organizations will become obvious in Chapter Four.

there is significant primary source material. As mentioned, in 1916 the Department of Education in the Government of Saskatchewan petitioned a survey of the province's educational system and sought the advice of an American expert on rural education from the Bureau of Education, Washington D.C. Harold Foght's, *Survey of Education in the Province of Saskatchewan*, published in 1918, introduced a wide array of American-style reform to the province's school system.¹⁶ Most noteworthy among Foght's myriad recommendations was his invocation of a consolidated system of school districts, largely patterned after similar efforts in the states of North Dakota and Minnesota. Similarly, Foght argued that the province's schools needed to pursue a more vocational focus on behalf of students, particularly among the largely rural population of the province. Reforming the province's schools along the lines followed in rural America, thought Foght, would make Saskatchewan education more efficient. Though the *Survey* itself marked a high water mark for American involvement and influence in Saskatchewan education, not all of Foght's recommendations were adopted. School consolidation would not occur for another quarter century. Most other recommendations were heartily accepted by policymakers within the province. Much like American attempts at implementing progressive practices in the classroom, however, true reform in the classroom was elusive.¹⁷

What is perhaps most interesting about Foght's *Survey*, apart from its staunchly efficient approach to education reform, is the American author's characterization of the people of Saskatchewan—a description contrary to Walter Murray's centralist, traditional viewpoint.

¹⁶ Harold W. Foght, *A Survey of Education in the Province of Saskatchewan, Canada* (Regina: Saskatchewan Department of Education, 1918).

¹⁷ For excellent discussions of the problems associated with implementing progressive reforms within American classrooms see Larry Cuban, *How Teachers Taught: Constancy and Change in American Classrooms, 1880-1990* (New York: Teacher's College Press, 1993), and Arthur Zilverschmit, *Changing Schools: Progressive Education Theory and Practice, 1930-1960* (Chicago, U of C. Press, 1993).

Saskatchewan, in common with the other prairie provinces of Canada, is dominated by people of progressive type—forward looking people, who have shown a striking determination to escape the hindering influence of back-eastern conservatism by taking action before their educational institutions shall become afflicted with inertness; resulting in failure to respond to the changing life of their democratic civilization.¹⁸

Inherent within these conflicting perspectives exists the dichotomy that characterizes the historiography of K-12 education within the province of Saskatchewan. There are those, like Murray, who favor a centralist, Canadianized examination of the history of education: one that sees unity in approach, its foundation emanating from Canada's East. Others, like Foght and Patterson, see such a look eastward as regression, a step backward. If one looks south instead, one finds progress and innovation.¹⁹ Though the centralist perspective pervades the field within which the few histories of Saskatchewan education are written, I reject it in favor of a strictly provincial account, but one that witnesses school reform within the larger context of cultural transfer across the North American plains.

In 1985, Nancy Sheehan bemoaned the fact that Canadian historians have shown little interest in the history of Canadian universities.²⁰ Little has changed since then. Robin S. Harris had written an encyclopedic history of Canadian higher education in 1976, but in an effort to survey the entire breadth of higher education from 1663-1960, Harris attempts to mention as many themes as

¹⁸ Foght, 5.

¹⁹ A Canadian historian of higher education, Peter N. Ross, captured this best when he suggests that "we Canadians have historically remained ambivalent about our neighbors to the south; we regard American innovation as worthy of imitation yet fear the anticipated effects of American vigor." See Peter N. Ross, "The Establishment of the Ph.D. at Toronto: A Case of American Influence," in *History of Education Quarterly*, (Fall 1972), 359-360. It is interesting to note, however, that as a historian of K-12 education Murray welcomed a "nationalist" perspective. As a practitioner of higher education he abandoned eastern models in favor of those from the American Midwest.

²⁰ Nancy Sheehan, "A History of Higher Education in Canada," in *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Winter, 1985), 25-38.

possible while providing detail on none.²¹ In relation to universities in the West he does concede that an attempt was made to avoid the competition among institutions that plagued universities back East, and that at Saskatchewan the Board of Governors followed an American approach to agricultural education, rather than an Eastern approach like that of Ontario. Similarly, in regard to American philanthropic organizations Harris does chronicle the grants to individual universities and their size, yet makes no effort to critically discuss their influence on higher education in Canada.

While the study of higher education historically receives limited attention in Canada, there is one recent exception. Jeffrey D. Brison's, *Rockefeller, Carnegie, & Canada: American Philanthropy and the Arts & Letters in Canada*, is the only history that examines the American foundation to Canadian higher education.²² Brison views the exportation of American philanthropy to Canadian higher education as establishing a national agenda for reform in conjunction with, or occasionally as a substitute for, the role of the Canadian federal government. As such, American philanthropy attempted to reproduce American-style universities north of the border through the creation of a continental system of higher education in the 1920's.

Personal, professional, familiar, and academic ties between the leaders of the foundations and the emerging secular network of reform-minded urban intellectuals in Canada made the border between Canada and the United States, if not invisible, at least extremely permeable. Overwhelmingly sure of the correctness of their ideology, their duty to lead, and the need to integrate Canada into a North American mainstream, trust leaders extended programs into Canada. ... Canadian educational administration eagerly accepted outside help.²³

²¹ Robin S. Harris, *A History of Higher Education in Canada, 1663-1960* (Toronto: U of T Press), 1976.

²² Jeffrey D. Brison, *Rockefeller, Carnegie, & Canada: American Philanthropy and the Arts & Letters in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005).

²³ Brison, 45.

Most noteworthy was the attempt by Carnegie to support a “Scotian Harvard” at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia, around the turn of the century. Interestingly, Dalhousie was the initial academic home of the University of Saskatchewan’s first President, Walter C. Murray.

Brison asserts that through selective and preferential granting to some Canadian universities, American philanthropy helped to create a system of institutional winners and losers that mirrored the environment in the United States. Although the University of Saskatchewan did receive small amounts of funding from American philanthropy, it was the obvious institutional loser among Western Canadian campuses, as Rockefeller and Carnegie tended to support larger campuses in larger urban centers, like the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, the University of Alberta in Edmonton, and the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. This was particularly true with the funding of medical schools in the 1920’s.²⁴ Despite its second tier status among universities in the West—or perhaps because of it—President Walter Murray pursued American support for his University with great vivacity. This is made obvious in a host of institutional histories of the University of Saskatchewan and in biographies of its first President.

What all histories of the University of Saskatchewan share is the dominating role played by the university’s first President, Walter Murray. Much like his American counterparts, such as Eliot at Harvard or Van Hise at Wisconsin, Murray came to personify “his” university and for decades dictated the path it would take in serving the entire province of Saskatchewan.

All the histories of the University of Saskatchewan and the biographies of President Walter Murray largely support one another. Each author will have relied on the large collection of Walter Murray’s personal and Presidential Papers housed at the University Archives in Saskatoon. Although none of the authors emphasize the role played by American institutions in the formulation of

²⁴ Brison, 59.

the Saskatchewan campus, they do acknowledge that a great deal of effort was devoted to replicating the American university's architectural design, administrative structure, and course of study. The most comprehensive book to chronicle the history of the University of Saskatchewan is Michael Hayden's, *Seeking a Balance: The University of Saskatchewan, 1907-1982*.²⁵ Much of Hayden's contribution stems from his examination of correspondence between Murray and the then President of the University of Toronto, Robert Falconer. Murray wrote to Falconer of the prime example he found for the kind of university he wished to create on the banks of the South Saskatchewan River while on a fact finding mission to the northern United States in 1907. In Madison, Wisconsin, Murray found his prototype in the University of Wisconsin. What Lawrence Veysey describes as the "Wisconsin Idea" would take shape under Murray's leadership shortly after.²⁶

Arthur S. Morton, himself a University of Saskatchewan Professor of History at the time of his book, *Saskatchewan: The Making of a University*, credits Murray with recognizing that an American example of higher education would best meet the educational needs of the people of Saskatchewan.²⁷ In the US, suggests Morton, Murray expected to find colleges and universities that suffered from similar problems to the embryonic University of Saskatchewan. At Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, for example, the Saskatchewan Board of Governors found their architectural design, the Collegiate Gothic. More than just adopting the form of the American university, however, Murray and

²⁵ Michael Hayden, *Seeking a Balance: The University of Saskatchewan, 1907-1982* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983). Hayden was a Professor of History at the University of Saskatchewan.

²⁶ Lawrence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

²⁷ Arthur S. Morton, Carlyle King, *Saskatchewan: The Making of a University* (Toronto: University of Saskatchewan Press, 1959). Morton died before publishing his book. Carlyle King, another U of S faculty member, completed and edited the final product.

the Board of Governors also adopted its function. The University of Saskatchewan was to be a service university that would reach to every corner of the province. The rapid expansion of extension programs, particularly as they related to the fields of agriculture and education, were an indication of the evolution of the U of S towards what Clark Kerr identifies as the “multiversity.”²⁸

In a similar vein Carlyle King follows the development of the academic program at the University of Saskatchewan in his work, *Extending the Boundaries: Scholarship and Research at the University of Saskatchewan, 1909-1966*.²⁹ What King’s work clearly reveals is the extent to which new colleges and/or departments of study developed at the U of S in a manner identical to those in American universities. As the American service university, professional colleges, and the Wisconsin Idea took shape on American campuses throughout the early twentieth century, so too did these develop in Saskatoon.³⁰

Walter Murray’s biography, *The Prairie Builder: Walter Murray of Saskatchewan*, provides evidence of the President’s beliefs and actions within the context of what Clyde Barrow describes as the “corporate ideal.”³¹ Within this context Murray’s stature at the head of a corporate-like structure was closely akin to that of Van Hise at Wisconsin or Hill of Missouri to the extent that he personified the university he headed. In a time of giants, Murray was the giant at

²⁸ Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University*, 5th ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

²⁹ Carlyle King, *Extending the Boundaries: Scholarship and Research at the University of Saskatchewan, 1909-1966* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 1967).

³⁰ For an examination of these developments in the American context see, Arthur O. Levine, *The American College and the Culture of Aspiration, 1915-1940* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987) and Kerr.

³¹ David R. Murray and Robert A. Murray, *The Prairie Builder: Walter Murray of Saskatchewan* (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1984). Despite their identical last name the authors are not related to President Murray. See Clyde Barrow, *Universities and The Capitalist State: Corporate Liberalism and the Reconstruction of American Higher Education* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990).

Saskatchewan.³² As such Murray was seldom questioned from within the University or outside it. On the one occasion he was challenged, sometimes referred to as the “crisis of loyalty” of 1919, Murray responded in suitable corporate-like manner, summarily dismissing the four faculty “employees” who opposed him. As a further example of corporate influence Murray was a frequent applicant for Carnegie Foundation financial support. Murray viewed participation under the Carnegie umbrella as indication that his university had joined the ranks of the great North American universities. He served as Vice-Chairman and Chairman of the Carnegie Foundation Board on separate occasions in the 1920’s and 1930’s.³³ Murray was the quintessential “Carnegie man” at the U of S.

A review of Walter Murray’s personal papers reveals an untold story about the decision to locate the College of Agriculture on the same campus as the University of Saskatchewan. Harris’s *History of Canadian Higher Education* mentions the outcome of the deliberations in passing, but the substance of the decision is most telling because the advice Murray accepted created the blueprint for his university. Among Murray’s first actions as the newly appointed President of Saskatchewan was to solicit advice for where the newly created University should be located, and the location of its agricultural research station in relation to the campus. The responses Murray received from his American counterparts, which included President Hill of Missouri, Chancellor Houston of Washington University, and Pritchett of Carnegie, in addition to the information gleaned from his sociological tour to the major state Universities in the American Midwest, unanimously favored a unified campus which included Agriculture. This and a host of other advice Murray received from American university presidents formed the foundation for the form and function of the U of S through Murray’s tenure and beyond. The one piece of advice he rejected emanated from

³² See Kerr, 22-33.

³³ Murray and Murray, 191.

President G. C. Creelman of Guelph University, located in the province of Ontario, who suggested that, as was the custom in Ontario, the agricultural station be removed from the campus.³⁴ In accepting the advice of his American colleagues while rejecting that of his Eastern compatriot, Murray rejected an Eastern Canadian model in favor of an American approach to higher education in the agricultural heartland of the continent.

III A Note on Sources

Although much of what follows in this dissertation is a re-descriptive history relying on existing secondary sources to re-create a narrative different from those few already written, there are a number of primary source materials that contribute a substantial portion to the manuscript.³⁵ In the realm of K-12 education I rely heavily on *Annual Reports* to the Minister of Education for the Government of Saskatchewan. Each year, beginning in 1906, the various inspectors of Saskatchewan school divisions (the equivalent to the superintendent in American districts) made detailed reports of activities within their school divisions to the provincial Minister of Education. In addition, the principals of the provincial Normal Schools and an increasing number of educational specialists, in areas like vocational education and household science, for example, made similar reports. These reports I treat within the spirit of what Sol Cohen describes as the language of discourse, whereby a change in education

³⁴ Creelman did not state why he believed this should occur.

³⁵ William H. Sewell Jr. describes such a re-description as a “synthetic essay” in that it emerges from a drawing together from existing studies, often in ways quite different from the intentions of the original author, to form a new interpretation. See Sewell, *Work and Revolution in France: The language of labor from the old regime to 1848* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

can be marked through changes in the system of language.³⁶ Between 1905 and 1930 Saskatchewan K-12 educational policymakers were speaking an American language of educational reform that mirrored that of their American cousins, particularly as it related to the *problem* of rural education on the continental Great Plains. These *Annual Reports* are housed in the Government Documents section at the University of Saskatchewan's Murray Library.

The College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan also houses a historic textbook collection which includes most of the K-12 school textbooks mandated for use in the province from its creation in 1905, in addition to a number of other textbooks readily available to Saskatchewan teachers. Similarly, the Education Library also contains many of the volumes identified on the Saskatchewan Normal School's reading list for teachers pursuing certification. In both cases, Saskatchewan students and teaching staff alike were exposed to American reform through American authors.

Finally, as mentioned above, the personal and Presidential Papers of Walter C. Murray are housed in the U of S archives. While numerous historians have accessed these papers to produce general histories of the University and its President, alternate readings will often produce a plurality of interpretations. When judged through a continental lens similar to that used by Brison in his history of American philanthropy in Canadian higher education, the re-description that results will hopefully prove of value among those interested in the US foundations to Saskatchewan's system of schooling.

³⁶ Sol Cohen, "Language and History: A Perspective on School Reform Movements and Change in Education," in *Challenging Orthodoxies: Toward a New Cultural History of Education* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 89.

IV *Organization and Scope of this History*

In Chapter Two I attempt to identify the extent to which American culture, especially various aspects of culture as it developed among the Midwestern and Plains states of the United States, influenced the culture of Saskatchewan from 1905 until about 1937. The starting and end points are important signposts since these reveal a story in themselves. I begin at 1905 because this is when the province of Saskatchewan came to exist. Prior to 1905, it and the province of Alberta were part of the Northwest Territories and as such were, for all intents and purposes, territorial wards of the central government in Ottawa. The territory had little law making ability unto itself, and in those areas where it did, the laws were largely replicas of eastern provinces, particularly Ontario. Once these territories achieved provincial status they became responsible for making laws in those areas designated as part of provincial jurisdiction as articulated in Section 92 of the *British North America Act, 1867*. Foremost among these was the area of education. Beginning in 1905, the province of Saskatchewan begins to chart its own path—one which I argue diverges from that of Ontario and converges on a path similar to American models.

In Chapters Two and Three the year 1930 serves as a somewhat arbitrary endpoint, although 1930 signals the beginning of a decade-long drought in the province of Saskatchewan, coupled with an economic depression that would change life on the prairies in significant ways for decades. Beginning in 1930, economic and environmental necessity dictated policy much more so than cultural affinity. Since political culture is the lens through which I want to view education policy, by ending my history at 1930 I reduce the number of variables impacting it. In Chapter Four I cease my history at 1937—the year in which the first President of the University of Saskatchewan, Walter C. Murray, retires. With the retirement of Murray a host of American influences cease, foremost among them, the pursuit of Carnegie Foundation support for the U of S. At both the

level of K-12 education and higher education, I believe the period from 1905 until around 1930 clearly demarcates the foundations for the province's system of schooling, and as such delineate the greatest level of American influence.

In Chapter Two my argument focuses on a broad transfer of American culture to the province of Saskatchewan. Traditional histories of Saskatchewan tend to view the province's development as a continuation of eastern models, especially from Ontario, and as such view the province of Saskatchewan as part of a monolithic, Anglophone political culture whose roots are largely British and eastern Canadian. In resistance to such histories, I attempt to change the direction of Saskatchewan history by focusing instead on a north-south relationship between the province of Saskatchewan, on the one hand, and Midwestern and Great Plains American states on the other. I establish several avenues along which this culture traveled northward, including: the immigration of people from the US to Saskatchewan, especially from states that Daniel J. Elazar identifies as comprising a *moralistic* political culture; the introduction of member organizations into Saskatchewan that are subsidiaries to American parent organizations, like the *Grange*; the flow of publications to Saskatchewan from the United States; the sociological tour where Saskatchewanians travel south to learn about American practice; advanced education in the US; and visitations from American experts to Saskatchewan. Various forms of popular culture also traveled to Saskatchewan. Finally, I articulate the extent to which the province of Saskatchewan was itself an extension of the American frontier, its topography and frontier farming methods identical on both sides of the international border. Similarly, Canada's West adopted meanings and symbols for progress, western settlement, and the West's relationship with the East, that are indistinguishable from those of their American cousins. Saskatchewan, part of the "last best west," was a part of a continental West that was much more American than Canadian historians have heretofore written.

Chapter Three extends the above arguments into the history of Saskatchewan Kindergarten through Grade 12 public education. Developments in Saskatchewan K-12 education paralleled those in the American milieu, usually following a 10-20 year lag. Saskatchewan experienced American educational influences in several ways, including: the existence of American trained teachers in Saskatchewan classrooms; teachers trained in Saskatchewan Normal Schools were trained in American models of instruction; those responsible for training teachers in the province of Saskatchewan often pursued advanced education on specific American campuses; Saskatchewan teachers took frequent sociological tours to retrieve American solutions for Saskatchewan educational problems; and the prevalence of American school textbooks in the hands of Saskatchewan students.

One of the most noteworthy events that signaled an openness to American models of school reform was the invitation of Harold W. Foght, an American expert on rural schooling from Washington D.C., to survey the province's schools and make recommendations. The results of his *Survey*, published in 1918, ushered in a period of education reform into Saskatchewan that Herbert Kliebard identifies as *social efficiency*. The failure of the province to act on Foght's recommendations for rural school consolidation I treat as evidence of a much deeper reception of American political culture into Saskatchewan—one that favors local democratic control over local institutions as opposed to centralized and bureaucratized control over local affairs.

Chapter Four examines American influences on the province of Saskatchewan's sole university between the years 1907 and 1937, the period encompassing the tenure of the U of S' first President, Walter C. Murray. While I might have included in to Chapter Four my discussion from the previous chapter around American influences on Normal School curricula and textbooks, and the Normal School instructors' propensity to take advanced education in the United States, I chose instead to focus my argument entirely on the University. The

argument in this chapter is rather straightforward, since the U of S developed as a virtual replica of the University of Wisconsin—a state university whose purpose was to serve the entire state. During Murray’s southern tour of American campuses he and two members of the Board of Governors found their prototype in Madison. The University of Saskatchewan copied the Collegiate Gothic architecture found at Washington University in St. Louis, mirrored the American university’s academic program, and reproduced a corporate-like structure through Murray’s protracted attempts to secure financial support from the Carnegie Foundation. Similarly, Murray depended on American-born or trained faculty to fill a high percentage of positions in his university, and treated his faculty in a manner similar to his American colleagues--as dutiful employees. To put it another way, between 1907 and 1937 the University of Saskatchewan persistently emulated the culture of the American state university.

I conclude my history in Chapter Five with a concise assessment of how these American foundational roots to both K-12 and higher education have served the province of Saskatchewan, and how evidence of those roots persist today, some 100 years following the creation of the province of Saskatchewan in 1905. I also examine what were some of my greatest challenges, both intellectual and methodological, throughout the course of my dissertation, and also propose future pathways of research and writing.

Chapter Two American Cultural Transfer to Saskatchewan: Changing Directions in Provincial Historiography

I *Introduction*

Typical studies of Canadian culture and history examine the progress of Canada in an east-to-west direction, or as a series of movements running parallel to but seldom crossing the border that separates the United States from Canada. What I propose to argue in the following chapter is that the evolution of the province of Saskatchewan between the years 1905 and 1937 can be viewed in a way entirely different from histories that follow a traditional latitudinal perspective. If the historian chooses to view the progress of Prairie Canadian society and culture along lines that travel in a north-south path from the American Midwest and Plains into the province of Saskatchewan, the history that emerges is quite different. Indeed, a handful of writers, both American and Canadian, assumed such a perspective in the first half of the twentieth century. When viewed in such a way the passage of American culture to Saskatchewan resembles a spring breeze emanating from the south, bringing with it a wide variety of cultural flora and fauna, transplanted in a *virgin soil* ripe for any seed that might flourish there.¹ That the seeds of American culture were so easily adapted to the stark physiographic reality of the Canadian prairie is a reflection that these original seeds were themselves sewn in an environment equally isolated, dry, and forbidding as the garden into which they are transferred. Though similar winds blew from Canada's East, the accompanying cultural strains encountered resistant soil and robust American hybrids far more fruitful

¹ In making such a statement I by no means want to suggest that the pre-existing aboriginal cultures or the Metis culture in Saskatchewan were irrelevant and unworthy of replication by settlers to the region. Unfortunately they were destined for removal from mainstream society through a variety of mechanisms largely initiated by the federal government and supported by the various provincial governments and non-aboriginal society generally.

than anything coming from the older provinces. Indeed, for many a Saskatchewan farmer, there was only wind and little else coming from Canada's East.

In describing Saskatchewan as "virgin soil" I do so in two distinct but related ways. In a literal sense, the soil of the province in 1905 was largely unbroken and unsettled. In this regard Saskatchewan and its neighboring province to the west, Alberta, were described as the "Last Best West" once free land on the US frontier disappeared. Saskatchewan was on the *frontier* of Canadian settlement and its economic and social development in 1905. In a figurative sense Saskatchewan, though a new province in the Dominion of Canada, was a territory largely devoid of definitive culture, Canadian or otherwise, apart from the scattered First Nations and Métis cultures already there. The province's institutions were certainly British and Canadian, its official language English, and its citizens subject to the laws of the land established in Ottawa and the provincial capital in Regina. Yet the meaning and practice of life in the province of Saskatchewan in 1905 awaited cultural imprint. American culture, therefore, vied with Eastern Canadian and British culture for influence within Saskatchewan society. Combined with these was a distinctive Northern European cultural strain which also played a role in the political and economic life of the province in the early decades of the twentieth century. Many Scandinavian settlers to Canada's West made their way there first through the American Midwestern states. This hybridization of American and Scandinavian political and economic sensibilities left a lasting legacy in the province of Saskatchewan.

This was in sharp contrast to the province of Ontario whose cultural imprint was British from its outset. Loyalist migration from the American states following the Revolutionary War in 1776 simply confirmed the British character of Ontario. Unlike the resistance to American culture displayed by the province of Ontario and Eastern Canada generally, American cultural influences in

Saskatchewan following 1905 were both welcome and necessary given the challenges of life on the North American Great Plains. Few Canadian historians, and even fewer historians of Saskatchewan education, have told the story of American stimulus in the history of Saskatchewan.

When writing of culture I rely on the work of William H. Sewell Jr. who conceives of culture as *meaning* and *practice*, particularly reflected through the process of *language*. Sewell's notion of culture provides a broad conceptual framework around a very complex term. His work helps me understand what culture, broadly conceived, is. When thinking of political culture I invoke Daniel Elazar's work around American political culture. Elazar is useful for understanding the specific meaning, practice, and language of the *moralistic* political subculture that prevails in the Midwestern and Plains states of the United States—the area from which the vast majority of immigrants to the Canadian prairies emanated. In this regard I work these two conceptions of culture, one more general, the other political, in a complimentary manner.

In this chapter I focus on how American culture moved northward into the province of Saskatchewan and why American culture, particularly Midwestern and Plains moralistic political culture, was so readily received north of the forty-ninth parallel. Given that Saskatchewan society was almost completely rural and agrarian in nature, especially between 1905 and 1937, I particularly concern myself with agrarian movements and the political movements that accompanied them. I also mention some aspects of American popular culture. From this discussion I suggest that the meaning of democratic government, the meaning of the East and its relationship to both the American Midwestern and Plains states and Canadian Prairie, and indeed the meaning of the land itself, were very similar within these two continental polities. In so doing I do not mean to suggest that American culture dominated western Canadian culture. I do, however, want to examine the extent to which American culture influenced Saskatchewan culture. In the process I seek to challenge

“standard” histories of the Canadian prairies that suggest the West was simply a replica of Canada’s East, or that prairie culture was opposed to American culture and little more than a combination of Ontario and British influences. Saskatchewan welcomed American culture within its borders for a host of reasons.

Prairie Canadian agricultural practices copied those of their American cousins, largely because dryland farming first originated on the Great Plains of the United States. Canadians reproduced American images of the frontier in their efforts to encourage settlers to the West, especially American settlers well versed in dryland farming techniques who, it was believed, could most readily adapt to the harsh realities of the Canadian prairie. Finally, there quickly evolved linguistic similarities among the Progressive and Populist movements on both sides of the Canada-US border. Through a re-interpretation of historical artifacts I hope to reveal the cultural affinity that spanned the forty-ninth parallel, encompassing a large portion of the continental Great Plains including the province of Saskatchewan. This will lead to my discussion of the meaning, practice, and language of Saskatchewan K-12 education policy in Chapter Three and a parallel discussion of higher education in Chapter Four.

Before I begin my argument, however, I provide demographic information for the province of Saskatchewan which reinforces the rural context in which education development proceeds, and also the ethnic makeup of the province’s population for the timeframe of this history. Ultimately, the demographics depict that the Anglo-Celtic majority—so central to Tomkins’ argument in favor a common face in English Canadian education—never existed in the province of Saskatchewan.

II Demographic Context for the People of Saskatchewan, 1906-1931

One of the basic premises in the history that follows is that Saskatchewan, much like the US Great Plains states, maintains a largely rural population from the time of its creation in 1905 well into the middle of the twentieth century. Rural citizens, educational policy makers will argue, have different educational needs from their urban neighbors, yet attend schools and study curricula largely designed for urban students. This necessitates the creation of a system of education that is more responsive to the needs of those who reside in the country. What will come to be described as the “rural school problem” in rural United States and Saskatchewan by commentators like Harold Foght is reflected in the demographic makeup of the province at the time of his *Survey* in 1916. Similarly, the decision to create a university, which has at its center a College of Agriculture, is also a reflection of the rural makeup of the province. Table 2.1 below articulates the urban/rural split in population for the province of Saskatchewan from 1901-1931.

Table 2.1: Urban/Rural Population Split in Saskatchewan, 1901-1931.²

Year	Total Pop	Urban	Rural	% Urban	% Rural
1901	91,279	14,266	77,013	16	84
1906	257,763	48,462	209,310	16	84
1911	492,432	131,395	361,037	27	73
1916	647,835	176,162	471,673	27	73
1921	757,510	218,958	538,552	29	71
1931	921,785	290,905	630,880	32	68

²Taken from Census Canada, www40.statcan.ca/101/cst01/demo62ihtm. Retrieved July 16, 2008.

Table 2.2: Urban/Rural Split of students in Saskatchewan, 1906-1931.³

Year	Stud Pop	Rural	Village	Town	City	HS
1906	31,275	19,230		12,045		1683
1911	70,567	42,580		27,987		3849
1916	125,590	74,387	19,518	15,174	16,511	6903
1921	177,968	102,478	31,344	21,455	22,691	7442
1926	205,962	122,973	37,179	22,055	23,755	8942
1931	221,556	130,827	39,743	21,995	28,991	7956

Table 2.2 and 2.3 confirm that a significant majority of Saskatchewan students throughout the early decades of the twentieth century attended rural schools. Though it is unclear the way in which students were delineated as either rural or from a village in the *Annual Reports*, I think it entirely accurate to suggest that “rural schools” as discussed in historiography of Canadian and American education would include both those students living in the open country and those living in a village. In Foght’s *Survey*, he suggests that roughly 85 percent of Saskatchewan’s school age children were “rural-minded,” which, given the distribution for the year 1916, includes all students who attended rural, village, and town schools.⁴

³ Numbers are taken from Saskatchewan, *Annual Report of the Department of Education of the Province of Saskatchewan, 1906, 1911, 1916, 1921, 1926, and 1931*. In 1906 and 1911, no distinction was made between village, town, or city. Numbers were reported for Town. “HS” denotes number of high school students.

⁴ Harold Foght argues that students attending rural, village, and town schools should be considered rural students, given they are part of an educational system whose fundamental industry is agriculture. See Harold W. Foght, *A Survey of Education in the Province of Saskatchewan, Canada* (Regina: King’s Printer), 77.

Table 2.3: Percentage of Students by type of settlement in Saskatchewan

Year	% Rural	%Village	% Town	%City
1906	61.5		38.5	
1911	60.3		39.7	
1916	59.2	15.5	12.2	13.1
1921	57.6	17.6	12.0	12.8
1926	59.7	18.1	10.7	11.5
1931	59.0	18.0	9.9	13.1

Table 2.4: Ethnic Composition of Saskatchewan Population, 1911-1931.⁵

Year	Brit	Germ	Fren	Scan	Ru/Uk	Euro	FirNa	Other
1911	251,010	68,628	23,251	33,991	18,413	47,742	11,718	37,649
1916	353,098	77,109	32,066	49,708	33,662	68,536	10,902	22,754
1921	400,416	68,202	42,152	58,382	73,440	65,978	12,914	36,026
1926	416,721	96,498	47,030	63,370	87,682	57,682	13,001	38,754
1931	437,836	129,232	50,700	72,684	98,821	72,783	15,268	44,461

Table 2.4 identifies the ethnic composition of the population of Saskatchewan. What is interesting to note is that in much of the census data, residents born in the United States, or who entered Saskatchewan from the US but identify themselves as British in origin, are labeled as British. As the tables above clearly suggest, US born residents of the province are not viewed as an ethnic group unto themselves. This encourages some interesting questions as to why Saskatchewanians or Canadians cannot identify themselves as former US citizens, but are instead lumped together with people who are clearly different from themselves. Given that a large percentage of Scandinavians who migrate to Saskatchewan do so having first settled in the northern tier states of the US, this also suggests that the percentage of Americans living in Saskatchewan is much

⁵ Taken from Bill Waiser, *Saskatchewan: A New History* (Calgary: Fifth House, 2005), 502.

higher than census data suggests. Table 2.6 identifies the number of Saskatchewan residents who are born in the province.

Table 2.5: Ethnic Composition of Saskatchewan by percentage, 1911-1931.⁶

Year	Brit	Germ	Fren	Scan	Ru/Uk	Euro	FirNa	Other
1911	51.0 %	13.9 %	4.7 %	6.9 %	3.7 %	9.7 %	2.4 %	7.6 %
1916	54.5	11.9	5.0	7.7	5.2	10.6	1.7	3.5
1921	52.9	9.0	5.6	7.7	9.7	8.7	1.7	4.8
1926	50.8	11.8	5.7	7.7	10.7	7.0	1.6	4.7
1931	47.5	14.0	5.5	7.9	10.7	7.9	1.7	4.8

Table 2.6: Birthplaces of Saskatchewan Residents, 1911-1931.⁷

Year	Born in Saskatchewan	Total Sask. Population
1911	101,854	492,432
	20.7 %	
1921	287,652	757,510
	38 %	
1931	442,258	921,785
	48 %	

Table 2.7 provides a different breakdown of ethnic data among Saskatchewan’s population. The year 1916 is an important one since it was this year that Harold Foght surveyed the province of Saskatchewan. While he used the same census data as presented above, he broke down the percentage of those of British ancestry in a slightly different way. He first lists those of British origin, including those who trace their ancestry to Great Britain, whether born in Canada or the US. His numbers, not surprisingly, match the 54.5% noted above

⁶ From Waiser, 502. Note: “Ru/Uk” denotes people of Russian or Ukrainian descent, “Euro” refers to other European peoples than the ones listed, and “FirNa” refers to people of Canada’s First Nations.

⁷ From Waiser, 503.

in Table 2.5. When Foght distinguishes between British subjects and US born subjects, however, the proportion of British relative to all other ethnic groups is very different, and considerably more interesting than most Canadian historians, let alone historians of education, assume. The Anglo-Celtic majority, so central to the arguments of education historians like Tomkins and others, disappears like a mirage in the summer heat.

Table 2.7: Ethnic Origin of Saskatchewan population, 1916, Harold Foght.⁸

	Br.	US	A-H	Rus	Scan	Ger	Fr	Ice	Oth
%	33.75	28.19	14.6	9.52	5.7	3.4	1.5	.5	2.84
#	218,644	182,625	94,583	61,674	36,927	22,026	9,718	3,239	18,399

Census data indicates that in 1916 there were 87,901 Saskatchewan residents born in the US.⁹ In 1921 that number remained almost identical at 87,617.¹⁰ Census information for 1931 identifies 73,008 Saskatchewan citizens born in the US.¹¹ Another 17,826 US born are listed as aliens living in the province.¹² By 1931, the percentage of British citizens relative to all others, if one removes US born from British totals, is again indicative that the Anglo-Celtic majority that existed in other English speaking provinces within Canada, did not exist in Saskatchewan. If one subtracts these numbers alone from British totals, again the percentage of British relative to all other ethnic groups in Saskatchewan remains closer to 35, or at most, 40 percent of the total population—a far cry from an

⁸ Taken from Foght, 13. Note: “A-H” denotes people of Austro-Hungarian lineage. “Oth” refers to all others.

⁹ Canada, Bureau of Statistics, *Census of Prairie Provinces, 1916*, Table X, 154.

¹⁰ Canada, Bureau of Statistics, *Sixth Census of Canada, 1921*, Vol. 1, Table 30, 564.

¹¹ Canada, Bureau of Statistics, *Seventh Census of Canada, 1931*, Vol. 1, Table 56, 1010.

¹² Canada, Bureau of Statistics, *Seventh Census of Canada, 1931*, Vol. 1, Table 62, 1050-1052.

Anglo-Celtic majority. If one maintains the formula identified below in Section IV, subsection i, which posits that one third of Americans in the province of Saskatchewan are of Yankee stock, another third expatriate Canadians who lived in the US before returning to Saskatchewan, and the final third Scandinavians who settled first in the northern US before moving to Canada, the total number of Saskatchewan residents in 1931 who once resided in the United States is likely closer to 200,00 or 300,000, thereby reducing the percentage of British residents in the province far lower still.

Whether the percentage of people in Saskatchewan who identify themselves as of British origin in the first three decades of the provinces' existence is 30 percent, or 40 percent, is irrelevant. The key is that if English Canadian education, as George S. Tomkins suggests, was to serve an Anglo Celtic majority that was Protestant and resistant to American hegemony, one must first understand that in Saskatchewan that majority did not exist. Furthermore, including the number of American born—the culture with whom English Canadian education was destined to resist--within the ranks of those who identify themselves as British is antithetical and contradictory. This history proceeds from the understanding that the percentage of British in the province of Saskatchewan between 1905 and 1930 was about 35 percent.

III *Historical context(s) of American culture in Canada*¹³: *Anti-Americanism in English Canada, 1812-1905*

At the time of Confederation in 1867, anti-Americanism and fears of American expansion and reprisals following Britain's support of the South in the American Civil War were themselves one cause for the union of the British North American colonies.¹⁴ There was and is, as Seymour Martin Lipset suggests, no ideology of Canadianism to unite a group of quasi-independent colonies under one identity.¹⁵ There was, however, a common fear. In 1867, it was sufficient, though perhaps not promising for the future, that Canada be united by anti-Americanism, a dependence on Britain, and that prominent minority groups could depend on the state for their continued survival. As Canada expanded westward, however, the practical necessity of nation-building and later province-building created circumstances under which divergent political cultures would appear.

When Canada's westernmost province, British Columbia, joined Confederation in 1871 it was largely in response to eastern fears over potential American expansion, referred to as "manifest destiny," into the territories

¹³ I must make clear the distinction between the various "Canadas" of which I write. Upper Canada and Lower Canada comprised the two largest colonies in what will become a confederated Canada in 1867. When I identify schools and textbooks in Upper Canada I am referring to what will become Canada West and later the province of Ontario. Lower Canada becomes Canada East, later the province of Quebec. Canada West should not be confused with Canada's West which historically includes the provinces west of the province of Ontario: Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia.

¹⁴ Such causes are highlighted in any Canadian high school history textbook. One could argue, therefore, that Canadian high school students are taught that we Canadians have never been a patriotic nor nationalistic lot, but instead are quite practical. For a *typical* view of Confederation see Edgar McInnis, *Canada: A Political and Social History*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Holt Rinehart, 1969), especially Chapters 12 and 13. The original four provinces to comprise Canada are Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick.

¹⁵ Seymour Martin Lipset, *Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 42.

between Manitoba and British Columbia. This included what would become the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta in 1905. The intended completion of the Transcontinental Railroad under Prime Minister John A. Macdonald's leadership was a further attempt by the Canadian government at laying claim to this broad expanse of Canadian plains.¹⁶ It is safe to say, therefore, that in matters political, fears of American expansion and influence into Canada's West were widespread in Canada's East from 1867 until the close of the nineteenth century. Fear of American cultural incursion had existed in the East for some time prior to Confederation in 1867. This was particularly true in the realm of education.

Even before the War of 1812 the existence of American teachers in Upper Canada (later Ontario) was cause for grave concern among those who feared the inculcation of Republican ideals into the minds of British subjects.¹⁷ As President of the General Board of Education in Upper Canada, John Strachan found it necessary to confront the threats posed by democratic and republican tendencies infecting the country.¹⁸ Unfriendly foreign (American) teachers were often to blame. The Revolts of 1837, many believed, served only to confirm the pernicious quality of "revolutionary-minded" American teachers in Upper Canada.

As dangerous as the adventuresome American teacher was to the spiritual and intellectual wellness of the British North American subject, even more perilous was the abundance of American school textbooks that confronted Egerton Ryerson during his tenure as Superintendent of Schools in Canada West. The use of American textbooks in Canada West (later Ontario), he declared, was

¹⁶ The railroad was completed in 1885, just in time to quash the Riel Resistance in the province of Saskatchewan.

¹⁷ J. Donald Wilson, "Education in Upper Canada: Sixty Year of Change," in *Canadian Education: A History*, ed. J. Donald Wilson, Robert M. Stamp, and Louis Philippe-Audet, (Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1970), 192.

¹⁸ R. D. Gidney, "Upper Canadian Public Opinion and Common School Improvement in the 1830's," in *Histoire Sociale – Social History*, Vol. V, No. 9 (April, 1972): 48-60.

both “anti-British and unpatriotic.”¹⁹ Concerns regarding the use of American textbooks led Ryerson, over the course of time, to promote a standardization of textbooks within Canada West, beginning first with the *Irish Readers*. Though neither British nor Canadian in origin, these *Readers* did convey a pro-imperial image to the student and were a positive alternative, believed Ryerson, to anything coming from the United States. The development of a standardized list of school textbooks in Canada West signaled more than a shift in preference away from American publications to those of the British Empire. As Bruce Curtis eloquently presents in his critique of the curriculum in Canada West, “[t]he curricular reforms of 1846 transformed the social identity of the schoolbook by making it an instrument of state policy. Through these reforms school knowledge became state knowledge.”²⁰

Concerns over the existence of American textbooks, or at least what American texts might represent in a British Dominion, predate Confederation. As one British visitor to Upper Canada, Dr. Thomas Rolph, observed in 1833:

It is really melancholy to traverse the province and go into many of the common schools; you find a herd of children instructed by some anti-British adventurer instilling in the young... mind sentiments hostile to the parent state; false accounts of the late war... geographies setting [American cities] as the largest and finest in the world; historical reading books describing the American population as the most free and enlightened under heaven and American spelling-books, dictionaries and grammar teaching them an anti-British dialect and idiom.²¹

¹⁹ J. Donald Wilson, “The Ryerson Years in Canada West,” in *Canadian Education: A History*, 219. The issue of how anti-British and un-patriotic American textbooks were is called into question by Bruce Curtis, “Schoolbooks and the Myth of Curricular Republicanism: The State and the Curriculum in Canada West, 1820-1850,” in *Histoire Social – Social History*, Vol. XVI, No 32 (November, 1983): 305-329.

²⁰ Curtis, 325-326.

²¹ J. G. Hodgins, *Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada*, as quoted in George Tomkins, “Canadian Education and the Development of a National Consciousness: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives,” in *Canadian Schools and Canadian Identity*, ed. Alf Chaiton and Neil McDonald (Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing, 1977), 11.

Persistent concerns with resisting American influences, while preserving ties with the Empire, accurately characterize the educational policy in Ontario prior to Confederation. Opposition to American ideals was ubiquitous in eastern Canada but, I will argue later, never took hold within the province of Saskatchewan. Whereas English Canadians during the nineteenth century revered continuity, tradition, and properly constituted authority,²² by the beginning of the twentieth century such *traditionalistic* notions were replaced by a *moralistic* claim for the public good in Canada's West.

With Manitoba and British Columbia within Confederation, the transcontinental railroad complete, and the specter of American manifest destiny abated south of the forty-ninth parallel, by the time Saskatchewan and Alberta enter Confederation in 1905 the political landscape of Canada had changed dramatically from 1867.²³ Once free land on the United States frontier was gone, a new and much anticipated flood of immigrants entered the Canadian prairies.

IV Mechanisms of Cultural Transfer from the US to Saskatchewan

Culture is not a static entity, but rather something in the process of constant change. Not surprisingly, cultural ideas and forms transfer from one geographic location to another, only to be adapted and redefined to suit the new location and integrated into its existing cultural norms. These mechanisms of transfer include: the movement or immigration of people from one nation-state

²² Allan Smith, "American Culture and the Concept of Mission in Nineteenth Century English Canada," cited in "Canadian Education and the Development of a National Consciousness," in *Canadian Schools and Canadian Identity*, ed. Chaiton, Alf and Neil McDonald (Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing, 1977).

²³ Bell also mentions the fact that at the same time Canada was bringing in large numbers of immigrants, there was also a sizeable outflow of emigrants. This loss of "tradition-carriers", Bell believes, is a further cause of a fragmented Canadian political culture. See Bell, 91-94.

to another where the incoming bring with them their meanings, practice, and language; the introduction of member organizations that are subsidiaries of or beholden to parent organizations that exist in other locations, for example, the *Grange*; the free flow of publications across national boundaries including newspapers, academic journals, professional publications, etc., which disseminate cultural knowledge to receiving societies (e.g. *the Grain Growers Guide*); the sociological tour where individuals travel to other cultures and return with experience, knowledge, and practice; advanced education abroad; and visitations by experts from afar who bring with them the “gospel” of how things are done back home as was the case with Aaron Sapiro in his attempt to spread cooperative forms of production across North America. Each of these mechanisms was evident in varying degrees as American culture was welcomed on the Canadian prairie. I will also make the case that physiographic similarities between the American Plains and the Canadian prairie, and the lived experiences that accompanied geographic setting, was a further motivation for the adoption of American culture into the province of Saskatchewan.²⁴

(i) *Cultural Transfer through Immigration*

The movement of Americans to the Canadian prairies is well documented. University of Saskatchewan historian, Bill Waiser, cites the 1906 census as

²⁴ My conclusions around cultural transfer are corroborated in the following: Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Political Age* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1998); David Laycock, *Populism and Democratic Thought in the Canadian Prairies, 1910-1945* (Toronto: U of T Press, 1990); Louis Aubrey Wood, *A History of Farmer's Movements in Canada* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1924); Paul F. Sharp, *The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada: A Survey Showing American Parallels* (Winnipeg: Hignell Printing, 1997); and Ellen Furlough and Carl Strikwerda (eds.), *Consumers against Capitalism? Consumer Cooperation in Europe, North American, and Japan, 1840-1990* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999).

counting 35,464 Americans living within the infant province.²⁵ Of these, one third were of Yankee stock, another third expatriate Canadians, and the remainder recent emigrants from Northern Europe who settled first in the northern American states.²⁶ The American sociologist Paul Sharp suggests that by 1920 the number of American immigrants to Alberta and Saskatchewan totaled close to 1.25 million.²⁷ While the majority of these settled in the province of Alberta, there remained a sizeable portion who made their home in Saskatchewan. Among those who moved northward were a large number from the Midwestern and Plains states of the Dakotas, Montana, Missouri, Iowa, Kansas, Utah, and Minnesota.²⁸ Saskatchewan provincial historian, John Archer, maintains that the Saskatchewan Valley Land Company alone lured 50,000 American families to a large swath of land bordered on the south and north by the province's two largest cities, Regina and Saskatoon.²⁹

²⁵ Bill Waiser, *Saskatchewan: A New History* (Calgary: Fifth House, 2005), 67. The number of Americans within the province was exceeded only slightly by the number of British (35,518). Fifty percent of the province's population was born in Canada, with forty percent of the province's total population originating from the province of Ontario. Nelson Wiseman argues that in contrast to Alberta, where the majority of American immigrants were of Anglo-Saxon stock, in Saskatchewan the majority were not. American and European Scandinavian influence in Saskatchewan led to a far greater receptivity to socialism than was the case in Alberta. See Wiseman, "The Pattern of Prairie Politics," in *The Prairie West: Historical Readings*, ed. R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1992), 640-660.

²⁶ Waiser, 69.

²⁷ Sharp, 4-5.

²⁸ Sharp, 5.

²⁹ John H. Archer, *Saskatchewan: A History* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Books, 1980), 119. If one assumes that a family contains at minimum two members, Archer documents the movement of well over 100,000 Americans to one region of the province alone. The Saskatchewan Valley Land Company employed Colonel A.E. Davidson, a former Canadian living in Minnesota, to lead the recruitment efforts. The town of Davidson, situated roughly half way between Saskatoon and Regina, bears his name.

While sheer numbers tell one story in the movement of American culture to the Canadian prairie, the locales from which the bulk of these Americans originated reveals another equally important tale. The vast majority of those who left the United States for the “last best west” in Saskatchewan and Alberta left from the northern plains and Midwestern states—states that maintain what the American political scientist, Daniel J. Elazar, describes as a moralistic political culture. This political orientation set them apart from other political subcultures and regions within the United States. To put it another way, those who tended to emigrate to the Canadian prairies from the United States were a very distinct sort of American who brought with them very specific ideas as to the meaning and practice of government, the meaning of the East, and the meaning of the West itself.

In Elazar’s groundbreaking examination of American political culture he divides American political culture into three separate but related subcultures: the individualistic, traditionalistic, and moralistic strands.³⁰ While Elazar believes that a national political culture exists as a blending of all three subcultures, specific regions of the country maintain strong sub-cultural influences.³¹ For those states that comprise the American Midwest and the northern plains states the dominant political culture is moralistic.³² Elazar describes this group in the following terms:

The moralistic political culture emphasizes the commonwealth conception as the basis for democratic government. Politics, to the moralistic political culture is considered one of the great activities of

³⁰ Daniel J. Elazar, *American Federalism: A View From the States* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1966).

³¹ Elazar, 86.

³² Elazar provides his readers with a map on page 108 with the dominant political cultures labeled. Here he clearly identifies Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, Utah, and Colorado as predominantly moralistic in orientation. Iowa, South Dakota, Kansas, Montana, and Idaho he classifies as largely moralistic with individualistic undertones. Nebraska and Wyoming maintain an individualistic political subculture with some moralistic influences.

humanity in its search for the good society—a struggle for power, it is true, but also an effort to exercise power for the betterment of the commonwealth. ...

In the moralistic political culture, individualism is tempered by a general commitment to utilizing communal—preferably non-governmental, but governmental if necessary, power to intervene in to the sphere of private activities when it is considered necessary to do so for the public good or the well-being of the community. ...

Since moralistic political culture rests on the fundamental conception that politics exists primarily as a means for coming to grips with the issues and public concerns of civil society, it also embraces the notion that politics is ideally a matter of concern for every citizen, not just those who are professionally committed to political careers. Indeed, it is the duty of every citizen to participate in the political affairs of his commonwealth. ...

By virtue of its fundamental outlook, the moralistic political culture creates a greater commitment to active government intervention in the economic and social life of the community.³³

The first American historian of the frontier, Frederick Jackson Turner, complements Elazar's analysis though he speaks of Midwestern and Plains political culture in slightly different terms. For Turner it was the unrelenting challenge of the Great Plains that led the American settler away from an individualistic stance toward a greater acceptance for, and at times reliance upon, government regulation. For the Midwestern pioneer government intervention became a means of preserving democracy.³⁴ Both Elazar's and Turner's descriptions of moralistic and Great Plains political culture are evidenced in the province of Saskatchewan.

As American settlers moved into the Canadian prairies they brought with them a variety of meanings and practices. This is most apparent in the diversity

³³ Elazar, 118-119.

³⁴ Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier In American History* (New York: Dover, 1996), 276-277. Turner also accounts for the movement of Americans from the Midwest to the Canadian Prairies. "Hundred of thousands of pioneers from the Middle West have crossed the national boundary into Canadian wheat fields eager to find farms for their children, although under an alien flag." See Turner, 109.

of agrarian member organizations and political movements that accompanied these farmers, for it was predominantly the American farmer who moved northward into Canada, not the industrialist nor the professional. These organizations were a vital secondary conduit through which Midwestern and American Plains culture crossed north along longitudinal lines.

(ii) *Cultural Transfer within Continental Organizations and Publications*

Historians of North American agrarian movements agree that much of what developed on the Canadian prairies in the way of protest, reform, and organization in the early twentieth century first took root on the American plains. The Canadian historian, W.L. Morton, summarized this relationship in 1950:

Support of direct legislation was indicative of another element which contributed to the growing political consciousness of the farmers. That was the steady wind of American reformist influence which fanned every flame with precedent, example, and slogan. Not only was there the vivid memory of Populism: not only did the [*Grain Growers*]*Guide* carry on its early numbers the old Jacksonian motto of 'Special privileges for none, and equal rights for all;' not only was direct legislation as popular in the Canadian West during these years as in the north-western American states; there was also the contemporary American Progressive Movement, which reached its climax in the years from 1910 to 1912. Its influence was immediate and insistent on the growth of the reform movement in the Canadian West, and its precept and example, its *vocabulary* and even its name, came to characterize the ferment of political life in the western provinces.³⁵ [emphasis added]

Among the plethora of American organizations that moved northward with settlement on the prairies, the *Grange* entered Canada in 1872 and moved to

³⁵ W.L. Morton, *The Progressive Party in Canada* (Toronto: U of T Press, 1967), 30-31.

the West in 1876. Similarly, the American Farmer's Alliance inspired the Farmer's Union of Manitoba shortly thereafter.³⁶

The American sociologist, Paul F. Sharp, tells a similar tale.

The influence of identical environments was reinforced by the ease with which men and ideas crossed the international boundary to the north. The impact of the American republic has been great upon life in every section of the dominion, but nowhere is it more pronounced than in the Canadian West. The American farmers who helped to settle that vast region carried with them an agrarian experience which had matured under the stimuli of similar conditions in the American West. Typically western ideas quickly took root in the prairie provinces, where, combined with eastern Canadian and British traditions, they flowered in an agrarian revolt that recalls the earlier populist crusade and parallels the contemporary agrarian movements in the American Northwest.³⁷

Given this affinity between the American and Canadian prairies, it is not surprising that American organizations such as the Society of Equity, the Farmer's Union, and the Non-partisan League all first developed in the US and then moved northward with the settlers.³⁸

The transfer of Midwestern political culture, agrarian organizations, and protest movements was greatly facilitated by the influence of print publications, most notably the *Grain Grower's Guide*, *The Nutcracker*, and the *Western Producer* in Canada, and the *Leader* emanating from the United States. Sharp posits that the *Guide* and the *Leader* were similar in both content and style: each performed an educational function, identified a moral to the reader, and preached a gospel invoking revolt in the wheat belt.³⁹ The *Western Producer*, printed in Saskatoon from the early 1920's until today, was first called *Turner's Weekly* and renamed *The Progressive* in 1923. In its early stages, the paper's motto was "Reliable News, Unfettered Opinions, and Western Rights."

³⁶ Morton, 10.

³⁷ Sharp, vii.

³⁸ Sharp, 24. Sharp goes so far to say that virtually every American "society" moved into Canada in one form or another. See Sharp, 25.

³⁹ Sharp, 27.

The extent to which western Canadian publications followed activities south of the border further contributed to the flow of culture northward. For example, Canadian Nonpartisan League newspapers followed the successes of the North Dakota League very closely, often publishing articles written by North Dakota legislator, C.W. McDonnell, in newspapers like the *Grain Grower's Guide*.⁴⁰ Furthermore, publications on both sides of the border assumed similar languages of protest and insult, including phrases like "Big Biz" for industry, the "Kept Press" for opposing journals, to name just two. Cartoons were a popular source of criticism and ridicule in both western Canada and the American Midwest, and in many cases Canadian writers simply substituted the Canadian Manufacturer's Association for the American Manufacturer's Association;⁴¹ so easily could the experience of the prairie Canadian farmer be substituted for the experience of his American cousins.

Western Canadian farmers were exposed to American practice, agrarian politics, and revolt through a variety of media. In addition to reading and hearing about activities south of the forty-ninth parallel, the "sociological tour" became a common means through which Saskatchewanians could borrow from their neighbors to the south. Individual and group tours to the American Midwest occurred frequently. Similarly, American experts were encouraged to travel northward to spread the gospel of reform. There were also recurrent trips where American popular culture made its way to the province of Saskatchewan.

⁴⁰ Sharp, 61.

⁴¹ Sharp suggests that the phrase "Go home and slop the hogs," first uttered by the North Dakotan, Treadwell Twichell, was frequently attributed to easterners on both sides of the border as an indication of eastern ignorance and lack of regard for the work of the western farmer. Reformers purposefully accused easterners of using the phrase as a means of rousing the ire of their memberships. See Sharp, 62.

(iii) *Cultural Transfer through the Sociological Tour*⁴²

Organized sojourns from the Canadian prairies to the United States are not well documented within existing literature. There are examples, however, where government supported fact-finding missions traveled southward. For example, in 1900 in the midst of a grain elevator and shipping debate, a federally appointed commission dispatched two members to the state of Minnesota to gather expert information on the storage and shipment of grain in that state.⁴³ The results of their inquiry led to the Manitoba Grain Act, the contents of which would be adopted later by the province of Saskatchewan.

The 1916 campaign for the North Dakota State Legislature lured a few Saskatchewanians south as a means of gaining experience with third party formation and fomentation. Among those who traveled southward was a farmer from outside the town of Swift Current, located in the southwest corner of the province. S.E. Haight worked in the campaign on the behalf of the North Dakota Non Partisan League (NPL) and upon his return to Saskatchewan in July of 1916, he organized a similar league in his home province.⁴⁴ These efforts, along with many others, brought the success of the NPL in North Dakota to the Canadian prairies.

⁴² Daniel T. Rodgers writes of the “grand sociological tour” in his book, *Atlantic Crossings*. The purpose of these tours was to enhance social policy at home by studying social and civic movements across the North Atlantic community, and adapting those policy solutions from foreign shores on the home front. This became a popular outlet for inquiring social reformers at the turn of the twentieth century. In addition to taking trips overseas, often, social reformers invited key figures from outside the country to share their thoughts and experiences. Aaron Sapiro’s trips to Western Canada to spread the word around cooperatives are the most obvious and frequently cited examples among contemporary Saskatchewan newspapers.

⁴³ Wood, 165-166.

⁴⁴ Sharp, 57.

Less formal interactions between Saskatchewan citizens and their American cousins occurred for a variety of reasons, most notably when it came to the purchase of American farm machinery. Despite the protestations of the Canadian Manufacturer's Association, centered in the province of Ontario—a group viewed with disdain and mistrust among western farmers—prairie farmers preferred farm machinery manufactured in the United States over those produced in Eastern Canada.⁴⁵ Not only was American equipment superior to Canadian-made products, it usually cost less. Saskatchewan farmers made frequent trips to the US market to purchase machinery. These informal trips to the US by individual farmers exposed the Canadian farmer to similar anti-American Manufacturer's Association sentiments south of the border. As a result, farmers on both sides of the boundary shared a mistrust for corporations back east.

Similarly, Saskatchewan farmers were frequently successful exhibitors and participants in a variety of farm expositions like, for example, the International Soil Products Exposition in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1918.⁴⁶ Such expositions occurred frequently throughout North America, and were ready-made sites for cultural exchange. Saskatchewan's most decorated grain farmer, Seager Wheeler, farmed 40 miles north of Saskatoon and was five-time world Wheat King and an annual competitor at several American farm expositions.⁴⁷ Indeed, flipping through the pages of contemporary issues of the *Grain Growers Guide* and *Western Producer* one quickly learns that the *Guide* is emblematic of the continental nature of an agrarian economy and culture. The *Guide* weekly reported commodity prices from a variety of economic centers, including Winnipeg, Manitoba; Chicago, Illinois; and Saint Paul, Minnesota. In many important regards, the agricultural communities north and south of the forty-

⁴⁵ Advertisements by American farm machinery manufacturers are mainstays within the pages of the *Grain Growers Guide* and *Western Producer*.

⁴⁶ See "Soil Products Exposition," in *Grain Growers Guide* (Feb. 20, 1918), 31.

⁴⁷ Grant MacEwan, *Harvest of Bread* (Saskatoon: Prairie Books, 1969), 82-86.

ninth parallel were inextricably linked. What happened in one necessarily influenced activity in the other.

To this point in this chapter I have emphasized the role of agrarian movements, associations, and industries in regard to cultural transfer. Though agriculture was the key conduit through which culture moved northward, there were a variety of other fields where sociological tours produced cultural borrowings. In the field of K-12 education, for example, it was customary for Saskatchewan educators to attend annual meetings of the National Education Association (NEA) in the United States. In 1918, Mr. A. Kennedy, Inspector of Schools for Weyburn, a small town in southeastern Saskatchewan, attended the gathering of the NEA and announced to the assembled delegates:

Mr. President – the Department of Education of the Government of the Province of Saskatchewan fully appreciates the value of the National Education Association and has requested me to carry to you a message of greeting and good-will. Problems that present themselves to you for your consideration and solution also present themselves to us; and your discussion and solutions are of very great benefit to us.⁴⁸

In the field of higher education, the University of Saskatchewan's first President, Walter Murray, and a number of the University's Board of Governors, traveled south in 1907 to witness firsthand many of the Midwest's large land grant universities in addition to some prominent privately funded universities. Their experience south of the border resulted in the creation of a template for a university unlike any other in Canada. The inspiration for such a university stemmed almost completely from their visits to campuses like the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Washington University in St. Louis, and a variety of other agricultural research stations.⁴⁹

When Canadians were not traveling to the US for inspiration, it was often the case that American popular culture traveled north instead. For example, it

⁴⁸ See Saskatchewan, *Annual Report of the Department of Education of the Province of Saskatchewan, 1918*, 186. I will address this theme more fully in Chapter Three.

⁴⁹ I will further pursue this level of cultural transfer in Chapter Four.

was quite common for Midwestern American baseball teams to frequent Saskatchewan communities in the summer months, particularly those including African-American players banned from playing in the US.⁵⁰ Baseball quickly became the most popular sport in Saskatchewan in the 1920's, after hockey. Similarly, radio listeners could easily pick up American broadcasts from cities like Denver and Chicago.⁵¹ Chautauqua also made its presence felt in the province of Saskatchewan during the 1920's, making what Teddy Roosevelt described as "the most American thing in America" a staple on the Canadian prairies.⁵² American popular culture permeated the province of Saskatchewan. Not all that was borrowed from the US, however, was positive.

Boasting a membership of 25,000 in 1929, the Saskatchewan chapter of the Ku Klux Klan found fertile soil among a population concerned with the degree of Catholic and eastern European infiltration into a province perceived by many as protestant and Anglophone.⁵³ Such an episode of the Klan's movement into Saskatchewan from the United States is a perfect example of how American culture was adapted to the realities of the Canadian prairie. Reinvented in Saskatchewan as a pro-British and protestant organization, Saskatchewan's version of the KKK played upon similar nativistic sentiments to those coming from the United States, focusing on the need for an exclusionist immigration policy and the removal of publicly funded Catholic schools and schools where the first language of instruction was French. While the activities of Saskatchewan Klansmen never reached the level of violence of their American counterparts, the

⁵⁰ Waiser, 275-276.

⁵¹ Waiser, 274.

⁵² Quote taken from <http://sdr.lib.uiowa.edu/traveling-culture/essay.html>. Retrieved November 5, 2005.

⁵³ The Klan first entered Saskatchewan in 1926, although the first organizers in the province fled with the collected membership fees. Waiser compares the number of KKK members with the highest level of membership in the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association (SGGA) in the 1920's at 35,000. See Waiser, 251.

ritualistic burning of crosses was not an uncommon site. The Ku Klux Klan also exercised varying levels of influence among all the province's major political parties throughout the late 1920's and into the 1930's.⁵⁴

(iv) *Cultural Transfer through Higher Education Abroad*

Given the rural, agrarian makeup of the province of Saskatchewan between the years 1905 and 1937, it is safe to say that widespread study in the US by Saskatchewan residents was minimal. That a university did not exist in the province until 1907, and then expanded only gradually, implies the pursuit of higher education was not a priority among the vast majority of its citizens. The "culture of aspiration" that existed in the United States was still a few years from fruition in Saskatchewan at the close of the First World War. What is significant, I believe, is the extent to which the University of Saskatchewan, from its outset, depended on faculty who were either American-born, or American-trained. Arthur S. Morton, perhaps the first historian of the University of Saskatchewan, confirms that among the first five faculty hired at the U of S, two were American-trained. In 1910, when five more faculty were hired, three of these completed their graduate work in the Ivy League. In 1911, one of two faculty added was from the United States; in 1913, two of three.⁵⁵ Though Saskatchewanians were

⁵⁴ Most notable was the influence of the KKK on the leader of the province's Conservative party, Dr. Anderson. Anderson had served as the director of education among new Canadians in 1923, and in 1929, as leader of the Conservatives, launched an attack on the policies of the federal government in Ottawa and the provincial Liberal government in Regina. See Waiser, 249-252, and Sharp, 15 and 95.

⁵⁵ See Arthur S. Morton, *Saskatchewan: The Making of a University* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959), especially Chapter VIII. Among the faculty, the Dean of Agriculture had first instructed at Iowa State College prior to coming to Saskatoon. The Dean of the College of Arts and Science completed his graduate work at Columbia University.

not generally pursuing higher education in the United States, higher education in the province of Saskatchewan was certainly affected by American institutions for higher learning.⁵⁶

There was, however, one exception to the above statement, and that was in the realm of K-12 education. Following the Foght *Survey* of 1918, several educationists employed by the Department of Education began the pursuit of advanced degrees in a variety of fields, all centered on two campuses: the University of Chicago and Columbia University—the bastions for progressive education reform in the United States. In the decade of the 1920's roughly 10 educational elites, including the Principal of the Regina Normal School, and an instructor in Mathematics at the Saskatoon Normal School, completed Doctorates of Philosophy degrees in their respective fields, the first in Education Psychology at Teacher's College, Columbia University, the second in Mathematics at Chicago.⁵⁷ Therefore, while American higher education was beyond the means of most people in the province of Saskatchewan, sometimes American higher education could be brought to the people. In a similar fashion, the American expert was often brought northward to extend innovation to the people of the province.

Morton died prior to the completion of the manuscript. Carlyle King, another U of S historian, completed the manuscript and acted as the book's editor.

⁵⁶ While it is hard to pinpoint those Saskatchewanians who would pursue university study in the US, one must consider that between 1923 and 1938 there were over 1000 Canadians enrolled in graduate study in Education at Columbia University alone. See George S. Tomkins, *A Common Countenance: Stability and Change in the Canadian Curriculum* (Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1986), 158. The majority of these most likely emanated from eastern Canada. Westerners were more likely to pursue their studies in the Midwest, including the University of Chicago.

⁵⁷ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1925*, 72, 76. See Tomkins, "Foreign Influences on Curriculum and Curriculum Policy Making in Canada: Some Impressions in Historical and Contemporary Perspective," in *Curriculum Inquiry*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Summer, 1981), 157-166.

When Saskatchewan policy makers sought inspiration for their uniquely prairie travails, often they looked south for their guidance, rather than east. The two most obvious examples of this receptivity to American models include the messianic work of Aaron Sapiro of California, whose commitment to cooperative forms of production attracted large audiences on several occasions, and helped lay the foundation for the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool—a producer cooperative that continues today. The second includes the provincial government’s decision in 1916 to hire Harold Foght, an expert on rural education from the federal government in Washington, to survey the province’s K-12 system of education.

The advent of the expert was certainly not indigenous to North America, but instead was an outgrowth of a North Atlantic policy community that sought scientific and rational solutions to political and social problems. Canadian political sociologist, David Laycock, argues: “Technocracy in this broad sense is the first principle of social engineering in the tradition of Anglo-American utilitarianism, and has been of great importance in the approaches that western political elites have taken to the problems of policy determination and administration over the last century.”⁵⁹ Prairie Canadian Populism developed within the context of this technocratic ethos, or what US commentators will call “social efficiency,” with both Populists and technocrats absorbing into their ideology aspects of the other, seemingly antithetical components. This encouraged among social democratic Populists in Saskatchewan, for example, the adherence to an anti-statist local control at the level of the people, while still abiding the expert influence of those, like Aaron Sapiro, who articulated a

⁵⁸ The increasing reliance on “the expert” as a source of policy inspiration is evidence itself of American progressivism moving northward into Saskatchewan from the United States.

⁵⁹ David Laycock, *Populism and Democratic Thought in the Canadian Prairies, 1910-1945* (Toronto: U of T Press, 1990), 10.

centralized, technocratic planning of cooperative grain production and marketing.⁶⁰ Maintaining the equilibrium between local and centralized control was a constant challenge for both governments and cooperatives in the province of Saskatchewan between 1910 and 1945.

Although scientific management, technocracy, and social efficiency were not American creations, when looking for policy solutions to prairie Canadian problems, Saskatchewan policy makers and local patrons alike turned to American adaptations of these ideologies for inspiration. This was as true in the field of agriculture as it was in education.

The advent of producer cooperatives was far from an American idea. Nevertheless, that the grain growers of Saskatchewan should turn to an American lawyer from the state of California to educate the farmers of the province about the benefits of pooling wheat is testimony to the degree of reliance upon, and confidence in, American methods. Sapiro's maxim, "Get wise! Organize!" became the rallying cry for a generation of Saskatchewan farmers who listened to his message in the summer of 1923.⁶¹ Throughout 1923 and 1924 the *Western Producer* carried almost-weekly articles on Sapiro, reproducing speeches in their entirety for those unable to attend his lectures. Sapiro spoke in a myriad of locales across the prairie provinces at a time when enthusiasm for and commitment to a unified approach to pooling and marketing wheat among farmers was weakening. It was Sapiro's passion and wisdom—wisdom gained from his own attempts at organizing California fruit producers—that led farming leaders in Saskatchewan to seek his guidance and counsel.

⁶⁰ See Laycock, 179-189.

⁶¹ One of those who heard Sapiro's speech in Saskatoon was the U of S historian, Frank Underhill. Fifty years after hearing Sapiro, Underhill wrote: "his speech was the most magnificent to which I have ever listened." Cited in Waiser, 262. Sapiro's greatest achievement in the state of California was his role in the creation of the Sunkist producer's cooperative.

It was also the case that some northern American states, particularly Minnesota, similarly recruited Sapiro and others to jump start their own efforts at establishing producer co-ops in the spring of 1923. As he was to do in Saskatchewan a few months later, Sapiro praised the cooperative spirit of Minnesota farmers while criticizing their decision to pursue a producer's cooperative plan along the lines of the Rochdale consumer cooperative.⁶² While not all aspects of the Sapiro Plan took shape in the state of Minnesota, Sapiro's agitation for a different approach to cooperative endeavors had a lasting impact across the North American continent.⁶³ Most significant, however, was the apparent attempt by Saskatchewan cooperative organizers to use the same method of agitation as their Minnesotan cousins.

In regard to the Foght *Survey* of 1918 one cannot help but assume the decision to recruit an American expert on rural education was not only a tacit acceptance of American educational forms and functions on the part of Saskatchewan legislators, but also a rejection of models from Canada's East. The school survey movement itself was very much an American creation, begun in 1911 by Paul Hanus, a Harvard professor in the history and art of teaching.⁶⁴ That the Department of Education in the province of Saskatchewan would choose an American expert, and not a Canadian, is itself an indication that rural education in Saskatchewan was undergoing growing pains similar to those in rural America. Several August issues of *Turner's Weekly* contained lengthy

⁶² Keillor, 296-297.

⁶³ The Land O' Lakes dairy cooperative in Minnesota is perhaps the most lasting legacy. See Keillor, 300-303.

⁶⁴ Ellen Condliffe Lagemann, *An Elusive Science: The Troubling History of Education Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 71. Hanus led a survey of New York City schools in 1911 and 1912. Lagemann suggests that by 1917 there had been 125 school surveys performed in the United States. By 1928, 625. The school survey movement in the US was itself an outgrowth from social research and social policy developed in England around the turn of the twentieth century. Condliffe, 80.

articles on the “Rural Education Problem” in Saskatchewan.⁶⁵ The consolidation movement, which sought to combine independent schools and districts into larger, centralized, and more efficient entities, begun in American urban school divisions in the nineteenth century, was already in full swing among US rural school divisions by the end of World War I. This consolidation, states David Tyack, marked an ongoing struggle between local or community control, on the one hand, and professionalism on the other.⁶⁶ Like many of their counterparts in the US, Saskatchewan experts were knocking at the doors of rural schools, expecting their influence to be welcomed by all. It was not.

The Foght *Survey* of 1918 is crucial to understanding the influence of American models of education both in terms of its form and content. I reserve my discussion of the content of the report until Chapter Three. In terms of form, however, the decision to hire an expert on rural education from the US Bureau of Education is itself a telling example of the desire among Saskatchewan policy makers to replicate American processes on the Canadian plains. That Saskatchewan education policy makers anticipated Foght’s recommendation for wholesale consolidation long before his survey began seems certain, given that in 1917 the province contained no less than 4000 separate school divisions, many of them consisting of only one school, and that for years prior to the *Survey* Saskatchewan school inspectors had consistently argued for large-scale consolidation. Prior to hiring Foght, Saskatchewan policy makers had already learned a valuable lesson from their American counterparts – that employing an

⁶⁵ See, for example, Carl A. Anderson, “Rural Educational Problem,” *Turner’s Weekly*, Vol. 1, No. 11 (August 2, 1919), 19.

⁶⁶ David B. Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 6-7. Tyack also chronicles the “Rural School Problem” as one requiring solution through modernization and consolidation. See also, Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), 274-276, for a big picture examination at centralization.

expert, especially from the US Bureau of Education, was an effective means to legitimating pre-existing decisions, as David Tyack confirms:

But as the [school survey] movement matured, it became increasingly a device for 'progressive' superintendents to enlist the aid of outsiders to make changes they wanted anyway. ...Supporting the survey movement was a network of university professors, administrative progressives in the city school systems, the U.S. Bureau of Education, lay reformers in civic organizations, and foundations.⁶⁷

Whether in the field of agricultural policy or education policy, Saskatchewan legislators had adopted the American practice of relying on the expert to inform policy decisions—one of the hallmarks of the American progressive movement.⁶⁸

The wholesale rejection of Foght's key recommendation by local school divisions was not itself a rejection of American models of education as much as an acceptance of American meanings of rural schools. The schoolhouse was, in the words of Jonathan Raban, a political nursery of grassroots democratic government.⁶⁹ Expert control over local education, though successful in the United States, could not supplant local control in the province of Saskatchewan.⁷⁰

V *American Culture on the Prairies: Meaning, Practice and Language*

To this point I have accounted for the manner in which American culture, particularly the moralistic political culture of the Midwestern and Plains states,

⁶⁷ Tyack, 193.

⁶⁸ For a discussion of the Progressive movement's reliance on the expert see, Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform from Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), particularly Chapter IV, "The Status Revolution and Progressive Leaders, 131-173.

⁶⁹ Jonathan Raban, *Bad Land: An American Romance* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 162.

⁷⁰ Rural school consolidation did not occur in Saskatchewan until the early 1940's. I will revisit the Foght *Survey* in greater detail, particularly as it relates to the language of schools, in Chapter Three.

moved northward into Saskatchewan. My task now is to verify that what William Sewell defines as the critical attributes of culture—meaning, practice, and language--was in fact received by the citizenry of the province. In so doing I focus on the meanings, practice, and language of what I consider the three crucial constructs of American culture that will ultimately influence Saskatchewan policy making: (1) conceptions of democratic government, since these are direct reflections of political culture, with schools themselves being intensely democratic political entities; (2) the concept of the East—that locus which Saskatchewan policy makers will seek to resist, leading them instead to turn southward for their inspiration. (In the language of agrarian protest on the prairies, democracy and the East are inextricably linked); and (3) the concept of the West, which includes the land itself and ultimately the meaning of rural schools on the frontier. In this regard the meaning, practice, and language of the Midwestern American and Northern Plains culture will be replicated on the Canadian prairies, albeit with a time lag of roughly 15-20 years.

(i) *Democratic Government and “down east nabobs”*

Explicit within Saskatchewan political culture from the province’s beginning in 1905 is a concept of democratic government that is both moralistic and social democratic in nature. Implicit within this political culture is a voice of protest against a perceived asymmetric economic and political relationship between the prairie region and Canada’s East. This asymmetric thinking was obvious across the American Great Plains prior to 1905. David Laycock, a Canadian political sociologist, suggests that “...prairie citizens often viewed the electoral practices of the southern republic—first male and then universal suffrage, experimentation with instruments of direct democracy, the primaries, and open conventions for leadership selection—as superior to those of their own

reluctantly democratic polity.”⁷¹ To put it another way, prairie residents often gazed south for their political meaning and inspiration rather than east.

American *moralistic* political sub-culture was obvious in prairie Populism in the early twentieth century. Within the *social democratic* strain of prairie Populism, which predominated within the province of Saskatchewan, democracy required “... a more egalitarian, state-enforced, and co-ordinated distribution of goods and opportunities, flowing from extensive citizen participation in social institutions.”⁷² Within this branch of Populism was an expectation of government involvement in the lives of its citizens.⁷³ *Radical democratic* Populism emanated from the rural Western United States, says Laycock, and tended toward a rejection of party politics while maintaining a fervent belief in participatory democracy and group government.⁷⁴ *Crypto-liberal* Populism was the most influential form of protest on the prairies from 1910-1930, favoring the *language* of direct democracy, referendum, and recall as a means for the people to retain political power over the parties.⁷⁵ Such ideas drew heavily from American Populist and Progressive movements throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Paul Sharp encapsulates these shared meanings and language when he states:

⁷¹Laycock, 577.

⁷²Laycock, 136.

⁷³ Laycock, 137. Laycock identifies social democratic influences within the Non-Partisan League (NPL), The United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section) or UFC, and most significantly within the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) which formed the provincial government in 1944.

⁷⁴ Laycock, 20, and in much more detail in Chapter 3, 69-135. Radical democrats were visible within the NPL, UFC, and within a host of producer cooperatives across the prairies.

⁷⁵ Laycock, 23-68. The Progressive Party, the Saskatchewan Grain Growers, and The *Grain Grower's Guide* were the most prominent in displaying this brand of prairie populism. The last form of prairie populism identified by Laycock was *plebiscitarian* and existed almost entirely within the Social Credit Party in the province of Alberta.

The western Canadian farmer who protested against a high tariff, trusts and combines, and “money power” in 1911 did so in the best Jeffersonian tradition. His protests were rooted in the same soil of Lockean thought and evangelical Protestantism and sprang from the same grievances that had produced the Grange, the Farmers’ Alliance, and Populism in the United States. His crusade coincided with and sought the same fundamental objectives as the Farmers’ Union, the Society of Equity, Robert M. LaFollette’s “Progressivism,” and Woodrow Wilson’s “New Freedom.” This was no accident. The impact of monopolistic consolidation of Canadian industry hit the prairie farmer with such force during these years that in self-defense he turned to reforms similar to those advocated by American muckrakers and reformers in their “quest for social justice.”⁷⁶

These shared experiences among prairie social democrats and moralistic plainmen found their greatest expression in the practice of political protest.

The *practice* of democratic government on the Canadian prairies was, of course, limited by the parliamentary structures imposed by the existing constitution as established in *British North America Act* of 1867 and *Saskatchewan Act* of 1905. Regardless, the democratic ideals that emerged within the Populist and Progressive movements emerging from the US were also adapted to the Canadian milieu. Among these was the practice of forming third parties to protest and resist the power and influence of the established two-party structure. The Canadian Progressive Party, an outgrowth of the Non Partisan League, challenged the existing two-party structure in the 1920’s—a structure which inevitably favored the more-populated eastern provinces of Ontario and Quebec.⁷⁷ The politics of protest achieved greater success at the national level in Canada than in the US, albeit it fleetingly, when the Progressives won a majority

⁷⁶ Sharp, 40.

⁷⁷ The Progressives maintained a power base in rural Ontario and the three Prairie Provinces. The Party won 65 seats in the 1921 election but only 25 in 1925.

of seats from Western Canada in the 1921 federal election and maintained the balance of power in the House of Commons until the election of 1925.⁷⁸

At the provincial level third parties found their greatest success in the prairie provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan, with protest parties developing their strongest support first in rural areas. The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) increased its political support within Saskatchewan throughout the 1930's and formed the provincial government in 1944. The CCF, now the New Democratic Party (NDP), has dominated provincial politics in the province ever since. In Alberta the Social Credit Party dominated that political scene in a way much akin to the CCF in Saskatchewan. While the West persisted as the locus for the formation of third parties in Canada, these parties never wielded influence beyond the regions in which they were born and, as a result, their influence at the national level remains limited.

Despite the fact that political protests north of the border took their inspiration from their southern kin, third party success at the state level among northern US states was quite limited. The obvious exception was the Non Partisan League (NPL) victory for the state legislature in North Dakota in 1916. Success there soon spread north through the efforts of a few Saskatchewanians who worked for the NPL in the North Dakota campaign.⁷⁹ At the federal level Progressivism remained largely contained within the existing structure of the Democratic and Republican parties (Theodore Roosevelt's run for the presidency under the banner of the Progressive party in 1912 notwithstanding).⁸⁰ The most hopeful attempt at thrusting the Progressive movement onto the national stage occurred with LaFollette's campaign for the Presidency in 1924 – an attempt that

⁷⁸ See Edgar McGinnis, *Canada: A Political and Social History*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston, 1969), 514-518.

⁷⁹ See Sharp, Chapter Five, "The Nonpartisan League Invades Canada," 57-66.

⁸⁰ Roosevelt won 28 percent of the popular vote and finished second to Woodrow Wilson's 42 percent. Wilson himself exhibited his own brand of Progressivism. See Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), 216-223.

garnered 16.6 percent of the popular vote.⁸¹ Though impressive, this would be the final occasion when a Progressive-inspired program would enter the American national arena. What is obvious from such results, however, is that protest politics first gained prominence on the American plains before such programs migrated northward. Closely related to these political protests were objections to the centripetal concentration of economic power in the East.

On both the Canadian prairies and the American plains the eastern corporations, or trusts, were the focal points of popular, grassroots revolt and protest. Given that these "Easts" represented the geographic center of economic disparity, monopoly, and exploitation on both sides of the forty-ninth parallel it is little wonder that a society as it existed within the province of Saskatchewan would resist these influences in a manner similar to its American cousins. The "down east nabobs" of Bay Street, as western farmers scurrilously identified the corporate heads in the heart of Toronto's business district, and their corporations represented what the West was to progress away from, and not toward. The meaning of the East relative to the West was shared across the continental Great Plains.

Richard Hofstadter's *Age of Reform* clearly articulates the conspiratorial mentality maintained by agrarian Populists. To American Populists, farmers and workers alike were oppressed intentionally by what was commonly identified as "the interests." As Populism and Progressivism merged at the beginning of the twentieth century these interests took on the moniker of the *plutocracy*. The plutocrats were represented by the newly rich, or those who gained their fortunes through corruption or graft, or more generally as the "masters of the great corporation."⁸² The heads of railway corporations, grown wealthy on the backs of underpaid workers and on excessive fees charged the western farmer, were the most obvious of plutocrats, in addition to the American Manufacturer's

⁸¹ Hofstadter, 98.

⁸² Hofstadter, 137.

Association which provided an organizational target for western protest. Though plutocrats existed in every community, they were foremost associated with eastern corporate interests and the likes of individuals such as the Rockefellers, J.P. Morgan, and Andrew Carnegie.⁸³

The trust busting activities that prevailed south of the border under the leadership of Teddy Roosevelt in the first decade of the twentieth century assumed a less aggressive and ambitious form in the western Canadian context some ten to twenty years later. Nevertheless, prairie farmers particularly resented the activities of corporations like the Canadian Pacific Railway, the Canadian National Railway, and the Canadian Manufacturer's Association; all centered in the East. Laycock suggests that within all branches of prairie populism the plutocracy resided in opposition to the people, and that in social democratic circles party politics was coupled negatively with corporate control.⁸⁴ In the minds of prairie farmers, the East represented industry, tariffs, and protectionism. In political terms it epitomized domination of the West by the Liberal and Conservative parties. Contemporary political cartoons appeared frequently in farmer's periodicals like the *Western Producer* and *Turner's Weekly*, and capture well the essence of the relationship between the farmer and the capitalist and, correspondingly, the West and East.⁸⁵

⁸³ For an interesting expose on the travails of John D. Rockefeller as head of Standard Oil, see Michael McGerr, *The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America, 1870-1920* (New York: Free Press, 2003), 157-160.

⁸⁴ See Laycock, 140-144. Laycock writes: "'Plutocracy' is an old term of popular movement damnation, and had been common in American populist and popular discourse since Jefferson. The term refers to more than 'them': it signifies a general understanding of the prevailing political economy, which features financiers, industrialists, large commercial interests, landowners, and railway companies as the winners, and small farmers, urban-working, and lower classes as the losers." Laycock, 78.

⁸⁵ Figure 1 below is reprinted from *Turner's Weekly*, June 14, 1919, (Vol. 3, No. 4), 17. Figure 2 is reprinted from *Turner's Weekly*, August 2, 1919 (Vol. 3, No. 11), 15.

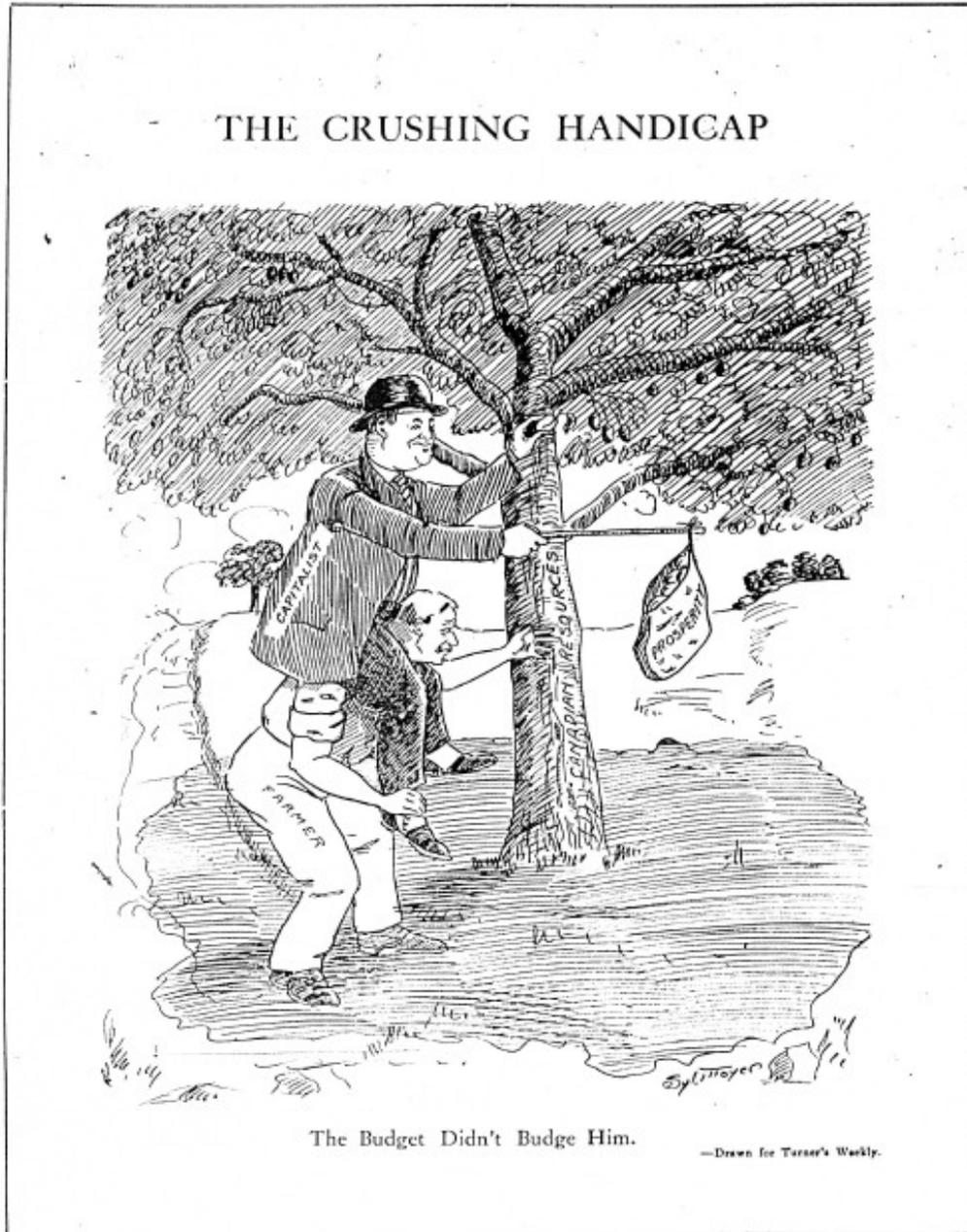


Figure 2.1: "The Crushing Handicap"
Reprinted with the permission of the *Western Producer*, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

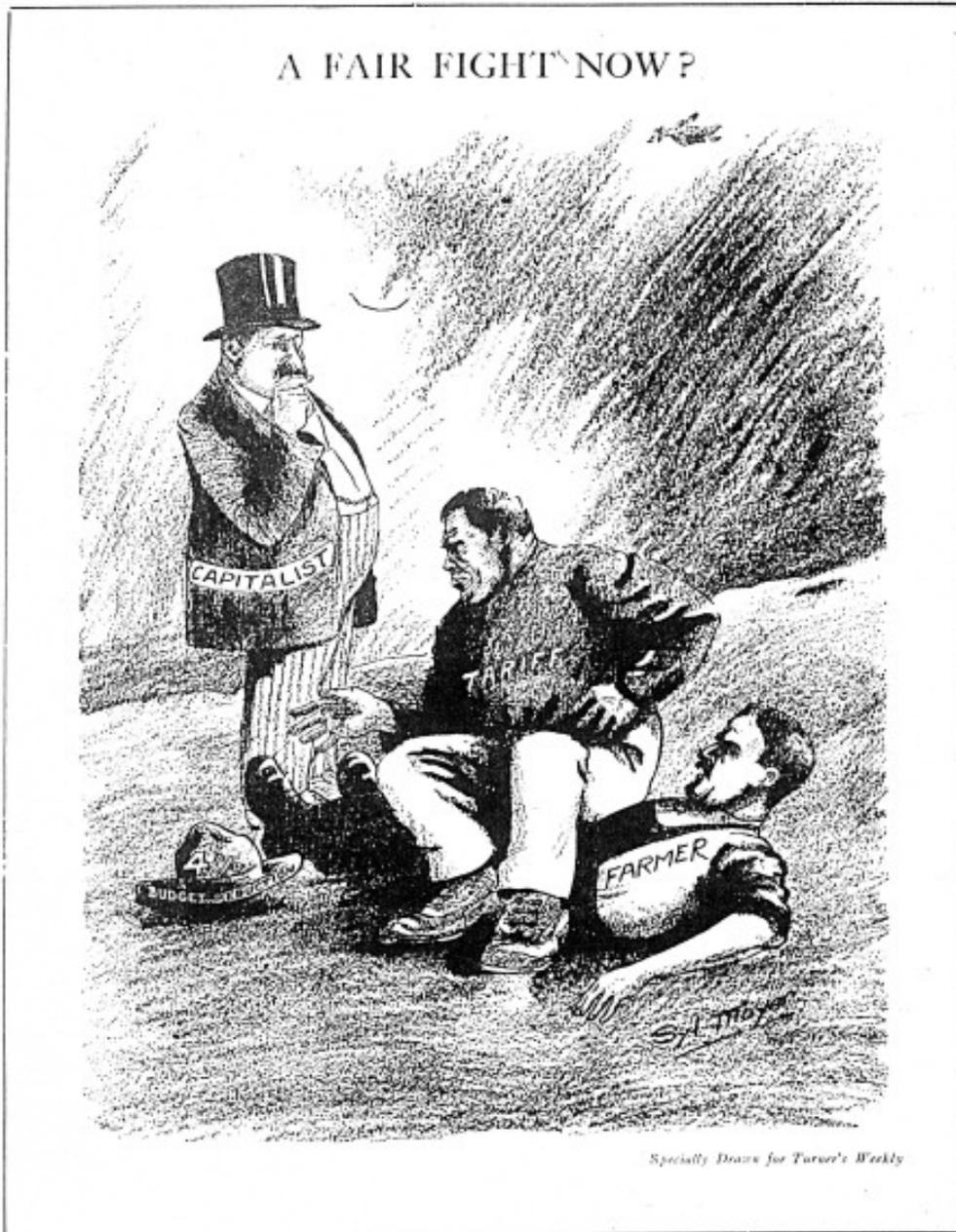


Figure 2.2: "A Fair Fight Now?"
Reprinted with the permission of the *Western Producer*, Saskatoon,
Saskatchewan.

(ii) *The "Last Best West"*

One can think of Canada's West in two distinct ways. The first, the physiographic West, encapsulates the practice of farming and the living of rural life on the frontier or Great Plains. The second includes the constructed West, or the manner in which the West was represented by the federal government and the meaning it contained for those who settled there. Though most Canadian historians distinguish between the American and Canadian Wests, particularly along political lines, for those who settled there the Canadian West was an extension of the American West, both physiographically and in its meaning.



Figure 2.3 (previous page): “The Last Best West” is taken from a calendar celebrating the 100th anniversary of the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta.⁸⁶ The poster appeared between 1905 and 1911.



Figure 2.4: “Western Canada: The New Eldorado,” characterizes Western Canada as an extension of the American west.

⁸⁶ James H. Marsh (ed.), 2005: *Alberta/Saskatchewan Centennial* (Histor!ca: 2005), 5 [March].



Figure 2.5: “Canada’s West in Europe,” is a reproduction of a Canadian immigration poster in Norway. For many Europeans Canada, like America, symbolized the existence of free land, in this case, 160 acres of free land. The amount of land available to new immigrants at the turn of the twentieth century in Canada was identical to the amount available to those immigrating to the United States under the terms of the 1862 Homestead Act.

American historians of the frontier, including Frederick Jackson Turner and Walter Prescott Webb, make virtually no distinction between the American or Canadian Wests, whether one thinks of each in terms of a frontier, or as part of the continental Great Plains.⁸⁷ For Turner the frontier is the frontier, whether in the Canadian, Australian, or American context. The existence of inexpensive,

⁸⁷ See Turner, particularly his essays, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” and “Pioneer Ideals and the State University,” in Turner, 1-38 and 269-289 respectively; Walter Prescott Webb, *The Great Plains* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981); Daniel Worster, *Under Western Skies: Nature and History in the American West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Paul F. Sharp throughout; and Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism*.

expansive tracts of land marks the edge of the frontier [see Figure 5 above]. The only difference between the American frontier and its Canadian equivalent is the timing of settlement, with the Canadian frontier finding settlement some twenty years following Turner's reported "end" to the American frontier. For the American historian, Richard Slotkin, Turner simply substituted a geographic entity for a class-based entity as the dividing discipline in American history.⁸⁸

For Webb the ninety-eighth meridian marks the beginning of the Great Plains on the North American continent. Webb argues that the movement from the eastern timberland into the Great Plains produces an inalterable change in the practice of life:

At this fault [at the 98th meridian] the ways of life and of living changed. Practically every institution that was carried across it was either broken and remade or else greatly altered. The ways of travel, the weapons, the method of tilling the soil, the plows and other agricultural implements, and even the laws themselves were modified. When people first crossed this line they did not immediately realize the imperceptible change that had taken place in their environment, nor, more is the tragedy, did they foresee the full consequences which that change was to bring in their own characters and in their modes of life.⁸⁹

For Seymour Martin Lipset, it was life in the "grain belt" that produced similar experiences on both sides of the artificial border. "It is highly significant that the first electorally successful socialist party [the CCF] in the United States or Canada should have developed in the same Great Plains wheat belt that earlier produced the Greenbackers, the Populists, the Non-Partisans, and other agrarian upheaval."⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 58-59.

⁸⁹ Webb, 8.

⁹⁰ Lipset, 34. For a discussion of how life in the American grain belt influenced life in places like Minnesota see Steven J. Keillor, *Cooperative Commonwealth: Co-ops in Rural Minnesota, 1859-1939* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2000).

In seeing the forty-ninth parallel as a man-made, artificial, and arbitrary creation, Sharp goes the furthest in acknowledging that the prairie West and the American Midwest are part of the same environment. (See Sharp's quotation at the bottom of page 40 above).

One recent history of the American West complements Sharp and his contemporaries. Richard White posits that migrations westward across the United States tended to follow latitudinal lines. The livestock that traveled with the migrants and the seeds grown in the previous, easterly environment most easily adapted to similar climatic conditions along the same parallel. An appeal to the familiar also influenced such migrations. These latitudinal movements, however, ceased once one reached the ninety-eighth meridian, that same signpost identified by Webb. There, suggests White, latitudinal influences weakened. "The major geographical marker on the Great Plains was longitude, not latitude; west of the 98th meridian the land grew increasingly arid. The advantages offered by migration along a line of latitude dwindled, while the challenge of adjusting to the arid West became preeminent."⁹¹ To put it another way, the West began beyond this signpost regardless of whether you were south of the forty-ninth parallel or north of it.

When one contemplates the meaning of the prairie West I feel myself entering the realm of history-making and not history-reporting. In other words, it is at this point where I palpably experience the ongoing debate within the History profession as to what the role of the historian is—to report history "objectively" or to create it. In keeping with the spirit of my dissertation I admit freely that what follows is my interpretation of the meaning of the Canadian prairies, albeit with the assistance of American historians, some writing in the *pastoral* tradition. Canadian historians, for very good reasons (or at least they must have seemed so at the time), have created the Canadian West in opposition

⁹¹ Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own: A New History of the American West"* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 184-185.

to the American West both as a means of assuming an heir of cultural and moral superiority and defining what it means to be Canadian. As one recent commentator on Canadian culture has concluded, however, being Canadian often means being *not* American.⁹²

Delving into the meaning of the West at the turn of the twentieth century poses a variety of methodological problems. In making such an attempt I wish to engage meaning through the use of *symbols* as they were produced at that time. William H. Sewell, Jr., in his examination of working class revolt in France during the French Revolution, aids my thinking in this process:

Although we [historians] obviously cannot hope to experience what nineteenth century workers experienced or to think their thoughts as they thought them, we can, with a little ingenuity, search out in the surviving records the symbolic forms through which they experienced their world. In part this means constructing the meanings of the words, metaphors, and rhetorical conventions that they used to talk about and think about their experiences. ... If we can discover the symbolic content and conceptual coherence of all kinds of working-class experiences, then the worker's adoption of explicit political ideologies will no longer appear as a sudden intrusion of 'ideas' from the outside but as the introduction or elaboration of yet another symbolic framework into lives that—like all ours—were already animated by conceptual issues and problems.⁹³

At the beginning of the twenty first century there exist a multitude of reasons how and why a Canadian is different from an American. At the turn of the twentieth century, however, my reading of a variety of texts leads me to conclude that those who settled Saskatchewan were not particularly concerned about the cultural differences that might prevail between settling in Saskatchewan or North Dakota, if such differences existed at all. For a large portion of newcomers to the West it was irrelevant whether one lived under the Stars and Stripes or the Union Jack. The West, either the American West or the

⁹² See Michael Adams, *Sex in the Snow: Canadian Social Values at the End of the Millennium* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1998).

⁹³ William H. Sewell, Jr., *Work and Revolution in France: The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 10-11.

Canadian prairies, largely meant the same thing: a progression away from more traditional modes of life in the East; opportunities for familial prosperity through the ownership of land; and in the case of European settlers, a chance to recreate a fragment of Old World society through the collective benefits of homogeneous group settlement coupled with New World freedoms and prosperity.

American writers, particularly historians within the pastoral literary tradition, suggest that western advance has always enticed humankind from the advent of civilization, beginning in the Classical Age with the writings of Virgil. Henry Nash Smith attributes this same thinking to American authors like William Gilpin, who suggests that each westward thrust of American society produced development superior to its easterly predecessor.⁹⁴ What Nash describes as this general law of progress, “so flattering to the West, becomes a guiding command to the American people in moments of decision.”⁹⁵ As American society spread westward, so too would the conception of the West as ideal simplicity, virtue, and contentment.⁹⁶

Leo Marx extends Smith’s notions of the pastoral tradition in American literature, equating the pastoral ideal with the idealization of rural life. In Marx’s history of westward movement agricultural life is deemed morally, aesthetically, and metaphysically superior to urban life in the East.⁹⁷ Movement westward was both a movement toward a simpler and more complete way of life, but also a

⁹⁴ Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 37.

⁹⁵ Smith, 37.

⁹⁶ Smith credits St. John de Crevecoeur with this sentiment on page 127.

⁹⁷ Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 99. Writing in 1972, noted Canadian writer, Margaret Atwood, argued that the prevailing theme in Canadian literature is one of survival. This perspective initially seems to agree with Webb and others as to the travails of life beyond the 98th meridian. However, Atwood does not equate the West as being any more foreboding than other regions of Canada, including Canada’s East. See Atwood, *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2004).

movement away from what Whitman described as the “shadow of Europe” and its many conventions. For Whitman, the concept of manifest destiny was inexplicably tied to westerly migration.

John Gast’s now famous painting, *American Progress*, completed in 1872, captures the essence of progress through western settlement [See Figure 6 below]. Art historian, Brian W. Dippie, comments that the tranquil procession of Civilization in *American Progress* leaves behind a bustling city in the East, while before it lies the panic of the old order, shrouded in darkness.⁹⁸ The image of Civilization, portrayed as a female form of great beauty, virgin-like, floating above the plains, is a moving and memorable image of progress. Not surprisingly, this same image would reappear on the Canadian plains some three decades later.

⁹⁸ Brian W. Dippie, “The Moving Finger Writes: *Western Art and the Dynamics of Change*,” in *Discovered Lands, Invented Pasts: Transforming Visions of the American West* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 96. The painting was retrieved from <http://www.csubak.edu/~gsantos/img0061.html>, February 17, 2006.



Figure 2.6: John Gast's "American Progress," completed in 1872. Note the railroads on the right side of the painting.

Knowingly or not, the Canadian government adopted American symbols of the West through their own program of western settlement. The settlement that occurred at the turn of the twentieth century was the second great attempt by the Canadian government to lure people to the prairies. The first enterprise, begun in 1885, failed for a variety of reasons.⁹⁹ Regardless, the United States was far more successful at gaining settlement onto the Great Plains, and one cannot help but wonder if American success initiated a borrowing of images by Canadians a generation later. Though the flag that accompanies the advent of

⁹⁹ The most obvious reason is that as long as free land was still available in the US at the end of the nineteenth century, settlers would opt for the more fertile soil and temperate climate of the American interior. Once free land had "disappeared" south of the forty-ninth parallel, and new farming practices encouraged settlement in previously unworkable, arid conditions, both in Canada and the US, settlement on the Canadian prairies began in earnest.

civilization is different, the beautiful image of progress remained largely identical: virgin-like in appearance, leaving bounty and progress in her wake [See Figures 7 and 8 below]. The railroad, barely visible at the feet of the drifting virgin in Figure 8, was another constant symbol of progress and westward settlement on both frontiers.¹⁰⁰



Figure 2.7: “Canada West,” appeared between the years of 1905 and 1911, the period during which Frank Oliver was the federal Minister of the Interior. Oliver’s intent was to attract more British settlement to the West, thereby insuring the British character of the nation. In so doing, however, Oliver

¹⁰⁰ For an obvious American example of the image of the railroad see the engraved picture which opens Albert D. Richardson’s book, *Beyond the Mississippi*, published in 1869. The engraving itself is titled “Beyond the Mississippi.” See http://cpr.org/Museum/Through_to_the_Pacific/Beyond_the_Mississippi.html for the image. Retrieved February 18, 2006.

appropriated the symbol of progress and civilization used so effectively south of the forty-ninth parallel.¹⁰¹



Figure 2.8: “Prosperity Follows Settlement,” captures the second symbol of the West in both the American and Canadian contexts--that a move westward is a move toward prosperity.¹⁰² This poster appeared between 1921 and 1923.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ http://www.canadianhistory.ca/iv/1867-1914/laurier_boom/oliver1.html. Retrieved February 17, 2006. The picture is from James H. Marsh (ed.), 2005: *Alberta/Saskatchewan Centennial* (Histor!ca: 2005), 5 [March].

¹⁰² James H. Marsh (ed.), 2005: *Alberta/Saskatchewan Centennial* (Histor!ca: 2005), 5 [March].

¹⁰³ This is the period when Charles Stewart served in the federal cabinet as Minister of Immigration and Colonization. Retrieved from

The promise of prosperity, as symbolized in Figure 8 above, was a second meaning encapsulated within the concept of the West. Canadian historian, Gerald Friesen, chronicles a variety of interpretive accounts for why immigrants chose to leave behind their old life for a new life in the Canadian West. Early Canadian histories of western settlement, Friesen argues, tended to acknowledge the dominant role of Clifford Sifton, federal Minister of the Interior, in promoting large-scale settlement. More recent scholarship focuses on the “push and pull” motives of settlers. Not only did the West pull immigrants to Canada through the promise of free land for those with the initiative to farm it, but the Old World itself, seen as an encumbrance to social mobility and economic prosperity, pushed those willing to risk the journey across the Atlantic.¹⁰⁴ The two factors of push and pull combined to produce a meaning of a prosperous West impossible to resist for tens of thousands.

In addition to abstract notions of progress and prosperity, a movement to either the Canadian West or American West meant the opportunity to recreate a fragment of the Old World community in the New World. Through immigration and settlement practices like *colony* settlement, whereby a sizeable portion of a European community or kinship group was encouraged to settle in a specific area, large portions of communities could come to North America and remain largely intact within defined geographic areas. The patchwork settlements that developed throughout the American and Canadian Wests allowed the European settler to retain the network of support that existed back in Europe while accessing the potential prosperity and freedom available only in North America.¹⁰⁵

<http://www.assembly.ab.ca/lao/library/premiers/stewart.htm>, February 17, 2006.

¹⁰⁴ Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: U of T Press, 1991), 248-252.

¹⁰⁵ Colony settlement was obvious in both the American and Canadian contexts. Richard White states that a number of these “colonies” segregated themselves

The *practice* of settlement on the Great Plains and prairies, therefore, did not produce a wild, unkempt garden where one could not distinguish one transplanted species from another. In both the Canadian and American gardens each subspecies was clearly distinct, with each specific variety initially separated from the others by generous amounts of space. Time alone would produce the cross-fertilization and introduction of hybrids necessary to foster the distinctive American and Canadian cultures as they come to exist in the twenty-first century. It was, however, these settlement patterns in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that created two of the greatest challenges for schools in the Canadian West—the need to teach and assimilate the “New Canadians” on the one hand, and the resulting need for rural school consolidation on the other. Not surprisingly, Saskatchewan policy makers will borrow generously from their American cousins in confronting these two great obstacles to a unified nation-state.

In opposition to the desires of Saskatchewan education policymakers stood the wishes of the settled, cohesive, immigrant populations who viewed the schoolhouse, the school board, and the power that resided within those who created these democratic entities, as the bastion of local control. Schools were intensely political entities then, as they are now, and maintaining some semblance of influence over the hiring of a teacher, the location of the school, and the program of study, remained impediments to control by the outside

into cohesive communities throughout Minnesota and the Dakotas, the most obvious examples being the Swedes and Norwegians. See White, 194, 299. In the Canadian context this “pattern” of settlement largely repeated itself. This was true even for American migrants like the 50,000 American families who settled in a strip between Regina and Saskatoon. Gerald Friesen suggests these colony settlements were most prevalent in Saskatchewan among Mennonite Germans who settled just north of Saskatoon, in addition a host of Scandinavian settlements. See Friesen, 248-249. While it is difficult to suggest that Canadian settlement practices copied those of the US, the end result was largely identical.

“expert” – that individual so central to Progressive movements in education across the North American Great Plains and the larger continent.¹⁰⁶

VI Conclusion

The transfer of Midwestern American culture to Saskatchewan occurred over a period of approximately two decades, roughly the period of time that transpired from the “end” of the American frontier until the end of large-scale settlement on the Canadian prairies in the middle of the 1920’s. Transfer occurred through a variety of forms, specifically through immigration, the flow of publications and organizations across the forty-ninth parallel, the sociological tour, and the influence of those who received higher education in the United States. American popular culture also appeared in Saskatchewan through a variety of media.

American culture was so well received in Saskatchewan largely because the Canadian West and the American West were part of the same environment – an environment that changed when one crossed the ninety-eighth meridian. Economically these agricultural hinterlands were inextricably linked. What happened in one necessarily influenced the other. If Saskatchewanians sought solutions to their uniquely prairie problems they need only look south for a viable solution. Looking south was made all the easier because in both the American and Canadian milieus the East, and much of what it represented, was something to vilify, not copy. Cultural affinity, as witnessed in the meaning, practice, and language of democracy, the East, and the West, will produce largely

¹⁰⁶ It seems appropriate at this point in my discussion to remind the reader that although I have focused on the movement of American culture, particularly Midwestern American culture and moralistic political culture, into the province of Saskatchewan, such a cultural transfer was itself part of a much larger movement of cultures and social policies around what Daniel Rodgers denotes as the North Atlantic community from Bogotá to Berlin. See Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*.

identical policy solutions to identical problems. This is particularly true in the fields of both K-12 and higher education.

Chapter Three: Border Crossings: US Contributions to K-12 Education Policy in the Province of Saskatchewan, 1905-1930

I Introduction

The history of Saskatchewan Kindergarten through Grade 12 education policy from the time of the province's creation in 1905 until the beginning of the Depression in 1930 is predominantly a history of rural schooling. The paramount challenge thrust upon Saskatchewan schools in this period was to educate a burgeoning population more heterogeneous than in any other province in the Dominion, in a pioneering landscape that was harsh, remote, and unforgiving. Into this frontier territory settled hundreds of thousands of immigrants, most whose mother tongue was neither English nor French. In Saskatchewan they sought the freedom and promise offered only within a continental frontier identified in the prairie Canadian context as the "last best west." To face this challenge Saskatchewan education policy makers looked in the only direction that offered experience and guidance for such an undertaking – south. American education was in the midst of its own reform in this period, having experienced a "rural school problem" two decades before its appearance in Saskatchewan. In addition to sharing parallel problems with our cousins in the American Midwest, Saskatchewan education policy makers adopted parallel solutions. Rather than look to Canada's East for inspiration in matters of schooling, between 1905 and 1930 Saskatchewan policy makers sought their answers to provincial problems in American forms of school reform.

Throughout this chapter I retain the framework for understanding culture and its transfer provided by William H. Sewell Jr., and articulated in Chapter Two. The transfer of American meanings, practice, and language of school reform to Saskatchewan was part of a larger transfer of culture from the Midwestern and American Plains states. In regard to *practice*, American methods

entered Saskatchewan in five related ways: through the hiring of American-trained teachers in the provinces' schools; through a dependence upon Saskatchewan Normal School textbooks written by American experts in a variety of fields, most notable in pedagogy and the philosophy of education; through Saskatchewan Normal School instructors' pursuit of Graduate Education at the two major American centers associated with education reform: the University of Chicago and Teacher's College, Columbia University; through numerous sociological tours south of the border by Saskatchewan educators and educationists; and finally through the exposure of Saskatchewan students to a great many school books written and published in the US. I present my arguments around the transfer of educational practice in Section I of this chapter.

The transfer of American *meanings* to Saskatchewan education is a somewhat more difficult concept to grasp. Regardless, my emphasis is on the crusade for school reform exemplified by the arrival in Saskatchewan in 1917 of the American expert on rural education, on loan from the Bureau of Education in Washington D.C., Dr. Harold Waldstein Foght. Not only does Foght's *Survey* signify a high water mark in the dependence upon American specialists in Saskatchewan education, but it also denotes a decision among policy makers to look south for their guidance around education reform, rather than east. I focus on the meanings of the "rural school problem" and its "obvious" solution, consolidation, particularly within the context of a language that is both democratic and Populist in tone. I show that these meanings were articulated in Saskatchewan and *received* into the province's system of schools.¹ This discussion occurs in Section II of this chapter.

While I introduce the *language* of school reform in Section II, I extend this discussion in Section III, particularly to the extent that Foght's *Survey* ushers in a

¹ The opposite side of any equation involving cultural transfer is the reception of that culture into the receiving state. For an example, see Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans have loved, hated, and transformed American culture since World War II* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

language of school reform known as *social efficiency*. Following the dissemination of his *Survey* in 1918, the language of social efficiency, and administrative progressivism for that matter, assume a dominant place within the body of literature occupied within the *Annual Reports* of Saskatchewan School Inspectors, replacing the more traditional language of schooling which emphasized citizenship and the Canadianization of recent immigrants.²

II *School Practice in Saskatchewan: A History of American Transplantation*

(i) *American-trained teachers in Saskatchewan*

The Department of Education in Saskatchewan experienced perpetual shortages of teachers in the decades following the province's entry into Confederation. Given the region's rapid increase in population during this period this is not surprising. When one considers, however, that in the years 1906 through 1911, the number of school districts in Saskatchewan increased, on average, at a rate of over one district for every teaching day, the magnitude of this increase is more revealing.³ As families from across Europe and the United

² Here I borrow specifically from the ideas of Sol Cohen, *Challenging Orthodoxies: Toward a New Cultural History of Education* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999). Cohen states the following: "My controlling assumptions are these: that language or language systems are a class of phenomena or historical source that can be studied as acts, events, or practices, as real and meaningful as any phenomena in the social world; that the field of education is a single discursive field; that we can track the influence of school reform movements through the diffusion and appropriation of language; and that fundamental change in education can be marked through change in the language system. Which is to say that fundamental change occurs when one language system, formerly marginal, displaces another, formerly dominant, in the total discursive field of education." Cohen, 89. I encourage the reader to monitor the language of efficiency that appears in many of the quotations in this chapter.

³ For the most part every school division in the province contained one school. Walter C. Murray, "History of Education in Saskatchewan," in Adam Shortt and

States entered Canada's hinterland, the demand for qualified teachers who could "Canadianize" the foreigners quickly outstripped supply. The province initially found itself entirely incapable of producing teachers at a rate exceeding a trickle. Combined with this inherent problem was the fact that in this era teachers resigned, married and left the profession, and/or left the province at a high rate. This had a calamitous effect on the number of certified teachers in the province at any given time. Provisional and interim certificates were granted on a short-term basis to teachers whose professional qualifications were not yet complete. The number of these far exceeded the number of permanent certificates each year.⁴

The majority of teachers employed in Saskatchewan in 1916 received their training from outside the province, some from as far away as Australia. Unlike the province of Ontario some 50 years earlier, where the presence of American teachers and textbooks in that province was vilified, in Saskatchewan the national origin of its teachers was largely irrelevant. In 1914 Walter Murray boasted that the educational ideals of Saskatchewan were Canadian and largely Ontarian.⁵ A second look, however, reveals that by 1930 Murray's assertion was no longer accurate; Saskatchewan's educational system was much more American, and much less Ontarian, than Murray identified.

As early as 1911 Saskatchewan school inspectors had already witnessed a decrease in the number of teachers trained in Ontario entering the Saskatchewan work force, and its resultant effect on the efficiency of local schools.

The regulations requiring teachers trained in Ontario to teach at least one year in that province is responsible for a decrease in the number of

Arthur G. Doughty, *Canada and Its Provinces* (Toronto: Glasgow, Brook & Company, 1914), 462. The number of pupils increased from a total of 31,275 in 1906 to 77,000 in 1911.

⁴ Murray estimates that the number of permanent certificates granted between 1906 and 1911 averaged 186. The number of provisional and interim certificates granted in 1909 was 508. In 1911 the number issued jumped to 915. Murray, 463.

⁵ Murray, 464. Most of the Saskatchewan-trained teachers were employed in rural Saskatchewan. See Harold W. Foght, *A Survey of Education in the Province of Saskatchewan, Canada* (Regina: King's Printer, 1918), 110.

teachers from that province [in Saskatchewan]. There is an increase in the number of teachers trained in our province; from the point of view of teaching we welcome the increase. As pointed out in my 1910 report, however, the danger of filling the schools with teachers of the 'home' district increases; the discipline, spirit and efficiency of the school is usually diminished, sacrificed to little more than personal or financial interests. In town schools the solidarity and efficiency of the staff are weakened because the work of the school and the interests of the children are relegated to a second place.⁶

A reduction in the number of Ontario-trained teachers, combined with the inability to train teachers within Saskatchewan, necessitated a widening of the net to attract teachers from other jurisdictions into the province.

Unlike the practice initiated in Upper Canada a century before, which went to great lengths to rid the province of Republican influences,⁷ the province of Saskatchewan welcomed the arrival of teachers from the United States and elsewhere at a time when the demand for qualified teachers outstripped supply. The chief concern for the Department of Education was not the nationality of the teacher, but the extent of his or her qualifications. The *Annual Report of the Department of Education* in 1916 highlights the problem:

To obtain each year an adequate supply of qualified teachers is perhaps the most serious problem which confronts the department and which has not yet been solved. ... With the 4,481 qualified teachers in charge of schools in 1915 we should have had 6,047 qualified teachers for 1916, an ample supply, because only 179 new schools were opened during the year. The records show, however, that we were compelled to issue 785 provisional certificates or "permits" for periods varying from two to eight months each to keep the schools in operation. ...The causes for the

⁶ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report of the Department of Education of the Province of Saskatchewan, 1911*, 48.

⁷ J. Donald Wilson suggests that despite the fact that American teachers provided the only instruction that some students received between 1812 and 1848, their efforts were still criticized by those who feared that American schoolmasters corrupted the minds of British North American youth. See J. Donald Wilson, "Education in Upper Canada: Sixty Years of Change," in *Canadian Education: A History*, ed. J. Donald Wilson, Robert M. Stamp, and Louis-Philippe Audet (Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1970), 192.

shortage are due mainly to the great demand for help in other lines of work and to the fact that many of our lady teachers marry. The war, too, has robbed the province of practically all the physically fit young men teachers. The shortage is felt mainly in our rural school districts.⁸

The *Report* also confirms that the flow of teachers to Saskatchewan from other provinces had receded significantly since 1906, when in that year fully 66% of new teachers to the province came from other Canadian provinces. By 1916 that percentage was reduced to 25%.⁹

By 1920, with the Great War over and life on the prairies returning to pre-war conditions, there emerged in the Department of Education an expectation that the demand for qualified teachers could be met. Despite these assumptions it soon became obvious that teacher transience from one province to another was increasing, thereby consistently reducing the number of qualified teachers in Saskatchewan.

It was hoped that the remarkable decrease in the number of provisional certificates issued in 1919 was an indication that Saskatchewan was on the way to an adequate supply of trained teachers, but the experience of 1920 which shows an increase of provisionally certified teachers did not warrant such expectations. The supply of teachers and the movement of teachers from one province to another depends largely upon the salaries paid and it would appear that Saskatchewan salaries must advance before an adequate supply of trained teachers can be maintained. An unusual movement was noted in 1920 in the return of teachers, particularly male teachers, to the eastern provinces. High schools of the east, particularly, are paying better salaries. ... Teachers are urgently required and trustees generally are willing to pay the salary asked, irrespective of qualifications.¹⁰

Each successive year of the *Annual Report* articulates the same concern regarding a lack of qualified teachers in the province of Saskatchewan,

⁸ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report of the Department of Education of the Province of Saskatchewan, 1916*, 10-11.

⁹ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report of the Department of Education of the Province of Saskatchewan, 1916*, 11.

¹⁰ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report of the Department of Education of the Province of Saskatchewan, 1920*, 14.

particularly as it relates to a shortage among teachers trained at Saskatchewan Normal Schools. It was not until 1930 that the Deputy Minister of Education could suggest that the supply of teachers produced in Saskatchewan met the demand: "The province is now training sufficient teachers to meet all our requirements and in this year issued 1,651 professional certificates to teachers trained in the province. The third class certificate has disappeared and the proportion of first class certificates, as compared with second class certificates, is rapidly increasing."¹¹

Noticeably absent from any of the *Annual Reports of the Department of Education* between the years 1913 and 1930 is any concern regarding the number of teachers from the United States who entered the ranks of Saskatchewan's teaching force.¹² As Walter Murray noted at the time, the province encouraged the immigration of teachers whose professional qualifications were suitable to meet the demands of the province's schools and their increasing foreign population.

Though much is done to encourage the immigration of teachers, their professional qualifications are closely scanned. So far as their scholastic qualifications are concerned, the department of Education prior to 1912 recognized only certificates granted by other provincial departments in Canada and the British education offices. The professional training of candidates is even more severely scrutinized before permanent certificates are granted. This practically ensures that all the teachers will be more or less of the same type of scholarship and of professional skill, and represent the same ideals of social and civic life. This is a matter of far-reaching consequence, since the schools are the most effective agencies in the Canadianization of the immigrants.¹³

Clearly, sufficient training and the capacity to aid in the acculturation of the new immigrants were the keys to receiving teacher certification in the province of

¹¹ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report of the Department of Education of the Province of Saskatchewan, 1930*, 1.

¹² Qualified American teachers were allowed certification in Saskatchewan beginning in 1913. Murray, 463.

¹³ Murray, 463.

Saskatchewan. Apprehension over a teacher's national origin was entirely absent from any of the Department of Education documents from the period, not to mention contemporary historiography.

From the time American teachers were allowed certification in Saskatchewan in 1913, no apparent concern was expressed over the number of American teachers entering the province's schools. Nor was anxiety expressed regarding the sorts of information and ideals being taught in the classrooms. These professionals were an integral part of a province's educational system which sought to create a society not unlike the frontier states in the American West. In essence, there existed more common ground between these American states and the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta than existed between Canada's West and its East. The necessity of obtaining qualified teachers to teach a growing pupil population each year made recruiting American teachers both a luxury and a necessity. The number of American teachers entering Saskatchewan's teacher work force remained consistent between 1913 and 1930, but that number remained moderate at best.

Between the years of 1906 and 1915 the number of American teachers in Saskatchewan who obtained their academic standing in the United States was 238 out of a total of 4979, or roughly 4.8%.¹⁴ By 1929 the overall percentage of teachers in the province trained in America decreased to 2.9%, or 659 out of 22,918.¹⁵ Such numbers, if taken alone, certainly do not convey an extensive degree of American influence in Saskatchewan education. However, during this same period American textbooks dominated the curriculum within the Saskatchewan Normal School. If the schoolbook was the curriculum, or as Bruce Curtis suggests, schoolbook knowledge became state knowledge, the influence of these

¹⁴ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report of the Department of Education of the Province of Saskatchewan, 1915*, 23.

¹⁵ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report of the Department of Education of the Province of Saskatchewan, 1929*, 62.

books on the thinking and practice of training teachers, and later their students, in the province of Saskatchewan was magnified.¹⁶

(ii) *Saskatchewan Teachers Trained on American Models*

For the period between 1908 and 1920, each year of the *Annual Report of the Department of Education* outlined the program of study for the province's Normal Schools. Notably absent from the Saskatchewan Normal School reading lists were any books or manuals coming from Canada's East. During this period in the province of Ontario, *Ontario Normal School Manuals* were abundant within that jurisdiction's Normal Schools, and were the required textbooks for training teachers in that province.¹⁷ Though such textbooks already existed elsewhere in Canada, the Department of Education in the province of Saskatchewan ignored these in favor of many titles written in the United States. Again, unlike the case in Ryersonian Ontario where American textbooks were viewed as unpatriotic and un-British, in Saskatchewan a variety of American textbooks influenced the minds and practice of the province's teachers.

In 1908 over one half the books appearing on the Saskatchewan Normal School's required reading list were written by noted American experts in a host of fields, specifically in the realm of pedagogy and educational philosophy. Most noteworthy was Herman Harrell Horne's, *Philosophy of Education*.¹⁸ Horne is well known for a wide variety of ideas, some specific to the realm of religious education. Horne completed his doctoral work at Harvard under the guidance of

¹⁶ Bruce Curtis, "Schoolbooks and the Myth of Curricular Republicanism: The State and the Curriculum in Canada West, 1820-1850," in *Histoire Social – Social History*, Vol. XVI, No 32 (November, 1983): 305-329.

¹⁷ See, for example, Ontario, *Ontario Normal Schools Manual*, "Science of Education," 1915. Retrieved Feb. 19, 2007 from <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/18451/18451-h/18451-h.htm>.

¹⁸ Herman Harrell Horne, *The Philosophy of Education, being the foundations in the related natural and mental sciences* (New York: MacMillan, 1904).

William James and spent over three decades as Professor of Education at New York University, where he retired in 1942. He is most noted, however, for his idealistic philosophy—a philosophy that often pitted him against the instrumentalism of John Dewey. Horne completed post-graduate work in Berlin and was obviously influenced by German philosophy and methods while there. Like Dewey, Horne believed that the individual could only be defined within the larger whole.¹⁹ In terms of his educational thought, Horne’s program seems to fit into what Kliebard described as the *mental disciplinarian* group of education reformers, given his emphasis on the brain and its exercise.²⁰

A second American author of note on the reading lists for Saskatchewan teachers was the reform-minded Charles De Garmo who, through his textbook, *Principles of Secondary Education*, brought Herbartian thought to the province of Saskatchewan.²¹ In 1895 De Garmo had been President of the National Herbart Society when, at the annual meeting of the National Education Association (NEA) in Cleveland, Ohio, he led an attack against the traditional, humanistic education program of William Torrey Harris.²² As part of the child study movement, De Garmo’s writing was firmly in line with that of G. Stanley Hall and other *developmentalists* in American education. At the time he wrote his textbook, De Garmo was Professor of the Science and Art of Education, and President of Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania.

A second member of the American child study movement was also widely read in the Saskatchewan Normal School. Elmer Burritt Bryan was educated at Indiana, Harvard, and Clark University and at the time he completed his book,

¹⁹ www.answers.com/topic/herman-harrell-horne, retrieved May 21. See also www.talbot.edu/ce20/educators/view.cfm?n=herman_horne for a brief biography of Horne.

²⁰Herbert M. Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum, 1893-1958* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 4-8.

²¹ Charles De Garmo, *Principles of Secondary Education* (New York: MacMillan, 1907).

²² Kliebard, 16-17.

The Basis of Practical Teaching: A Book in Pedagogy, was President of Franklin College in Indiana.²³ He later became President of Ohio University and Colgate. It was at Clark where Bryan trained under the tutelage of G. Stanley Hall, whose belief in a child-centered, integrated approach to a student's learning held great sway throughout a large part of the twentieth century. Like De Garmo, Bryan's textbook would obviously exert a profound influence on the practice of fledgling teachers in the province of Saskatchewan.²⁴ This American influence extended beyond the developmentalist camp of school reform into the realm of social efficiency.

Standard reading in Saskatchewan Normal Schools also included John A. H. Keith's, *Elementary Education: Its Problems and Processes*.²⁵ In it Keith introduces the budding teacher to a new mode of education reform, one Kliebard denotes as *social efficiency*.²⁶

In light of the social view of education, the process of education takes on significant meaning. The one comprehensive end takes in the multitude of smaller ends that otherwise become obstructions to the process. The material must meet one unswerving requirement, and the process must be judged by its social reference. *Social efficiency*, of the actual and ideal types, is the aim of education, and the process is one of organizing an individual in such a way that he actually and ideally participates in the life of the race.²⁷ [emphasis added]

Whereas in the American context of school reform Kliebard argues that various interest groups vied for prominence and influence throughout a 70-year period

²³ Elmer Burritt Bryan, *The Basis of Practical Teaching: A Book in Pedagogy* (New York: Silver Burdett, 1905).

²⁴ Another Herbartian text, *Manual of Pedagogics*, by Daniel Putnam, appeared in the Normal School library. It was completed while Putnam was the Principal of the Michigan State Normal School. See *Manual of Pedagogics* (New York: Silver, Burdett, and Co., 1895).

²⁵ John A.H. Keith, *Elementary Education: Its Problems and Processes* (Chicago: Foresman and Co., 1907). Keith was Professor of Pedagogy and Assistant in Psychology at North Illinois State Normal School.

²⁶ Kliebard, 77-78.

²⁷ Keith, 43.

of change, Saskatchewan Normal Schools seemed to adopt works from all interest groups into their curriculum, albeit with a lag between their prominence south of the border and their utilization to the north. It is not surprising, therefore, to note that American books entered the mainstream of Saskatchewan education some 15 to 20 years after they gained prominence in the US. Dewey-style reform would take hold in Saskatchewan only at the end of the 1920's. Social efficiency, as I will demonstrate below, became the dominant language of reform in Saskatchewan for close to two decades from the 1910's well into the 1920's.

The final American entry on the required reading list was Rueben Post Halleck's, *Psychology and Psychic Culture*.²⁸ Halleck, unlike the other American authors who were either professors of education or heads of State Normal Schools, was principal of one of the most prestigious high schools in the United States, Louisville Male High School in Kentucky. Halleck introduced a behaviorist approach to the study of psychology and the child, much along the lines of Edward Thorndike. Thorndike's book, *Principles of Teaching based on Psychology*, though not appearing on the required reading list at Saskatchewan Normal Schools, was found in the school's library.²⁹

It becomes difficult to judge the extent to which teachers trained in later years were exposed to American authors, given that the reading lists were no longer published in the *Annual Reports* following 1920. What is obvious, however, is that other American sources were notably present in the province's Normal School libraries. The Saskatchewan teacher's exposure to American sources was intense.

²⁸ Rueben Post Halleck, *Psychology and Psychic Culture* (New York: American Book Company, 1895). Halleck completed his master's degree at Yale University.

²⁹ Edward L. Thorndike, *Principles of Teaching based on Psychology* (New York: A.G. Seiler, 1916). Thorndike, of course, was professor at Teacher's College and one of the foremost social efficiency proponents of his time.

Several other textbooks that carry the stamp of the Saskatchewan Normal School between 1905 and 1930 were written by American experts in a variety of educational fields. Among them were George Drayton Strayer's, *A Brief Course in the Teaching Process*, Calvin N. Kendall and George A. Mirick's, *How to Teach the Fundamental Subjects*, Daniel Wolford LaRue, *The Science and the Art of Teaching*, and Harry Lloyd Miller and Richard T. Hargreaves, *The Self-Directed School*.³⁰

The existence of a wide array of American books on required reading lists and in libraries only has meaning when one considers the number of teachers affected by these works. Despite the fact the province of Saskatchewan's Normal Schools were struggling to meet the demand for teachers, these schools were still increasingly turning out large numbers of teachers on an annual basis, all of them trained to a large degree on American models of teaching.

Between the years 1906 and 1916 the number of teachers trained in the province of Saskatchewan's Normal Schools totaled 5677.³¹ Having been reared on American sources in their training, these beginning teachers undoubtedly transmitted this learning into their classrooms. Fully two thirds of the teachers teaching in the province's rural schools in 1916 were trained in Saskatchewan.³² The percentage of Saskatchewan teachers in the cities, though not available in statistics, would exceed this percentage. By 1926, the total number of teachers

³⁰ George Drayton Strayer, *A Brief Course in the Teaching Process* (New York: MacMillan, 1920). Strayer was on faculty at Teacher's College, Columbia University. Calvin N. Kendall and George A. Mirick, *How to Teach the Fundamental Subjects* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1915. Kendall and Mirick were Commissioners of Education for the state of New Jersey. Daniel Wolford LaRue, *The Science and the Art of Teaching* (New York: American Book Co., 1917). LaRue was on faculty at the Normal School of Pennsylvania. Harry Lloyd and Richard T. Hargreaves, *The Self-Directed School* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1925). Miller was professor Education at the University of Wisconsin, while Hargreaves was a high school principal in Minneapolis.

³¹ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1916*, 28.

³² Foght *Survey*, 110.

trained in the province was 18, 440.³³ Given the acceleration in teacher training in Saskatchewan Normal Schools that began in 1906, it is obvious that the vast majority of teachers in the province were very familiar with American methodology and philosophy of education at the time they took employment in Saskatchewan.

Tomkins confirms this was the case when he asserts that by 1922, Saskatchewan normal school students were well-versed in the “project method” of teaching first developed by the American, William Heard Kilpatrick. Tomkins characterizes Kilpatrick’s method as the most publicized pedagogical innovation of American progressivism, and describes such changes in the Saskatchewan curriculum as indicative of an interwar period of curriculum ferment across Canada, first initiated by the Foght *Survey* Report of 1918. For Tomkins, “Foght’s appointment illustrated an assumption, common in the western provinces especially, that American expertise and ideas could, with modification, be applied in a Canadian environment that was not thought to be fundamentally different from that of the United States.”³⁴

When combined with the preponderance of American sources on the required reading list, the collection of American textbooks available to and utilized by Saskatchewan’s teachers in training represents nothing short of an inundation of American practice and philosophy into the classrooms of the province. Classroom teachers were well versed in American method and thinking around education when their training was complete. Given that a number of the instructors in the province’s Normal Schools were actively engaged in graduate study in the United States during this period, the degree of exposure to American models of teaching intensifies still further.

³³ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report*, 1926, 50.

³⁴ George S. Tomkins, *A Common Countenance: Stability and Change in the Canadian Curriculum* (Scarborough: Prentice Hall, 1986), 190. In Canada, the project method came to be called the enterprise method.

(iii) *Training Those who Train the Teachers: Saskatchewan Normal School Instructors Pursue Advanced Education in the US*

The decade of the 1920's witnessed a marked increase in the number of educational elites in the province of Saskatchewan travelling southward to take advanced degrees at the two Meccas for American progressive education reform—the University of Chicago and Teacher's College, Columbia University.³⁵ Each of the educators listed below was directly involved in teacher education in the province of Saskatchewan at one of the three provincial Normal Schools, and include: J. W. Hedley, member of the Normal School staff in Saskatoon, who completed his MA in 1919 and his Ph.D. in Mathematics at Chicago in 1924; in 1919 Miss Hiltz, Director of Household Science, resigned to pursue study at Columbia; Miss M.A. Bell, head of the Household Science Department, attended Chicago, receiving a bachelor's degree in 1922; Miss Grayson was granted leave to resume her studies at Columbia University in the same year; Miss Lindenburgh and Miss McGill, both members of the Regina Normal School staff, studied at Columbia University in 1924, as did Miss McLenaghan of the Household Science Branch; F.M. Quance, Principal of Regina Normal School, completed his Ph.D. in Educational Psychology at Columbia in 1925; two other staff members attended Teacher's College with him that year; in 1926 several school inspectors took summer post-graduate courses at American universities.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the pursuit of advanced education abroad is one of the surest methods in which a foreign culture is absorbed into the home culture. Upon their return to Saskatchewan these Normal School Instructors will share their newfound learning with thousands of Saskatchewan teachers, thereby

³⁵ George Tomkins estimates that between 1923 and 1938 over 1000 Canadian registered for coursework at Columbia University alone. See Tomkins, "Foreign Influences on Curriculum and Curriculum Policy Making in Canada: Some Impressions in Historical and Contemporary Perspective," in *Curriculum Inquiry*, 11:2 (1981), 161.

affecting teacher practice across the province's school rooms. These more formal and long-lived exposures to American education practice were a prominent means through which American methods transferred to the province of Saskatchewan. Though of shorter duration, the sociological tour was another path along which American habits made their way northward to the Canadian prairie.

(iv) *The sociological tour: Continental Problems with American Solutions*

In the decade preceding the First World War and particularly following the War's cessation, the challenges facing the province of Saskatchewan were largely identical to those of its southern plains neighbor. Given these parallel environments, Saskatchewan school inspectors were particularly interested in learning about school reform through, for example, attending annual meetings of the National Education Association (NEA) in the United States. Though the Saskatchewan Education Association had been formed in 1907 as a provincial subsidiary of the CEA and NEA, its role in the province was minimal.³⁶ For this reason, Mr. A. Kennedy, Inspector of Schools for the Weyburn area in southeastern Saskatchewan, was perhaps the most noteworthy of "tourists" south of the border. In both his 1910 and 1911 Report to the provincial Minister of Education, Kennedy cites speeches made at the annual conferences. Upon his return to Saskatchewan Kennedy strongly endorsed the progressive practice of industrial education, confirming that the end of education, as he learned in the South, must be vocational.³⁷

³⁶ Verna Gallen, "The Development of the Teaching Profession in Saskatchewan," in *A History of Education in Saskatchewan: Selected Readings*, ed. Brian Noonan, Dianne Hallman, and Murray Scharf (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2006), 179, n.4.

³⁷ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1912*, 45.

Kennedy was also in attendance at the 1918 conference, but on this occasion he played a much more vocal role. There, in front of the assembled delegates, he took the stage and stated:

Mr. President—The Department of Education of the Government of the Province of Saskatchewan fully appreciates the value of the National Education Association and has requested me to carry to you a message of greeting and good-will. Problems that present themselves to you for your consideration and solution also present themselves to us; and your discussion and solutions are of very great benefit to us.

Through the courtesy of your Bureau of Education and your Commissioner of Education we have recently had the valuable services of Dr. H.W. Foght in conducting an Educational Survey from which very material benefits are expected. I beg to take this opportunity of expressing our gratitude in this connection.

As our two countries lie side by side; as our boys are fighting side by side; as these two flags can hang side by side, I see no reason why our educational forces cannot work side by side.³⁸

The issues facing Saskatchewan educators were indeed very similar to those facing educators in the American Midwest and northern Plains. The need for greater emphasis on vocational education, one of the hallmarks of the progressive movement in the United States during this period, was a constant theme on the Canadian prairies as well. In his 1918 report, the American expert on rural education, Harold Foght, stressed the importance of increasing access to agricultural education: “The entire survey report constitutes a report on vocational agricultural education to the extent it seeks to relate all education in the Province definitely to the basic occupation of the people.”³⁹ Such pronouncements were not lost on School Inspectors such as Kennedy, who, in his yearly report to the provincial Minister of Education, suggested that developing vocational models like those in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Georgia, North Dakota,

³⁸ The speech received a standing ovation at the conference and was reported by Kennedy in his yearly report to the Minister of Education. See Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1918*, 186.

³⁹ Foght, 131.

and Iowa, may well make agricultural education in the province of Saskatchewan more efficient.⁴⁰

In 1914 Kennedy attended the NEA annual convention once again, in addition to the School Garden Association of America convention from July 4 to 11 in St. Paul, Minnesota. There he was inspired by what he found, and reiterated his affinity for greater openness to American practice. "The three prairie provinces might well extend an invitation to the NEA to hold its annual convention in one of our Western cities in 1917, or later; the inspiration and educational stimulus would prove of inestimable value."⁴¹ In regard to school gardens, Kennedy boasted: "I believe the school garden at Souris School, Weyburn, will rank as one of the best school gardens operated in America in 1914."⁴² Although Kennedy was not the first Saskatchewan education policy maker to head south for guidance, he was probably the most frequent sociological tourist and the most ardent supporter of American method.

Other elite educators in the province took Kennedy's advice seriously. By 1919 the province had appointed a Director of Household Science, itself a key component to vocational education. The Director, Fannie A. Twiss, submitted her yearly report to the Minister of Education from New York City. Within the report she extends her appreciation for the opportunity given her by the Department of Education to pursue a year's leave to continue her studies at Columbia University, New York City. Ms. Twiss had previously travelled to the US in 1916, visiting Chicago, Indianapolis, and the University of Minnesota to witness household science education there. Similarly, in the summer of the same year the Director of Rural Education Associations conducted a "sociological tour" to the Midwestern US to attend the summer meeting of the National Education Association in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, spend several days in Madison, visit

⁴⁰ See Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1918, 192-196.*

⁴¹ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1914, 44.*

⁴² Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1914, 47.*

Northwestern University and the University of Chicago, attend Iowa State College and Iowa Teacher's College, and spend time in the state of Minnesota, all for the purpose of acquiring expertise in the realm of vocational education and solving the "rural school problem."⁴³

In his 1926 annual report, inspector McKechnie of Regina articulated the changing conception of education in the province of Saskatchewan, highlighting the influence of the Dalton and Winnetka plans on Saskatchewan practice.⁴⁴ In 1930, the inspector for the Saskatoon School Division, one of the few urban school districts in the province of Saskatchewan, confirmed in his report to the provincial Minister of Education that two of the city's teachers had made the pilgrimage to Winnetka, Illinois to study the Winnetka Plan. While there, the teachers attended a summer study session under the leadership of Dr. Carleton Washburne. The Winnetka Plan, developed by Washburne at Dewey's Laboratory School, University of Chicago in 1919, arrived in Saskatoon a full decade following its introduction into American public education.⁴⁵ The plan emphasized individualized, un-graded learning in opposition to the structured grading system ubiquitous throughout North American schools. Washburne's pedagogy represented a break from the routine so often criticized by policymakers and writers on both sides of the border. Despite the lag between its introduction into American schools and its movement to Saskatoon, such a time lapse was standard in regard to transfer from the American milieu to the province of Saskatchewan.⁴⁶

As mentioned in Chapter Two, when it was impractical for Saskatchewan educators to tour south for inspiration, often Americans would tour northward

⁴³ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1919*, 66 and 77 respectively. The visit to the American Midwest closely mirrors that taken by Walter Murray in 1906. See Chapter Four.

⁴⁴ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1926*, 101.

⁴⁵ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1930*, 92-93. A couple years later Washburne himself arrived in Saskatchewan to spread the word of the Winnetka Plan.

⁴⁶ In Chapter Two I suggest the lag in cultural transfer was closer to 20 years.

to spread the word of American innovation. In the summer of 1919, for example, as Saskatchewan educators attended a summer institute, they were treated every evening for a week to lectures presented by Professor J.B. Arp, Superintendent of Schools, Jackson County, Minnesota.⁴⁷ Arp was a disciple of Elwood Cubberly and a staunch proponent of school consolidation as a means of insuring efficiency in education. The timing of his lectures coincided with the dissemination of Foght's recommendation around the same theme.

Taken in isolation, any one of the four modes in which American educational influences affected the teaching profession in Saskatchewan must be considered modest. When viewed in concert, however, that influence becomes profound. A few hundred American teachers scattered around the province represented a small portion of the teacher work force in Saskatchewan; their influence fragmented at best. When added to the thousands of teachers trained in Saskatchewan's Normal Schools by educationists who received advanced training in the two centers for progressive reform in the US, with library shelves bulging with chronicles of American reform efforts, the exposure to American educational influences becomes formative for the Saskatchewan teacher. This impact on the teaching profession will obviously manifest itself in the province's students who, like their teachers, will be exposed to various aspects of American culture through the medium of the printed word. For school inspectors (those most responsible for implementation of education policy) and other officials in the Department of Education, the sociological tour became a further conduit through which American practice could be transplanted in Saskatchewan soil. As if to complement the exposure of American educational practice on the Canadian prairie, student textbooks in the province also contained a decidedly American flavor in the classroom.

⁴⁷ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1919*, 59.

(v) *American K-12 school books in Saskatchewan Schools*

In Chapter One I was critical of a limited breadth in the historiography of Canadian Education. One exception to this criticism comes in the realm of the history of school textbooks in circulation in Western Canada in the early twentieth century. Numerous Western historians have examined the content of schoolbooks available to students. At first glance the existence of American textbooks in Saskatchewan classrooms is a non-issue – the province legislated the free distribution of Canadian *Alexandra Readers* to all school-age children beginning in 1908, to be replaced some years later by another Canadian Reader. Closer examination, however, suggests that the *Alexandra Readers* were not so Canadian as originally thought, as revealed in a brief but high-spirited debate within the Saskatchewan legislature around the contract to procure the *Readers*. Furthermore, though intended to be the Reader of choice in all Saskatchewan schools, there is evidence to suggest that a number of American Readers infiltrated Saskatchewan classrooms for a variety of reasons between 1908 and 1930. Regardless, the existence of American Readers and textbooks in Saskatchewan was not a concern among provincial education policy makers, particularly since those textbooks produced in Canada inevitably came from Ontario, were more expensive than American books, and paid little homage to the experiences of westerners on the frontier. The moral and ethical fiber of the textbook was seemingly what mattered most to policy makers, not its national origin. Again, this is unlike the experience in Ontario some five decades earlier, where the existence of republican ideals in school textbooks was roundly criticized by many in that province. Like American teachers entering the province's schools, American textbooks fulfilled a need in Saskatchewan not met by those produced in other parts of Canada.

The Departments of Education in the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan authorized the purchase and free distribution of the *Alexandra*

Readers to all pupils beginning in 1908. These *Readers* remained the authorized textbooks for Saskatchewan students until 1922 and were the curricular staple for an entire generation of school-aged children in both provinces.⁴⁸ Much like the *Irish National Readers* used in Ontario in the mid-nineteenth century, these textbooks not only helped a new generation of young Canadians learn how to read, but inculcated new citizens with the requisite political and moral ideals of a fledgling democratic nation.⁴⁹ Because textbooks were and are more than a source of information—because the lessons within them represent what a province hopes to replicate in its citizenry—the process of choosing and distributing public school readers is both interesting and informative. The most vocal concerns expressed in Saskatchewan regarding the process of choice and distribution of the *Alexandra Readers* had little if anything to do with the content of the *Readers* themselves. Instead, moral alarm was expressed regarding the manner in which the Department of Education of the Government of Saskatchewan came to enter its contract with the Morang Educational Company of Toronto. The textbook issue is a further indication that American moralism, as identified by Daniel J. Elazar, was well received into the province of Saskatchewan.

In January, 1909 the former territorial premier of the Northwest Territories and the existing Leader of the Opposition, F.W.G. Haultain, rose in the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly to voice his concern over the textbook contract signed one year previously between the provincial Government and the

⁴⁸ The *Alexandra Readers* were gradually phased out of use and replaced with the *Canadian Readers* beginning in 1923. Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1923*, 13.

⁴⁹ For an excellent discussion of the role the *Irish Readers* played in forging curricular knowledge into state knowledge see Bruce Curtis, "Schoolbooks and the Myth of Curricular Republicanism," 305-329. Nancy Sheehan's essay highlights the moral and religious overtones of the *Readers*. See Sheehan, "Character training and the cultural heritage: an historical comparison of Canadian elementary readers" in *The Curriculum in Canada in historical perspective*, ed. G. S. Tomkins, Edmonton: Canadian Society for the Study of Education, 1979: 77-88.

Morang Educational Company. Haultain suggested that, despite the fact the agreement was signed with the Toronto company, the actual order for textbooks would be filled by the American Book Company—a New York firm Haultain described as one of the most corrupt in the United States.⁵⁰ Haultain’s objections were based upon a number of issues, but none related to content. The books, he argued, were roughly 40 percent more expensive to purchase, although less expensive to make, than similar Readers produced in Canada.⁵¹ Similarly, the tender for the contract was submitted late by the Morang Company, but still accepted by the Government. Haultain’s accusations against the Government and the Department of Education did not stop there, however:

He (Haultain) repeated that it was a profligate and improper deal. There were degrees of graft and while Mr. Calder [Commissioner of Education] might be in a state of semi-purity by keeping free from personal graft there was graft in the deal and there was no question this was allowed with the personal knowledge of Calder....The books were being printed by non-union labour in one of the biggest “scab” offices in the country....Even campaign literature was coming from Toronto and it was quite possible that they (the Government) were getting that thrown in with the free text books.⁵²

The *Journal* reported similar accusations made by Haultain in the *Regina Leader* on December 16, 1908: “I did not accuse the Commissioner of Education of grafting. I said there was graft and there was graft, but I did not say that the Commissioner had grafted by putting money in his pocket but by violating his

⁵⁰ Saskatchewan, *Journal of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Saskatchewan*, Vol. IV, January 11, 1909, 28. Mr. Haultain does not explain what, precisely, leads him to conclude that the American Book Company was corrupt. A search of subsequent legislative debates does not reveal any further suggestions by Mr. Haultain.

⁵¹ Haultain does mention the Canada Publishing Company’s Readers but only in regard to price, not content. See *Journal*, 28.

⁵² *Journal*, 29. A reader cannot help but feel that the Morang Book Company of New York represented “the interests” or the plutocracy to the western observer.

public trust and allowing other people to secure undue profits at the public expense.”⁵³

Haultain’s criticisms of the Government and the Department of Education are difficult to substantiate. The matter was handed over to a committee for review but no apparent report was made on the issue. A brief examination of the *Readers* themselves does betray the existence of American spellings—something rather odd in a *Reader* supposedly produced in the province of Ontario.⁵⁴ Regardless, the outcome of the controversy, in my mind, is less important than its substance. The debate also has meaning in regard to what was not at issue—the existence of American Readers in the province’s schools.

The fact that the Leader of the Opposition articulated a concern over the manner in which the contract was secured by an American company, and about the moral and ethical qualities of the company itself, is most revealing. Haultain’s consternation did not emerge because the Morang Company was affiliated with an American company, nor over the existence of American spellings in a Saskatchewan textbook. His criticisms arose, instead, because of the American Book Company’s reputation (in Populist lingo, the company represented “the interests”) for using scab labour, the Company’s notoriety in providing illicit campaign funding, and for his perception that members of the Saskatchewan provincial government might have benefited financially from the contract with the Morang Company. In other words, textbook content, at the center of Ontarian’s concern over American influence some 80 years earlier, was not the issue at all. The ethical and moral actions of the Government were paramount. Such pronouncements on the part of the Leader of the Opposition

⁵³ *Journal*, 30.

⁵⁴ In examining the Readers I looked for any shibboleth that might substantiate Haultain’s accusations. I found it in the spelling of the word “color” in two separate poems. I am quite certain there are many others. See “The Anxious Leaf” in the *Second Book of The Alexandra Readers* (Toronto: McMillan Company of Canada, 1908), 64-65 and “The Song Sparrows,” in the *Fourth Book*, 29.

reflect the attributes of Elazar's *moralistic* political culture that originated in the American Midwest:

[T]here is a general insistence that government service is public service, which places moral obligations upon those who participate in government that are more demanding than the moral obligations of the marketplace. There is an equally general rejection of the notion that the field of politics is a legitimate realm for private economic enrichment. A politician may indeed benefit economically because of his political career but he is not expected to profit from political activity and in fact is held suspect if he does.⁵⁵

Whereas some political cultures, like the individualistic political culture, tend to turn a blind eye to corruption, moralistic cultures maintain less tolerance for corrupt actions. This, argues Elazar, insures greater levels of amateur participation within the political system.⁵⁶

Given the moralistic orientation of Saskatchewan's political culture, it is not surprising that the *Alexandra Readers* became the first choice of the provincial government. As Nancy Sheehan argues, the "hidden curriculum" within the *Alexandra Readers* was one focused on an ethical life. "Political, moral and social concepts included in the selections undoubtedly helped shape the average child's view of the world and his place in it. Perhaps the moral tone was the most obvious. A perusal of these texts showed that a life based on the golden rule and Judaeo-Christian traditions was stressed. Included in the selections were the virtues of persistence, obedience, and truthfulness."⁵⁷ Such virtues transcended provincial and national boundaries. The national origin of any particular idea or educational policy was less important than its moral outcome on the population of the province.

⁵⁵ Elazar, 117.

⁵⁶Daniel J. Elazar, *American Federalism: A View From the States* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1966), 92. I will return to this conception of politics at a later time when discussing local control over education.

⁵⁷ Sheehan, 79.

In authorizing the *Alexandra Readers* for free distribution to Saskatchewan's growing school population the Department of Education was not rejecting a pro-British attitude in its education of an ever-increasing immigrant population. In fact, the *Readers* contained a great deal of British and European history and literature.⁵⁸ What these *Readers* display, however, is a greater openness to American ideas, methods, and materials than was the case in other provinces in previous years. Other textbooks that in previous years drew the ire of *traditionalists* in other provinces were available throughout the province without apparent concern from the Government or its population.

Each year the Department of Education shipped *Alexandra Readers* to the province's schools, thereby taking a significant step toward standardizing instruction across the hundreds of local school divisions. While it is difficult to determine the extent to which other *Readers* beyond the *Alexandra Readers* entered the classroom, a quick survey of the number of *Readers* shipped versus the number of pupils in the province in a particular school year does indicate a wide discrepancy. For example, in 1908, the first year the *Alexandra Readers* were authorized, there were a total of 51, 693 *Readers* shipped to school districts while the number of pupils enrolled in the province totalled only 47, 086.⁵⁹ By 1916, however, a total of 73,688 *Readers* were shipped but the number of pupils equalled 125, 590. By 1917 the number of *Readers* was 92, 953, while the pupils equalled 138, 731.⁶⁰ This wide disparity between the numbers of *Readers* shipped versus the number of students enrolled can be explained in a variety of ways.

Undoubtedly, each year a number of *Readers* would be "handed down" to siblings or other family members as students made their way through grades and *Readers* alike, thereby reducing the quantity of new *Readers* required each year. Similarly, given somewhat sporadic attendance rates, particularly in the

⁵⁸ Sheehan, 78.

⁵⁹ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1908*, 17.

⁶⁰ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1917*, 11.

rural school divisions, relatively high failure rates were common, making it unnecessary for a failing student to acquire a new *Reader*. It also seems logical to conclude, however, that the existence of a variety of other Readers in the province's schools made it unnecessary for every student to receive an authorized *Alexandra Reader*. Though difficult to conclude which Readers were in circulation, when they were in circulation, and where, it is likely a variety of American Readers made their way into Saskatchewan classrooms, at the very least as a supplement to the *Alexandra Readers*.⁶¹

In addition to concerns around the contract to print the *Alexandra Readers*, there emerged a second problem with the *Readers* that likely resulted in other schoolbooks being used in their place. By 1911 *Alexandra Readers* were disappearing from schools and children's hands rather quickly. Furthermore, some of the books were found in tatters. Yearly accounts by school inspectors prove that on an annual basis *Alexandra Readers* were destroyed in large numbers on the instructions of the inspectors themselves.

It is my opinion that a change is necessary in the manner of distribution of the free [Alexandra] readers. It is found to be next to impossible to keep the record satisfactorily owing to frequent changes of teachers, pupils being allowed to carry books home and to keep them at home during the winter. ...

Give each pupil a new book upon entering the grade, to be absolutely his own book, to do with as he sees fit. He could not get another except by purchase.

I have this summer sanctioned or rather ordered the destruction of hundreds of books, all of which were abominable and totally unfit for use and the

⁶¹ The *Historical Textbook Collection* in the Education Library, University of Saskatchewan, displays an abundance of Readers from across the province and, indeed, across the continent. I examined a number of different Readers and concluded that some were in use in Saskatchewan schools, although the period in which they were used is somewhat difficult to pinpoint. Those Readers that bore the stamp of a Saskatchewan Normal School, and/or a specific Saskatchewan school division stamp, I concluded were in use in Saskatchewan schools. Others, like the *Horace Mann Readers*, bore no stamp and appeared to have been used in New York City.

unfortunate part of it was that a large number of them had passed through the hands of two and sometimes three pupils. Think of the sanitary effect. Think again of the moral effect when a little child is handed such a book and compare with the delights of a new clean book.⁶² [emphasis added]

While it is impossible to prove that American Readers took the place of the filthy and destroyed *Alexandra Readers*, it is obvious that a host of American Readers were readily available to the classroom teacher.

The most noteworthy of the American Readers was *The Young and Field Literary Reader*, produced by the noted American progressive instructor and teacher in the Dewey Laboratory School in Chicago, Ella Flagg-Young.⁶³ Another prominent Reader, and an obvious promoter of American military success in the period following the Great War, was the *Beacon Fifth Reader*.⁶⁴ Inside its front cover was featured a full-color picture of a procession of American servicemen marching triumphantly through a town square as the *Stars and Stripes* is carried aloft. Other American flags are draped from windows in the town. Following the picture is the poem, *Hats Off!* by H. H. Bennet, which implores onlookers to remove their hats because the flag of “a nation great and strong” is passing by. The *Wheeler’s Graded Literary Readers* pursued similar pro-American themes.⁶⁵ The *New Barnes Readers* and the *Winston Readers* also appeared within the

⁶² Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1911*, 44. The following year the same inspector authorized the destruction of roughly 1000 *Readers*.

⁶³ Ella Flagg-Young and Walter Taylor Field, *The Young and Field Literary Readers* (Boston: Ginn and Long, 1914). These Readers bore the stamp of the Normal School of Saskatoon. On Ella Flagg-Young’s attachment to John Dewey, the patriarch of the Progressive movement in education, see Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), 135-136.

⁶⁴ James H. Fasset, *The Beacon Fifth Reader* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1918). This Reader displayed the stamp of the Regina Normal School.

⁶⁵ William Iler Crane and William Henry Wheeler, *Wheeler’s Graded Literary Readers with Interpretations* (Chicago: W.H. Wheeler & Co., 1919). The Wheeler Readers were part of the Moose Jaw Normal School library.

Saskatchewan learning community.⁶⁶ What Ryerson decried as un-patriotic and un-British content—content he wanted banned from Ontario schools in the 1840's—was readily accessible in Saskatchewan schools around the time of the First World War.

In identifying those school Readers used as supplements to the *Alexandra Readers* I am in no way suggesting that the Department of Education sought to promote American ideals in opposition to those of Canada or the British Empire. There was emerging, however, a change in what Sol Cohen identifies as the “language of educational discourse.”⁶⁷ Given the political cultural affinity that existed between the province of Saskatchewan and a number of Midwestern American states, and the common bonds of reform forged within the larger Populist and Progressive political crusades, educators in Saskatchewan “turned away” from British and Ontarian educational practice and “turned toward” those emanating from the United States.⁶⁸ It is my belief that political orientations were the main reason for this shift. It is also true, however, that Canadian textbooks were often woefully inadequate.

Those textbooks produced in Canada and authorized for use in Saskatchewan schools often had little, if anything, to say regarding Canada's West, let alone about those people who settled there. The most telling example is a history textbook authorized for use in the four Western provinces from 1907-1924—*The Story of the Canadian People*.⁶⁹ Evidently from this history book the

⁶⁶ Herman Dressel, May Robbins, Ellis U. Graff, *The New Barnes Readers: The Kearney Plan* (Chicago: Laidlaw Brothers, 1924). This Reader was used in the Grand Central School Division. Sidney G. Girman and Ethel H. Maltby, *The Winston Readers* (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., 1918). This Reader held the stamp of the Moose Jaw Normal School.

⁶⁷ Cohen, 89. I will discuss this concept in further detail below.

⁶⁸ Cohen's discussion of languages of discourse relies upon the postmodern “linguistic turn.”

⁶⁹Gerald James Langley, *The Programs of Study Authorized For Use in the North-West Territories to 1905 and the Province of Saskatchewan to 1931, and the Text Books Prescribed in Connection Therewith* (Saskatoon: Unpublished Master's Thesis,

story of the Canadian people is one that begins and ends in Eastern Canada and bears little relationship to the experiences of those on the Western frontier. By 1920 a new chapter to the “story” was added, apparently as an after-thought, that included an Eastern Canadian perspective on Western Canada, largely around the issues of the Red River Uprising and the Riel Rebellion.⁷⁰ Given this dearth of information on the experience of the Western Canadian it is little wonder that educationists in the province of Saskatchewan looked south rather than east for their educational models and ideas. The American progressive movement in education provided ample footing on which to base an educational system in the province of Saskatchewan following the First World War.

In Chapter Two I outlined the manner in which culture transfers from one locale to another, in this case, how Midwestern and American Plains culture, including its political culture, moved northward along longitudinal lines to the Canadian prairie. Printed media, particularly newspapers, professional journals, and in the realm of education, the importing of teacher and student textbooks, were one key conduit through which American educational practice entered the province of Saskatchewan. The movement of American teachers and textbooks established a distinctive American undertone in the province of Saskatchewan’s system of education. With the arrival of an American expert to Saskatchewan in 1917, American culture found a further avenue into the province’s schools.

1944), 173. The first version found in the *Historical Textbook Collection* was David M. Duncan, *The Story of the Canadian People* (Toronto: The McMillan Company, 1919).

⁷⁰ See Duncan, 269-291.

III *Parallel Meanings and Language: Saskatchewan receives American culture*

(i) *The American Expert: Harold Foght and Saskatchewan School Reform*

Few events, if any, arouse more comment among historians of Saskatchewan education, or from contemporary writers, than the arrival in Saskatchewan of the American expert on rural education, Harold Waldstein Foght. In 1917, Inspector McKechnie of Regina, articulated the general anticipation among policy makers in the province:

The survey made by Dr. H.W. Foght, meant an outside expert viewing our system and our problems first hand. We await with interest his report. It doubtless will sum up the best thought of those who are working each day in the welfare of the province. It should also present educational conditions from new or different angles, based on the comparative judgement of a broader expert.⁷¹

His *Survey* of the province's system of schooling, researched in 1917 and published in 1918, marks a high water point in American influence in Saskatchewan education. The *Survey* also ushered in a period where the expert assumed an unparalleled prominence within the province's school system, as witnessed by the ever-increasing number of educational elite in Saskatchewan who pursued advanced education in the United States in the 1920's. At the time of his *Survey*, Foght was on loan from the Bureau of Education, Washington D.C., and he came to Saskatchewan amidst high expectations that he, unlike Saskatchewan policy makers of the day, could modernize the province's over 4000 school divisions.

Foght's *Survey* is easily the most mentioned event in the early history of Saskatchewan education, both among historians of Canadian and Saskatchewan education alike. Historians of Canadian education, like Robert M. Stamp, for example, mention the author's desire for all Saskatchewan students to pursue an

⁷¹ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1917*, 100.

agricultural course of study. He then quickly dismisses his recommendations as not in keeping with the trend of urbanization and industrialization that was evolving across Canada during the First World War.⁷² The fact that urbanization and industrialization was proceeding very slowly in a provincial economy entirely devoted to agriculture, and where the rural population of the province far exceeded urban numbers, is lost in a macro-level, English Canadian perspective on rural education like Stamp's.

Within the small number of provincial histories of Saskatchewan education, particularly those that chronicle the earliest phases in the evolution of public education, any development, no matter how small or remote, is always made with reference to, or deference for, Foght's *Survey*. For example, Brian Noonan cites an admittedly brief statement by Foght regarding separate schooling in the province as an indication that the issue was far too controversial for an outsider to make comment.⁷³ Similarly, Cameron Milner views Foght's written concern around educating members of remote Mennonite communities in the province as an indication of a lack of sympathy for religious minorities.⁷⁴ Both arguments, in my mind, historicize aspects of the *Survey* which were largely irrelevant to its larger historical context.

Jack's Funks' unpublished Master's Thesis examines the process toward rural school consolidation from the early twentieth century until its completion

⁷² See Robert M. Stamp, "Education and the Economic and Social Milieu: The English Canadian Scene from the 1870's to 1914," in *Canadian Education: A History*, 300. In so easily dismissing Foght's recommendation, Stamp betrayed the same mentality that Foght sought to expunge – the notion that urban education took precedence over rural education.

⁷³ See Brian Noonan, "Saskatchewan Separate Schools," in *A History of Education in Saskatchewan*, 27.

⁷⁴ Cameron Milner, "Valley Christian Academy: Promoting Diversity and Assimilation," in *A History of Education in Saskatchewan*, 111-112.

in the 1940's.⁷⁵ In it, Funk gives credit to Foght for setting the agenda for consolidation efforts in Saskatchewan in the decades that followed his *Survey*, and concludes that in the 1920's the province's rural citizens were not at a point where they would surrender their control over local schools. However, Funk pays little heed to the American context within which Foght's recommendations were forged. Indeed, no historical examination of the Foght *Survey* places the author, or the contents of his report, into the larger historical context of life on the North American plains at the turn of the twentieth century—a life that was rural, agrarian, and deeply imbued with Populist sentiment.

Foght was the son of Danish immigrants who settled in the state of Nebraska in 1888. Growing up on the American plains frontier, surrounded by other immigrant families, Foght would have attended the same sort of frontier rural school that he found in Saskatchewan some 28 years later. During the latter part of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries Nebraska, along with other plains states like Kansas and the Dakotas, was the heartland for Populist political revolt and farmer's alliances. Populist and Progressive politics would influence a generation of American and Canadian agrarian reformers alike who sought a different relationship between the government and its people from the one provided by the traditional, back-eastern establishment. This Populist sentiment, combined with the Scandinavian tradition of cooperative endeavor inherited from his parents, surely influenced Foght's thinking about life in rural America, and later in rural Saskatchewan.⁷⁶

Foght's career in education is diverse in experience yet consistent in locale. Though he assumed many posts his focus always centered on rural

⁷⁵ Jack Funk, "The Origin and Development of Consolidated School District in Saskatchewan" (Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1971).

⁷⁶ See Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own:" A New History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), particularly Chapter 14 on Western Politics.

education, especially on the American plains. In Saskatchewan lingo, he was a *westerner*. In 1910 Foght was President of Midland College in Kansas. By 1912 he was Professor of Rural Education and Sociology at the State Normal School in Kirksville, Missouri.⁷⁷ Not long after he was President of the South Dakota Teacher's College. In 1913, the then US Commissioner of Education, Philander Claxton, dispatched Foght and two others to Denmark to study the folks schools there. In 1914, his recommendations were given application to rural folk schools in the Appalachian region of Kentucky.⁷⁸ From 1927 to 1934 Foght was President of Wichita State University. Under his tenure the university expanded rapidly with a great emphasis placed on continuing education.⁷⁹ Upon leaving Wichita State, Foght became the Superintendent of the Cherokee Indian Agency in New Mexico. His career in education and beyond shows a remarkable consistency – he was committed to improving the lives of rural folks through schooling. It is with this mission in mind that he accepted the challenge to alter the course of Saskatchewan education in 1916.

Foght's arrival in Saskatchewan also occurred at a time when the politics of agrarian revolt in the American Midwest had reached an apex, with the Non-Partisan League taking the state legislature in North Dakota in 1916, and with the federal third party successes of both Woodrow Wilson and Teddy Roosevelt in the decade from 1910 to 1920. Within this political context Foght betrayed his Populist roots, and appealed to the same among Saskatchewan citizens, when he wrote in his Introduction to his published *Survey*:

Saskatchewan, in common with the other prairie provinces of Canada, is dominated by people of progressive type—forward looking people, who have shown a striking determination to escape the hindering influence of back-eastern conservatism by taking action before their

⁷⁷ See [links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-7162\(191203\)40%3C149%3ATCS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-I](https://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-7162(191203)40%3C149%3ATCS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-I). Retrieved June 3, 2007.

⁷⁸ See www-distance.syr.edu/stubblefield.html. Retrieved June 3, 2007.

⁷⁹ See [webs.wichita.edu/?u=pcampbell&p=past presidents](http://webs.wichita.edu/?u=pcampbell&p=past%20presidents). Retrieved June 3, 2007.

educational institutions shall become afflicted with inertness, resulting in failure to respond to the changing life of their democratic civilisation.⁸⁰

The same ideological current which prompted Saskatchewanians to pay close attention to politics south of the border also encouraged the same attention in regard to educational matters. Choosing an American expert in rural education, rather than one from Canada's East, signalled a rejection of the "back eastern" conservatism of which Foght wrote, and the wholesale reception of American education reform, particularly as it played itself out in the rural agricultural heartland of the American Midwest and Plains states.

Rather than attempt to articulate the breadth of Foght's influence across a wide array of Saskatchewan education policy, I wish instead to focus on four interrelated and overlapping layers of analysis. Whereas the first section of this chapter identified the ways in which Saskatchewan educators adopted American *practice*, in this section I identify the reception of American educational *meanings* and reform *language* into Saskatchewan K-12 schooling. As such I view Foght as an intermediary in the transfer of American *meanings* of the rural school to Saskatchewan, on the one hand, and the transfer of a particular *language* of reform on the other.

In regard to the reception of American meaning of schools I focus on the acceptance of the Saskatchewan rural school as a "problem" requiring solution in theme one, and consolidation as its only solution in theme two. The reader will quickly discover, however, that within the primary sources quoted there exists a common linguistic pattern. In other words, Saskatchewan policy makers come to share the same language of school reform with their American cousins. This understanding flows naturally into the third theme which ties the language of reform to Populist lingo in that consolidation is viewed in both the American and Saskatchewan settings as a means of restoring equity between the rural student and his urban schoolmate. Theme four extends this linguistic parallel further in

⁸⁰ Foght *Survey*, 5.

articulating identical meanings to the rural school in both the American and Saskatchewan contexts. My separation of quotations into separate themes is entirely subjective. Many of the quotations spill over into a number of themes or, indeed, all of them.

One important caveat is in order, however, before I proceed with my discussion of shared Populist language and meaning. The utterances I present in the coming section are those of experts (like Elwood Cubberly and Foght, for example) in the American context, and among the bureaucrats (school inspectors and high ranking officials within the Department of Education) among Saskatchewan commentators. In other words, at the level of the expert or bureaucrat there was agreement on the rationale for consolidating Saskatchewan rural schools. In the section that immediately follows this, however, I will show how this same meaning was not shared at the level of the people. The democratic ethos which prevails among the rural folk of Saskatchewan, imported along with American plains culture in previous decades, resisted the influence of the expert while maintaining a Jeffersonian and moralistic conception of local control over local institutions.

Before Foght's arrival to Saskatchewan in 1917 there already existed an inkling among Saskatchewan policy makers that there was a rural school problem in the province, identical to the rural school problem in the United States, and that consolidation was its only solution. Foght's perspective on the problem and its solution was obviously well known to Saskatchewan policy makers prior to his arrival. Legislation promoting consolidation in the province was enacted in 1913, but by 1917 had shown virtually no progress. The choice of Foght as the outside expert, apart from being a rejection of eastern models of reform, was a premonitory acceptance of his solutions, already outlined in his 1910 book, *The American Rural School: Its Characteristics, Its Future, and Its Problems*. Foght himself wondered aloud when he stated in his Introduction to his 1918 *Survey*: "This is probably the first instance on record of a Government

extending an invitation to a citizen in the employ of another country to direct the study of its school system.”⁸¹ Foght’s *Survey of Saskatchewan Education* was designed to succeed where provincial legislation and the prompting of provincial school inspectors had failed. The government of Saskatchewan needed the approval of an outside expert, in this case an American expert, to validate their policy decisions.⁸²

As I argued in Chapter Two, from largely identical environments emerge similar problems. Within similar political cultures identical problems produce identical solutions. Foght confirmed there was a problem, and he legitimated consolidation as its solution. In the process he ushered in a wholesale acceptance of American meanings of the rural school and ultimately a new language of reform based around the concept of social efficiency. As theme three and four suggest Saskatchewan policy makers had already adopted American meanings for schools and a largely identical Populist language before Foght’s arrival in 1917. Later in the chapter I articulate a second language of reform that Herbert Kliebard identifies as social efficiency.⁸³ First I wish to articulate the basic premises of Populism, both in the Midwestern American milieu and on the Canadian prairies.

⁸¹ Foght *Survey*, 7.

⁸² See John W. Kingdom, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper Collins, 1995), for an outstanding discussion of where policies come from and why.

⁸³ My inspiration for this approach comes from Sol Cohen’s examination of language and educational discourse and how changes in language signal a change in the forms of education. In Cohen’s, “Language and History,” he articulates how a change in language signalled a movement from a traditionalistic approach to education (as evidenced in the language of William Torrey Harris) toward a more progressive form of education as revealed in the language of John Dewey. In this case my task is somewhat simpler in that I wish to reveal how the adoption of American meanings of the school, particularly the rural school, and the language of reform signal the existence of an American bent in the history of Saskatchewan education that, to this point, historians have yet to acknowledge. See Cohen, “Language and History,” in *Challenging Orthodoxies*, 87-104.

(ii) *Populism in the North American Great Plains*

Specifically defining the term Populism, as the Canadian political sociologist, David Laycock suggests, is a rather elusive task, particularly since aspects of the concept impinge upon all major ideologies as they existed in Canada from about 1910 through 1945.⁸⁴ In the American context Populism dovetails into various aspects of agrarian revolt from 1890 forward, including Progressivism, and certainly spills over into Elazar's conception of the moralistic political culture that pervades the American Plains around that same period.⁸⁵ Regardless, there are some key tenets to Populism that Saskatchewanians share with their southern Plains cousins, all of which are obvious in the writings of educational experts as they comment on the rural school problem, consolidation, and the meaning of the rural school itself.

Richard Hofstadter articulates that American Populism maintained a notion that there once existed a utopian "golden age" of the past in which society must attempt to return; a time when there existed equal rights for all and the agricultural class enjoyed equality with all others. Industrial capitalism, symbolized by urbanization and the plutocracy, ruined this utopia. Lost was man's harmony with nature where nature was viewed as a beneficent entity that produced prosperity. Populists maintained a harmony of interests with other productive classes, including urban laborers, but also retained a conspiracy theory of history which produced great fears that society was near ruin.⁸⁶

The Populist and Progressive movements took place during a rapid and sometimes turbulent transition from the conditions of an agrarian society to those of modern urban life. ...The American tradition of

⁸⁴ David Laycock, *Populism and Democratic Thought in the Canadian Prairies: 1910-1945* (Toronto: U of T Press, 1990), 14. These ideologies include liberalism, conservatism, and socialism.

⁸⁵ See Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform from Bryan to F.D.R.* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), and Elazar.

⁸⁶ See Hofstadter, Chapter II, "The Folklore of Populism," 60-93.

democracy was formed on the farm and in small villages, and its central ideas were founded in rural sentiments and on rural metaphors (we still speak of “grass-roots democracy”). ...[T]he American was taught throughout the nineteenth and even in the twentieth century that rural life and farming as a vocation were something sacred. Since in the beginning the majority of the people were farmers, democracy, as a rather broad abstraction, became in the same way sacrosanct. A certain complacency and self-righteousness thus entered into rural thinking, and this complacency was rudely shocked by the conquests of industrialism. A good deal of the strain and the sense of anxiety in Populism results from this rapid decline of rural America.⁸⁷

Laycock agrees with much of Hofstadter’s analysis, particularly in regard to Jeffersonian notions of participatory democracy where the people controlled society’s affairs. He adds that prairie Canadian Populism maintained a belief in cooperation and community, while possessing a dualistic view of government to the extent they welcomed the positive use of state power but flatly rejected power that served to produce or preserve inequality.⁸⁸

Within this Populist framework, therefore, an American language denoting the rural school problem and consolidation as its solution become obvious among education policy makers in the province of Saskatchewan. More significantly, however, the meaning of consolidation and the rural school itself, in Populist terms, bears notice of the fact that a transfer in education policy was part of a larger transfer of culture from the American Midwest to Saskatchewan.

(iii) *American Language: The Rural School Problem*

David Tyack’s history of American urban schooling, *The One Best System*, begins by setting the context for school reform in rural America at the close of the nineteenth century. As early as the 1890’s with the Committee of Twelve on

⁸⁷ Hofstadter, 7.

⁸⁸ See Laycock’s “Introduction,” 3-21. Much of what Laycock identifies as central to prairie Populism is almost identical to Elazar’s *moralistic* political cultural subgroup.

Rural Schools, the *problem* of rural schooling was already evident. As would be the case among urban schools in the coming decades, solving the problem required professionals to remove schools from politics, stress the importance of professionally trained teachers, and connect the curriculum “with the everyday life of the community.”⁸⁹ Among the foremost authorities on rural education and the “rural school problem”, Elwood Cubberly, wrote in 1914 that adequate rural education was not simply about achieving greater levels of efficiency, but it was about achieving fairness for all students: “The chief reasons why this [providing as good an education for rural children as city children] has not been done before now, and the chief difficulty encountered in trying to provide such advantages today, is the conservatism and low educational ideals of the people in the rural communities themselves. Too many farmers have no proper conception as to the possibilities of education, or what is possible for country children.”⁹⁰

Though educators like Cubberly assumed prominence on a national scale others, like Harold Waldstein Foght for example, were making similar arguments before his more famous colleague, but without the notoriety. In his 1910 book, *The American Rural School*, Foght argued:

All well-informed persons agree that conditions in the rural schools are not to-day what they should be for the proper training of the twelve million boys and girls growing up in rural communities. One half of our entire school population attend the rural schools, which are still in the formative stage. And at least 95 percent of these children never get beyond the district school. The country youth is entitled to just as thorough a preparation for thoughtful and intelligent membership in the body politic as is the city youth. The state, if it is wise, will not discriminate in favor of the one as against the other; but it will adjust its bounties in a manner equitable to the needs of both.⁹¹

⁸⁹ David B. Tyack, *The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 23.

⁹⁰ Elwood Cubberly, *Rural Life and Education: A Study of the Rural School Problem as a Phase of the Rural-Life Problem* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1914), 167.

⁹¹ Harold Waldstein Foght, *The American Rural School: its characteristics, its future and its problems* (New York: Macmillan, 1910), 2.

For Foght, the source of the rural school problem was easily identifiable. "Attendance is spasmodic; interest poorly sustained. The work can scarcely be called graded; teachers change with each term; and with every such change the children are 'put back' to do over again work of which no record has been kept."⁹²

Finally, for Foght and others alike, the nature of school district organization in the US was itself a significant impediment to reform, particularly when the district was guided by parsimonious, close-fisted locals:

Many of the evils from which rural schools suffer are traceable to the small district. As we shall see in a later chapter, local partisanship and jealousy, and often close-fistedness and indifference in school affairs, make the district an inadequate basis for administering school affairs. The local school board is too often hampered in its work by obligations to friends and neighbors who elect them and retain them in office. Such a unit cannot possibly afford to pay for professional supervision. But most important of all, the last word in tax matters should never be left with so small a unit, since two or three influential men are generally able to dictate the policy of the district, and make this narrow or broad in proportion as they themselves are narrow-minded or broad-minded.⁹³

American commentators on the rural school problem agreed on its sources: a curriculum that bore little, if any, relationship to the world of the student; infrequent student attendance; poorly trained and transient teachers; un-graded classrooms with its resulting repetition and inefficiency; and a unsophisticated and narrow-minded rural citizenry who took little interest in the school, but a great interest in maintaining low taxes to support the school. As easy as it was to articulate the problem, it was even simpler for experts on rural education like Cubberly and Foght to propose its solution. A host of commentators sang in unison that the reorganization of smaller school units into larger, consolidated districts was the obvious answer to the rural school problem.

⁹² Foght, *The American Rural School*, 304.

⁹³ Foght, *The American Rural School*, 17.

(iv) *American Language: Consolidation as Solution to the Problem*

Following the Committee of Twelve on Rural Schools' report in the 1890's, consolidation, or as Tyack terms it, centralization, became the solution for the ills of rural schooling and rural life broadly conceived. Seemingly no commentator appeared more committed to consolidation than did Foght. In 1910 he acknowledged that in the rural, one-room school of the frontier consolidation would have to wait. In the meantime, rural teachers were expected to make the most of the new educational trends and attach schooling to the everyday life of the students.⁹⁴ Regardless, for him, "[t]he consolidated school is an illustration of the fundamental fact that if the country people want better schools in the country for country children, *they must spend more money for education and spend it in a better way. There is no other way.*"⁹⁵ [emphasis in original] Other experts in rural education were less patient than Foght.

In 1912, Mabel Carney, who shortly after the publication of her book, *Country Life and the Country School*, would join the faculty of Teacher's College, Columbia University, couched the notion of consolidation within a larger crusade for better, more efficient rural schooling.

The country school, let it be repeated, is the most direct and immediate point of attack upon the unfavorable conditions of country life. Increasing its efficiency is necessarily the first step toward progress. But no adequate degree of efficiency is possible under the existing one-teacher system. The immediate need for our country schools is for an army of far-seeing, heroic teachers who will go forth and impress upon farmers and others the inefficiency of the outgrown system. But the fundamental need is deeper than this. And upon it, educational redirection, service as a community center, efficient teaching, the holding of trained teachers, and all else depend.

⁹⁴ Foght, *The American Rural School*, 324.

⁹⁵ Foght, *The American Rural School*, 325.

*The fundamental need of country schools is a change of system, or consolidation.*⁹⁶ [emphasis in original]

Consolidation, therefore, became the panacea not only for the rural school problem, but for what some described as the problem of country life. Though the frontier school developed much later in Saskatchewan than it did in the American Midwest and northern Plains, the problem remained the same. With Foght's arrival to Saskatchewan in 1917, its solution, not surprisingly, was identical.

(v) *Saskatchewan Language: The Rural School Problem*

Though the rural school problem arrived in Saskatchewan a couple decades after the Committee of Twelve engaged it in the US, Saskatchewan policy makers—both indigenous and those invited to comment from America—agreed with their southern cousins on its roots. In 1913 the Saskatchewan *Annual Report* stated: “[t]he evils of the present system [of rural schooling] are short term schools, involving a constant change of teachers; and teachers badly prepared for their work.”⁹⁷ In regard to the work of teachers and trustees, another school inspector agreed with Carney:

Whether it is the lack of academic training, insufficient professional training or failure to grasp the tremendous importance of her work, the average teachers is not the important force in the community she should be. I think perhaps an older, more mature and more highly trained teacher would work a wonderful change in our schools. On the other hand, we require more intelligent and progressive trustees. While I know many, probably the majority of trustees have the best interest of education at heart, others are holding office to keep down taxes, keep out rivals, or to

⁹⁶ Mabel Carney, *Country Life and the Country School: A Study of the Agencies of Rural Progress and of the Social Relationship of the School to the Country Community* (Chicago: Row, Peterson and Company, 1912), 148. Cremin suggests that Carney's book became standard reading for rural teachers. Cremin, 84n.

⁹⁷ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1913*, 62.

propagate their particular brand of ideals. Why should trustees not be required to measure up to certain qualifications as well as teachers?⁹⁸

Despite the recognition on the part of Saskatchewan policy makers that a problem did exist, the government of the Province of Saskatchewan still needed the influence of an outside expert, in this case, an American expert on rural schooling, to add license to their efforts. Not surprisingly, Foght's insistence as to the existence of a rural school problem in Saskatchewan continues from where he began with the rural school problem in America in 1910. Like in America, the curriculum in Saskatchewan held nothing for the rural student:

The local district does not have within its boundaries what is necessary to make a modern community school. The district school in Saskatchewan devotes its energies to the tool subjects almost wholly. Very few pupils complete the prescribed course of study. The schools are not organised to attract and hold the larger boys and girls, and most of the schools are unable to provide the social aspects required of modern education. The district school is unquestionably responsible for the following fundamental weaknesses from which all are suffering: non-attendance of a large percent of the school population; irregularity of attendance; and great wastage in attendance due to lack of interest in prescribed schoolwork.⁹⁹

As for the work of the trustees, Foght agreed with the previous Saskatchewan school inspector:

Saskatchewan has 4020 school districts (December 31, 1917), each in the charge of three local trustees. This makes a small army of between eleven and twelve thousand men. An average municipality has from thirty to fifty or more each. Such an organization is inexcusable. It is unreasonable to expect that half a hundred men can be found in a thinly settled municipality suited by temperament and training to fill all these positions even if the men can be found there. ...In many municipalities, particularly in non-English communities, it is entirely out of the question to find a sufficient number of persons suited to hold these important positions.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1916*, 113.

⁹⁹ Foght *Survey*, 1918, 25.

¹⁰⁰ Foght *Survey*, 27-28.

Even following Foght's *Survey*, the rural school problem continued seemingly unabated in 1920:

The department has every reason to feel gratification at the progress in education during the year which this report covers. Our work is more "rural" than in any other province in the Dominion and this fact alone provokes its own peculiar and difficult problems. Our teaching staff is migratory, preventing continuous teaching of a progressive and complete character. The average area of school districts is probably larger than in any other political unit where public school systems have been established, a fact which contains an implication of inconvenient distances from schools with consequent irregularity of attendance and retardation.¹⁰¹

Though by 1920 the resolution to the rural school problem seemed distant, the obvious solution to the problem was well known to Saskatchewan policy makers some time prior.

(vi) *Saskatchewan Language: Consolidation as Solution to the Problem*

As early as 1913 the province of Saskatchewan was looking south for its solution to the rural school problem. As Foght had suggested in his 1910 book, where the one-room school would have to suffice until consolidation could continue apace, Saskatchewan policy makers saw the same dilemma on the Canadian plains:

Considering all the circumstances fair work was done, although there is still great room for improvement. It is only fair to ask that the boy or girl in the country should have an equal opportunity to secure good education with those of the town or city. This is far from being the case at present. ...Consolidated schools may solve the rural school problem but the country is too sparsely settled to make their introduction a success at present.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report*, 1920, 19.

¹⁰² Saskatchewan, *Annual Report*, 1913, 63-64

Regardless, by 1915, the Province had requested a special report on the work of consolidation in Saskatchewan. By then deference for American models around consolidation was obvious:

In many respects, particularly in regard to regularity of attendance, standards of teaching, economy in teaching and community usefulness, the rural schools of North America have proved to be unsatisfactory and there has arisen what is termed "the rural school problem." As a solution of this problem, especially in thickly populated settlements where small inefficient schools have been erected, consolidation of schools has been effected. This has been a common solution in the more progressive of the States and to some extent in Canada. Manitoba, of all the provinces, appears to have made most advance in this respect.¹⁰³

The Report makes note that among Saskatchewan residents requesting consolidation of local school districts, the majority of those making the requests had experienced it while living in the United States where similar conditions existed.¹⁰⁴

By the time of Foght's arrival in Saskatchewan, the result of his *Survey* was a foregone conclusion. "The following is a concise restatement of the most important recommendations made in the foregoing chapters: (1) The establishment of municipal school districts in place of the present local districts. (2) The organization of municipal school boards with powers to administer the public schools of the Province."¹⁰⁵ In Saskatchewan Foght had found the same conditions as existed in his Great Plains home. While in Saskatchewan he found policy makers already attuned to his policy solutions. As the expert in rural education, his word was expected by the province of Saskatchewan to carry the day in favor of consolidation. As such he was a crucial conduit for both policy transfer and cultural transfer.

¹⁰³ Saskatchewan, Department of Education, *Consolidated Schools in Saskatchewan: Special Report* (Regina: J.W. Reid, 1915), 5.

¹⁰⁴ Saskatchewan, Department of Education, *Consolidated Schools in Saskatchewan*, 7.

¹⁰⁵ Foght *Survey*, 1918, 172.

To claim that Saskatchewan education policy makers adopted American language and social policy in articulating problems and solutions that were largely identical across the continental plains is perhaps not surprising. To historians like Daniel T. Rodgers, who suggests there existed a North Atlantic social policy community where policy alternatives moved freely throughout a region from Bogota to Berlin during a period of Progressive reform, such an argument is little more than a localized case study of a large-scale theory.¹⁰⁶ It is an indication of a social policy transfer, but not cultural transfer. If, however, the language of reform indicates the existence of shared meanings, as I make the case in Chapter Two, then this shared language is indicative of a much deeper and more powerful transfer of culture. When Midwestern American culture moved northward to Saskatchewan it brought more than simply a language of reform. In the context of K-12 education moralistic, Populist political culture brought with it shared meanings of the rural school and, given the rural school problem, meanings of rural school consolidation.

(vii) *Parallel Meanings: American Consolidation in Populist Democratic language*

For writers like Cubberly, Carney, and Foght, consolidation of rural schools was more than just an issue of efficiency – it was an issue of living up to the ideals of the Founding Fathers, and for this reason their language of reform often assumed an almost evangelical, crusading tone. Foght’s plea in 1910 was a consistent one: “Consolidation... is a plan to reconstruct the rural schools on a new foundation which will re-establish the ancient principle of ‘equal rights to all.’”¹⁰⁷ Equality of opportunity, the concept around which the American

¹⁰⁶ Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 1998).

¹⁰⁷ Foght, *The American Rural School*, 302.

common school was built, was the goal. For Foght, however, that goal had long since died because the farm youth “... has not had a square deal.”¹⁰⁸

Cubberly agreed with Foght wholeheartedly:

That the education provided for such [rural] children is what it ought to be, or might easily be made to be, few maintain. Rural children are entitled to something better, and the interests of the state demand that there be a better equalization of opportunities and advantages of education, as between the city boy or girl on the one hand and the boy and girl in the small villages and the rural districts on the other.¹⁰⁹

Cubberly argued that the outmoded curriculum—central to the rural school problem—maintained an inherent city bias also:

The uniform textbooks, which have been introduced by law, were books written primarily for the city child; the graded course of study, which was superimposed from above, was a city course of study; the ideals of school became, in large part, city and professional in type. ... The subjects of instruction has been designed more to prepare for entrance to a city or town high school than for life in the open country. So far as the school was vocational in spirit, it has been the city vocations and professions for which it has tended to prepare its pupils, and not the vocations of the farm and the home.¹¹⁰

For Foght, the banal life of the city (that place where rural school students were destined for transplantation) itself was reason enough to improve rural schooling.

City life is terribly devitalizing. In its artificial, hot-house atmosphere the human organism literally starves and early deteriorates. Into this life, then, our best country boys and girls are thrown annually by the hundreds of thousands—their manifest destiny to reinforce the ebbing vitality of city life. The infusion of the sturdy country stock into the city assures a continuation of city prosperity and progress. But at what awful cost!¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Foght, *The American Rural School*, 329-330.

¹⁰⁹ Cubberly, 166-167.

¹¹⁰ Cubberly, 170-171.

¹¹¹ Foght, *The American Rural School*, 16-17.

The goal, therefore, was to retain country life through rural schools:

In order to reestablish this educational equality [equal rights for all] it becomes necessary to give the twelve millions boys and girls living in the rural communities just as thorough a preparation in school for their life work as we are now offering city children. Consolidation of rural schools is the practical remedy, and wherever given a fair trial it has provided conclusively that just as good, just as thorough-going schools may be made to flourish in the beneficent rural environment as in the city.¹¹²

Rural schools, therefore, were not solely about preparation for life in the country, or in town, following the student's exit. Clearly, rural schools were central to the continued existence of rural communities themselves, and ultimately the continuation of country life in an increasingly industrial age.

(viii) *American Meanings: The Rural School in Populist Democratic terms*

Foght posited in 1912 that for any school to be effective, it must reflect the needs of the community it supports. "Any form of education, to be effective, must reflect the daily life and interests of the community employing it. With us, agriculture is the chief primary industry; consequently our rural education must be agricultural in nature."¹¹³ The American expert's clearest statement on the role of schools, but especially rural schools, was written while analyzing the province of Saskatchewan's schools in 1918:

To educate all its people, without exception, is both the duty and the right of democracy. There are in Saskatchewan thousands of adults classed as illiterates—a majority of them from foreign shores. If these people have been deprived of educational opportunities in their youth, it is the duty of the government to extend blessing now in their years of maturity; if they have neglected their earlier opportunities, democracy has the right to demand that they correct the deficiency with government assistance at once. For all such people there should be established, as part

¹¹² Foght, *The American Rural School*, 303.

¹¹³ Harold W. Foght, "The Country School," in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 40 (March, 1912), 149-150.

of the regular school system, night schools, part time schools, and other types of continuation schools.¹¹⁴

Mabel Carney agreed with Foght, placing the school at the center of rural progress: "...[A] special function of the country school, imposed by present rural conditions, is that it shall become an initiator of various phases of rural progress and a center for the building of the community. [T]he *complete function* of the country school may be summarized in the phrase, *the country school as a center for redirected education and community building*."¹¹⁵ [emphasis in original] In democratic terms, she viewed the rural school as "... a democratic community institution, representing the *whole* community."¹¹⁶

Writing some 60 years later, David Tyack captures well the Populist bent in the meaning of the American rural school, particularly as it existed in the West. "[The rural school was] the center—educational, social, dramatic, political, and religious—of a pioneer community of the prairie region of the West."¹¹⁷ He continues: "As one of the few social institutions which rural people encountered daily, the common school both reflected and shaped a sense of community ... [T]he rural school integrated rather than disintegrated the community."¹¹⁸

Most importantly, however, in Populist terms, is Tyack's conception of who controlled the Western rural school. "Most rural patrons had little doubt that the school was theirs to control and not the property of the professional educator."¹¹⁹ Writing about rural schools in Montana at the turn of the twentieth century, Jonathan Raban echoes a similar Populist characterization of the rural school in that state:

¹¹⁴ Foght *Survey*, 1918, 20.

¹¹⁵ Carney, 134.

¹¹⁶ Carney, 136.

¹¹⁷ Tyack, 15-16.

¹¹⁸ Tyack, 17.

¹¹⁹ Tyack, 17.

The schoolhouse was an emblem of the fact that people were here for keeps. The foundations were dug deep enough into the prairie to hold one's ambitious roots. It was a showcase for everyone's best efforts at carpentry, painting, needlework, plumbing. And it was a political nursery. Forming a school district, electing a school board, dealing with county and state education agencies, the honyockers learned how to work the American system of do-it-yourself grassroots democratic government.¹²⁰

Given this meaning, it is little wonder why local patrons were so loathe to surrender their influence over the local school to the expert.

The rural school was the single democratic entity that existed closest to the people, and consolidation the single greatest threat to that local control. The issue of who controlled the rural school became central to consolidation efforts in both the rural American and Saskatchewan cultures. In the US, in the interests of efficiency, the expert prevailed over the local patron while in Saskatchewan the local patron carried the day despite the wishes of the provincial government and the efforts of experts like Harold Foght.¹²¹ Populist rhetoric, though powerful at times in the American Midwest and northern Plains, could not overcome the influence of the expert. In Saskatchewan, by contrast, the power of Populism could not be dispelled by calls for efficiency whether uttered by the provincial government or by a Populist, administrative progressive from the American Midwest.

(ix) *Parallel Meanings: Saskatchewan Consolidation in Populist Democratic Language*

As mentioned above, Harold Foght brought with him a decidedly Populist language when he arrived in Saskatchewan in 1917. Once there, however, Foght found he was far from alone in his democratic utterances. As

¹²⁰ Jonathan Raban, *Bad Land: An American Romance* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 162. As best as I can find, the term honyocker is a slang term that originated in Montana, and was a derisive term for homesteader.

¹²¹ I will return to this theme at the end of this section.

early as 1913, Saskatchewan school inspectors were making similar pleas to fairness in regard to school consolidation. "The chief nation-builders of the province are the pioneers on the frontier. After all the hardship that they must endure, is it fair to penalize their children, condemning them to a meager education, whilst the children of the city made great by their labor have every educational advantage?"¹²² In 1914, another inspector asked a similar question:

But in spite of improvements here and there, of various remedial measures that have been attempted and of the excellent financial basis of the system, the rural school still remains the unsolved problem, not of this province only, but of every other province of the Dominion and of nearly every state in the American Union. It does not accomplish the work it should and might in the interests of the province as a whole. As compared with the city or town school its efficiency is low. This is regrettable both from the point of view of the state and that of the rural school child. Has the rural school child the right to ask the state to furnish him with educational facilities equal to those provided for the urban child?¹²³

In presenting his *Survey* on Saskatchewan schools, Foght was for all intents and purposes "preaching to the converted" when addressing the provincial government and school inspectors. He stated: "If now the artificial lines separating these [local] districts were removed, and all the wealth of the municipality were equalized for educational uses every boy and girl would have reason to expect equalized educational opportunity in uniformly strong well-paid teachers, long terms, well-maintained school buildings, and well-sustained school work."¹²⁴ In proposing rural school consolidation Foght argued that "[t]he municipality becomes the unit of taxation for educational purposes, thus guaranteeing equality of educational opportunity to all living within the community."¹²⁵ Undoubtedly, Foght's recommendations for reforming rural

¹²² Saskatchewan, *Annual Report*, 1913, 62.

¹²³ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report*, 1914, 63.

¹²⁴ Foght *Survey*, 1918, 29.

¹²⁵ Foght *Survey*, 1918, 32.

schooling were identical regardless of locale. So too was the meaning of the rural school of the prairie on both sides of the forty-ninth parallel.

(x) *Parallel Meanings: The Meaning of the Rural School in Saskatchewan*

In the same way Carney identified the rural school as a social center for the community, Saskatchewan education policy makers viewed the school in an identical fashion. "One finds considerable satisfaction in the increasing evidence that the people are awakening to the recognition of the fact the school is the center of the community. With the recognition of this fact will come the beginning of the solution of ruralising or socializing of the rural school."¹²⁶ In 1912, one inspector spoke of the school and its place in the community in decidedly Populist terms:

One is almost ashamed to admit that in the great majority of districts the school is below the general standard of the community. The people as a whole do not realize how deeply children are impressed by the natural world around them. The school should be the centre of the community; this centre should be attractive and powerful in influence. It is the most tremendously significant thing in the whole history of America. Here is gathered the most impressionable element, to secure the highest possible development of mind and character. Every element of order, neatness and beauty, every broadening influence, every appeal to the finer nature of the child, mean better men and women and a more thrifty, prosperous, and attractive community.¹²⁷

By 1915 the government of the province had created Rural Education Associations as a further step to promoting the school as the center to every community.

The object of these associations will be to promote and develop the use of school gardens as an educational factor, to organize school fairs, contests for boys and girls, boys' and girls' clubs, etc., to organize literary societies and to encourage the use of the school building as a community center; in

¹²⁶ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1914*, 48.

¹²⁷ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1912*, 45.

fact, an attempt will be made to make these associations feel responsible for the general educational advancement of the whole community.¹²⁸

School gardens were a very successful enterprise across rural Saskatchewan, as they were across the United States and parts of Europe, and went far in enabling rural schools to prepare the farm youth for life on the farm. By the late 1920's, however, school gardens were slowly disappearing across the province, and with the onset of drought in 1930 disappeared completely.

Closely akin to Foght's statement regarding the effectiveness of rural schools, Saskatchewan inspectors articulated the following:

The efficiency of your schools is not to be measured by the number of students who pass their examinations but by the provision that is made for the education of every child in the district and the solid foundation laid for future citizenship. We must keep in mind the fact that the great majority of our pupils are not going in the High Schools but into actual business of some kind or other; we should then prepare them for the life they must live so that they may be intelligent and useful citizens.¹²⁹

As for who should be in control of the rural school this was also clear in the eyes of school inspectors, and very much reiterated the argument established by Tyack in regard to rural schools in the American West. "It is therefore evident that the development of our rural schools cannot be more rapid than will be the evolution of the people who administer its affairs. This evolution can be done only by the extension of the knowledge of the meaning and needs of the school as an institution which is directly under the control of the people for whom it has been created and established."¹³⁰ Finally, in the spirit of Raban, John Charyk denotes the same meaning to the rural school in Saskatchewan as did Raban in Montana. "The country schoolhouse was a proud moment in the building of this nation. It represented the heart and soul of every rural district and was the center

¹²⁸ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1915*, 50.

¹²⁹ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1913*, 43.

¹³⁰ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1913*, 90.

around which the religious, political, social, and educational life of the community revolved.”¹³¹

Educational policy makers in the province of Saskatchewan between 1910 and 1920 shared with their American cousins in education—people like Cubberly, Carney, and Foght—a unified meaning of the rural school problem and its solution. In both jurisdictions policy makers also shared the Populist meaning of consolidation and of the rural school itself. At the level of the local patron—or in Populist lingo, the level of the people—each polity shared identical meanings for the local school, and the belief that they, and not the expert, were in control of it. Tyack argues that beginning around 1910 in America control over local schools was successfully transferred from the people to the experts.¹³² To put it another way, Populism gave way to the work of the professional educators like Foght and others. Despite the fact Foght was heralded in Saskatchewan as the one expert who could bring school consolidation to fruition in the province, this same transfer of power from laymen to professional would not occur in Saskatchewan until the 1940’s.

Despite the anticipation that preceded Foght’s *Survey*, and the fervor it created upon its completion, by the mid-1920’s that momentum had waned. By 1922 no serious attempt had yet been made at consolidation in the province. A secondary recommendation following Foght’s analysis of the province’s system of schools was the appointment of a special inspector to preside over the re-organization of the province’s newly consolidated schools. In his 1927 *Annual Report*, the Provincial Inspector of School Division Organization laid to rest, for the next two decades, the notion that larger, consolidated school districts were necessary in Saskatchewan:

The present method of administering school districts by boards of trustees elected by ratepayers in each district is the result of long practice

¹³¹ John C. Charyk, *The Little White Schoolhouse* (Saskatoon: Prairie Books, 1984), back cover.

¹³² Tyack, 24.

and almost without exception proves very satisfactory. There seems no general desire to change in this regard, although one occasionally hears of the advantages to be derived from a larger unit of administration. It must be said that on the whole the trustees are an earnest and efficient body of men.¹³³

Furthermore, by 1924 Rural Education Associations, created in 1915 to make the rural school the center of rural life in Saskatchewan, were in a state of decline across the province.¹³⁴

Though consolidation of American rural schools met resistance in a variety of locales, the process was underway in virtually all American states by the time Foght first arrived in Saskatchewan in 1917. In fact, consolidation successes in North Dakota and Minnesota served largely as the blueprint for Foght's recommendations in Saskatchewan. Whereas rural school consolidation or centralization succeeded south of the forty-ninth parallel it was an abject failure in Saskatchewan following the publication of Foght's *Survey* in 1918, with true consolidation achieved only a full quarter century later. It is this single failure which casts doubt on my argument that Saskatchewan policy makers looked south for their solutions to prairie Canadian problems, for if this were true consolidation, like so many other shared solutions to shared problems, would be readily welcomed into a province bent upon resisting eastern Canadian models of reform.

The failure of consolidation to take shape in the province of Saskatchewan, however, is not a reflection of Foght's inability to convince the province's bureaucratic elite to accept American solutions to largely identical rural problems. Foght's recommendations were well received by school inspectors and provincial government employees in the province. It is instead a confirmation that local control of democratic entities—one of the cornerstones to American democracy and Populist revolt that migrated northward from the

¹³³ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report*, 1927, 92.

¹³⁴ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report*, 1924, 76.

American Plains into the Canadian prairie – was more successful in the prairie Canadian milieu than was the case in the United States. At the level of the people grassroots democracy was also received as part of a larger transfer of culture. Though the concept of local control as it emerged in North America first took seed in the US, and later germinated in the soil of the American Midwest, local control bore its greatest fruit not there, but through its transplantation into the fields of Saskatchewan. In this regard, the success of the locals in resisting school consolidation in Saskatchewan in the decades following Foght's *Survey* is an indication of a far deeper reception of American culture than would be the case with the adoption of American-style centralization, since this reception was felt most acutely at the level of the people and their relationship with that level of democratic government existing closest to them – the local school board

(xi) *Parallel Developments: The Failure of Consolidation in Saskatchewan in a Political Cultural Context*

Contemporary writers on the process of rural school consolidation often voiced the belief that centralization produced a higher level of education for all students, encouraged higher rates of student attendance, allowed the retention of better qualified teachers, equalized taxation and opportunity, and in general provided for a more efficient and cost-effective means of education for all.¹³⁵ While this was certainly the case in the American context, some aspects of these arguments were not true in Saskatchewan. The cost of conveyance, for example, was much higher in the province of Saskatchewan than in the American Midwestern and Plains states. This was true for several reasons, including the greater distance required for travel, the poor quality of roads in Saskatchewan

¹³⁵ For a North Dakotan argument in favor of consolidation, see Joseph Kennedy, *Rural Life and the Rural School* (New York: American Book Co., 1915). Kennedy was a professor at the University of North Dakota at the time, and based much of his discussion about rural life on his own childhood in North Dakota.

relative to most American states, and the length and ferocity of the Saskatchewan winter. While Frederick Jackson Turner might have been premature in suggesting that the period of the American frontier was over near the end of the nineteenth century, in the Canadian prairies frontier conditions persisted well into the 1920's.

Though legislation was created in 1914 to subsidize local school districts in Saskatchewan for up to one-third the cost of conveyance, this still left local school boards to cover the remaining two-thirds. In many rural school districts, particularly those where the tax base was rather limited through sparse settlement, the cost of conveyance was prohibitive.¹³⁶ Furthermore, Funk argues, provincial legislation providing for the conveyance of students from one local district to another, centralized municipal district, had the opposite effect of centralization since the legislation allowed local school districts to maintain their existence, and local school board, even if there were no operating schools.¹³⁷ Rather than reduce the number of school districts, the conveyance legislation enabled the number of school districts in the province to multiply.

A further impediment to consolidation was the nature of settlement in the province of Saskatchewan. As I mentioned in Chapter Two, settlement patterns on the Canadian prairies mirrored those on the American frontier, albeit with a lag of two decades, whereby immigrant communities were created often as fragments of the home country. Immigrants settled with people like themselves, often forming communities comprised of citizens from the same parish from where they originated in Europe.¹³⁸ Though communities were formed based on kinship, religion, etc., the geographic locations for these settlements were often quite random. It was quite common, therefore, to have a homogeneous settlement of German Lutherans located a few short miles from a similarly

¹³⁶ Funk, 43-49. The cost of conveyance in rural Saskatchewan was estimated to be three times that of most rural American states.

¹³⁷ Funk, 48.

¹³⁸ Richard White, 299.

cohesive settlement of Orthodox Ukrainians. By 1918 these contiguous communities had co-existed for a generation in the American Midwest, and were undoubtedly united by a certain degree of commerce and other forms of contact, and through various processes of Americanization, including public schooling. This made consolidation far easier in the US than would be the case in Saskatchewan in 1918 where settlement was far from complete and the homogenizing affect of the local school largely untapped. To put it another way, the Saskatchewan frontier was in an entirely different phase of social and cultural development than was the case among the American Midwestern or Plains states.

Given that much of my argument in Chapters Two and Three rejects a macro level approach to Canadian political culture and education policy I am somewhat reluctant here to invoke a national perspective. However, there is one key argument for the failure of consolidation in Saskatchewan in the 1920's that must include a national perspective. Whereas academics like Tyack and Lipset identify a national movement in the late nineteenth century toward greater levels of centralization across the United States,¹³⁹ in the decades prior to the Second World War in Canada the reverse process was in full swing. Canadian political scientist, Garth Stevenson, has argued that from the time of Confederation until the 1930's Canada experienced what he described as *centrifugal* federalism, whereby power that once resided within the central government in Ottawa was devolved to the various provinces. This process of decentralization occurred as the American division of powers experienced centralizing, or *centripedal* forces.¹⁴⁰ In this regard, American efforts at consolidation or centralization were part of a larger trend across the country, whereas resistance to centralization was itself

¹³⁹ See Tyack and Seymour Martin Lipset, "The Ideology of Local Control," in *Education and Social Policy: Local Control of Education*, ed. C.A. Bowers, Ian Housego, and Doris Dyke (New York: Random House 1970).

¹⁴⁰ Garth Stevenson, *Unfulfilled Union: Canadian Federalism and National Unity* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1979).

part of an opposite trend in Canada. This was particularly the case in Saskatchewan during this period because, more so than any other Canadian province, Saskatchewan's population in the 1920's remained overwhelmingly rural.

The centralization of schooling in the United States occurred during a period of urbanization and industrialization that began in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Although there were a few American states as rural in population as Saskatchewan, the movement toward consolidation of schools occurred among urban and rural states alike.¹⁴¹ One must assume that in 1918 Harold Foght predicated many of his recommendations for consolidation around the expectation that a similar urbanizing trend was afoot in the province of Saskatchewan. He was mistaken. In 1911 the percentage of Saskatchewan's population that was rural rested at 73 percent. By 1921 the percentage dropped slightly to 70, and by 1931, 68 percent. By 1941, 67 percent of the province's population lived rural lives, but by 1951 that percentage climbed back to 70 percent.¹⁴² From 1905 until well into the 1960's Saskatchewan's population was neither urban nor industrialized. Its population remained rural and agrarian.

As the rest of Canada and the US urbanized throughout the first half of the twentieth century, settlement patterns in Saskatchewan between 1910 and 1960 remained consistent. For every one citizen who settled in an urban community, two established roots in the country. The rural quality of Saskatchewan's population is also obvious in the growth of school divisions over

¹⁴¹ Census data from the US census bureau confirms that both North and South Dakota maintained an even wider gulf between urban and rural populations in the early part of the 1900's than did Saskatchewan. North Dakota, for example, was 89 percent rural in 1910, 86.4 percent rural in 1920, and 83.4 percent in 1930. Despite this fact, rural school consolidation was proceeding by 1918. See <http://www.census.gov/population/census data/urpop0090.txt>. Retrieved February 19, 2008.

¹⁴² Bill Waiser, *Saskatchewan: A New History* (Calgary: Fifth House, 2005), 498-499. In 1971 a slim majority of Saskatchewan inhabitants were identified as urban (53 percent).

the same period. At the time of Foght's *Survey* in 1917, the number of school divisions in the province exceeded 4000. A decade later, that number had risen to over 5000, each with its own school board with three trustees.¹⁴³

Centrifugal federalism also manifested itself in higher education in the province of Saskatchewan. As was the case in the US, where the Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations assumed a pre-eminent influence in a system of higher education devoid of centralized authority or standardization, the same was true in Canada. The central government in Ottawa, apart from providing some funding to support universities, left matters of higher education to the provinces, which in turn gave complete latitude to the institutions to chart their own course. In the hands of a powerful and independent President like Walter Murray, the University of Saskatchewan was left to develop completely independent of governmental influence or political interference. Murray relished this independence and crafted an institution almost entirely by his own hand. In the process, however, he formed a university that was corporate like in form and function.

The above arguments tell part of the tale why attempts at rural school consolidation failed in Saskatchewan following Foght's *Survey* in 1918. Tyack makes the argument in *The One Best System* that plans to reform the American rural school revealed a successful transfer of power from the layman to the professional.¹⁴⁴ Indeed, progressive attempts at reform across a wide array of American social policy, including public education, health, sobriety, etc., produced a high degree of centralization and the people's gradual acceptance of expert control. In Saskatchewan, experts like school inspectors and policy wonks in the provincial government very much approved of Foght's recommendations, and eagerly anticipated their implementation following 1918. At the level of the people, however, and among their elected representatives – legislators who lived

¹⁴³ Lipset, 33.

¹⁴⁴ Tyack, 24.

among the people in rural Saskatchewan--the same level of approval never developed. Resistance to Foght's recommendations was not a rejection of American reform efforts *per se*, but a revelation of the fact that the people of Saskatchewan had completely adopted a democratic conception that was Jeffersonian, Populist, and moralistic in tone. In Saskatchewan the rejection of Foght's call for rural school consolidation exemplified a victory of the people over the expert.

(xii) *Local Control Carries the Day in Saskatchewan Education*

Among the few histories of the province of Saskatchewan's system of K-12 schooling, all commentators agree that, logistical issues aside, the failure of rural school consolidation in the 1920's came from the desire to preserve local control over local schools. In 1971, Funk asserted: "The Municipal School Movement was a threat to the local board's sovereignty. It is the author's contention that this authority was more important than a good school in many instances."¹⁴⁵ University of Saskatchewan historian of education, M. P. Scharf, concurs:

There were a number of reasons for this [rejection of rural school consolidation]. The state of the roads in the pioneer rural areas, the difficulties of winter travel, the scarcity of population, and the costs of conveyance were major operational factors inhibiting the acceptance of larger jurisdictions. However, even in the areas which had been settled for two generations and had better roads, another factor arose: local pride. An amalgamation arrangement, under which one school district ceased to exist, failed to recognize the loyalty and identity, which had grown up in the local school districts. The fear of school closures cemented the resistance to school district restructuring.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ Funk, 58.

¹⁴⁶ M.P. Scharf, "An Historical Overview of the Organization of Education in Saskatchewan," in *A History of Education in Saskatchewan: Selected Readings*, 9. See also, in the same volume, Michael Owen, "Towards A New Day: The Larger School Unit in Saskatchewan, 1935-1950," 37.

On a more positive note, although the results of Foght's *Survey* failed to live up to the high expectations that preceded it, the recommendations he forwarded did guide the debate in the coming decades.

Previously I asserted that explicit within calls for rural school consolidation by experts like Elwood Cubberly and Harold Foght, and for the resolution to the "rural school problem" both in America and Saskatchewan, was a Populist notion of equality of opportunity for all students, particularly as it related to a perceived inequity between the opportunities afforded city students relative to their disadvantaged rural cousins. Equally as powerful, but somewhat paradoxical to calls for improved rural schooling, are the Jeffersonian and Populist utterances of those who sought to preserve local control over local schools. While the concept of local control is not an American invention, one could argue that its practical application was greatly furthered there. This democratic conception of local control migrated northward to Saskatchewan, embedded within the larger cultural framework of which I wrote in Chapter Two. The rejection of Foght's recommendations around consolidation was much less a rejection of American solutions for identical Saskatchewan problems than it was an indication of the wholesale acceptance of American democratic meanings and practice into the Canadian prairies.

University of Saskatchewan professor of political science, John C. Courtney, captures best the unique relationship between Canadian federalism and American conceptions of local control.

The American conception of democracy has developed on the theory that in order to be truly democratic a political system must be "as close to the people as possible." It think it is not unfair to say that this concept of closeness is in the mainstream of American democracy from Jefferson through to the *Saturday Evening Post*. ... This way of thinking of democracy has affected Canada most significantly. Not only has the nineteenth-century English liberal conception of local control been instrumental in the adoption and retention of "localized" education in Canada, but the peculiar conception of democracy, when combined with the institution of federalism in Canada, has added some considerable

weight to the arguments of those who desire the continuance of local control. The combination of the English Fabians, John S. Mill, *The Federalist Papers*, and Jacksonian ideals presents a formidable opposition to those who favor a centralized system of educational control.¹⁴⁷

In Saskatchewan the influence of American derivatives of local control would be far more powerful than its British equivalent. Into this already fertile environment for local control was further added a preponderance of farmer's movements and various other forms of member organizations.

At the time of Seymour Martin Lipset's comprehensive study of Saskatchewan political culture in the late 1940's, entitled *Agrarian Socialism*, consolidation of the province's rural schools was largely complete, having started with the election of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in 1944. Recalling his study some 20 years later, Lipset remained struck by the degree of local participation among Saskatchewan farmers:

Each small rural community required some people to serve on the school board, on the local Wheat Pool Committee, on the board of the Cooperative Store, in the local telephone company, in the hospital, in the library, as Rural Municipality councillors, and so on. A total of at least 125,000 positions had to be filled by a few hundred thousand farmers. Many of course held three or four positions. I estimated that one out of eight farmers held a community post. And this meant, of course, that those who did not were in close personal contact with those who did, could receive information from those involved with problems and changes, and could tell them what they wanted done. Consequently, rural Saskatchewan was an organized community with considerable involvement in local institutions. People participated, not because they were convinced of the worth of the participation as an abstract principle but, rather, because the very existence of the community required a high degree of activity.¹⁴⁸

Lipset concluded that in the context of Jeffersonian democracy, such a high level of direct political involvement within the institutions that most affected the

¹⁴⁷ John C. Courtney, "The ideology of local control: A Reply," in *Education and Social Policy: Local Control of Education* 47-48.

¹⁴⁸ Lipset, "The ideology of local control," 32-33.

citizens' lives this was admirable. The cost, however, was that with over 5000 school boards, rural students received an education inferior to that of their urban cousins.¹⁴⁹ Regardless, Lipset, Courtney, and Funk all agree that an ideology for local control persisted in Saskatchewan well into the 1930's—far longer than the concept survived in the American polity.

When one further considers the prevalence of a *moralistic* political culture within the province of Saskatchewan in the early decades of the 1900's, it becomes even more obvious why the province's citizens would expect to control their local schools. Elazar reminds us that within this subculture—one whose epicenter existed among the Midwestern and Plains states of the northern US, the area from which the vast majority of American settlers to Saskatchewan originated—political involvement was central to life in the commonwealth.

Since the moralistic political culture rests on the fundamental conception that politics exists primarily as a means to coming to grips with the issues and public concerns of civil society, it also embraces the notion that politics is a concern for every citizen, not just those who are professionally committed to political careers. Indeed, it is the duty of every citizen to participate in the political affairs of his commonwealth.¹⁵⁰

Elazar goes on to suggest that within a moralistic political culture a greater acceptance for government intervention exists, but that acceptance tends to occur along highly localistic paths. “[A] willingness to encourage local government intervention to set public standards does not necessarily reflect a concomitant willingness to allow outside governments equal opportunity to intervene.”¹⁵¹ Given this framework for understanding the political orientations of the Saskatchewan people, it is little wonder they rejected the provincial government's attempts at consolidation after 1918, much less share their control over local schools with those from outside the local community.

¹⁴⁹ Lipset, 33.

¹⁵⁰ Elazar, 91.

¹⁵¹ Elazar, 92.

The fact that different elements in Saskatchewan society perceived and received American plains culture in competing ways is not surprising. As William H. Sewell Jr. reminds us, cultures are inherently contradictory. Sewell notes, for example, that within Christian symbolism an attempt is made to unify in one symbolic figure "... three sharply distinct and largely incompatible possibilities of Christian religious experience: authoritative and hierarchical orthodoxy (the Father), loving egalitarianism and grace (the Son), and ecstatic spontaneity (the Holy Ghost)."¹⁵² Within Populism, therefore, the rural school came to mean entirely different things to administrative progressives, on the one hand, and the people on the other. For the bureaucrat the local school was an impediment to change and a force against equality of opportunity. For the local patron, however, the local school remained the one democratic institution around which every community functioned and around which every citizen could maintain some control. The continued survival of the local school, and the local school board, meant the preservation of rural life, not its demise. In the American context, local control gave way to centralization. In Saskatchewan, at least from 1918-1930, the local patron prevailed over the expert.

IV *Education "rooted to the soil:" The Language of Efficiency enters Saskatchewan Education*

The beginning of this chapter emphasized the influence of American *practice* on Saskatchewan education, while the middle section identified the various *meanings* adopted by Saskatchewan educationists specifically as a result of the education survey. Within these meanings I argued there was an explicit emphasis on the meaning of the rural school and consolidation, and centered my discussion around those meanings with reference to the democratic and Populist

¹⁵² William H. Sewell, Jr. "The Concept(s) of Culture," in *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture*, ed. Victoria E. Bonnell and Lynn Hunt (Berkeley: U of C Press, 1999), 53.

utterances of Foght and a host of provincial school inspectors. In this section I continue my focus on language, but move away from the political orientations this language suggests to one focused around a very specific branch of school reform emanating from the United States. Like other types of reforms that moved northward from the US, *social efficiency* entered the province roughly a decade or two following its zenith in America. Though some Saskatchewan policy makers had been exposed to notions of efficiency prior to Foght's *Survey*, the contents of his report ushered in a new era of school reform that went well beyond the issue of consolidation. Following Foght's *Survey*, and throughout the decade of the 1920's, the language of school reform in the province will be one devoted to social efficiency.

My discussion of the language of social efficiency will interpret Foght's *Survey* and its aftermath with the work of two American historians of education in mind. First, David Tyack's writing around the "one best system" that evolved in the US around the turn of the nineteenth century encourages the historian of Saskatchewan education to identify Foght as an "administrative progressive" who will undoubtedly propose specific changes to Saskatchewan education largely identical to those proposed by his colleagues in the US. Similar in process, but somewhat different in outcome to Tyack's administrative progressives, is Herbert Kliebard's "social efficiency educators." Like administrative progressives, social efficiency educators used scientific method to place the expert at the head of school reform. Whereas administrative progressives tended to emphasize the administration and organization of schooling, in Kliebard's history of the American curriculum social efficiency educators were also largely responsible for significant change in the curriculum. Whether one examines the work of Foght through the lens of Tyack's administrative progressivism or Kliebard's social efficiency, it is obvious Foght's *Survey* initiated a change in the language of schooling and school reform in the province of Saskatchewan to one that was American in origin.

For Foght, school district consolidation was not only a Populist phenomenon designed to improve life in rural communities, but also an attempt to make schooling and the society schools supported more efficient. For an administrative progressive such as Foght the goal of school reform was to remove politics from schooling entirely, thereby placing the responsibility for school transformation firmly in the hands of the expert. Foght made this assumption clear from the outset of his *Survey*, noting that during the initial debate around school reform in Saskatchewan, the Leader of the Opposition in the provincial legislature stated: “[T]he school system must be absolutely and entirely divorced from all politics and separated from all party influence.”¹⁵³ All Saskatchewan legislators agreed. Within Foght the Populist reformer did not compete with the social efficiency work, but instead worked side-by-side. Unfortunately for his legacy, Foght’s recommendations around consolidation did not persist through the 1920’s. However, his language of social efficiency, which Foght helped introduce to the province in 1918, survived through the end of the 1920’s until it too was replaced by another language of reform akin to John Dewey’s branch of “social meliorism.”

Tyack observes that beginning in the 1890’s there emerged a campaign to consolidate American schools and pupil transportation, and to place rural education in the hands of the professional. This attempt at standardization, much akin to the evolution toward the “one best system” already begun within urban school districts across America, attempted to take schools out of politics and transform country children’s social values and vocational skills.¹⁵⁴ As part of the larger solution to the rural school problem as found in consolidation, this too was a central theme throughout Foght’s *Survey*.

¹⁵³ Foght *Survey*, 5.

¹⁵⁴ This process began with the National Education Association’s Committee of Twelve on Rural Schools. See Tyack, 23.

The survey movement itself was a key component to the program of the administrative progressives, and had gained momentum throughout the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. Between 1911 and 1925 hundreds of surveys were conducted around the United States, reaching into every state in the union. Surveys tended to emphasize the financial and mechanical aspects of education, and placed the impetus for reform in the hands of the “authorities.”¹⁵⁵ The bulk of these state or city surveys were either petitioned by the federal government or by philanthropic foundations. Tyack characterizes these surveys as “highly prescriptive,” in their recommendations, emphasizing those reforms favored by the administrative progressives.¹⁵⁶

Foght’s *Survey* was no different. Administrative progressives, of which Foght was certainly one, “shared a common faith in ‘educational science’ and in lifting education ‘above politics’ so that experts could make the crucial decisions. Occupying key positions and sharing definitions of problems and solutions, they shaped the agenda and implementation of school reform more powerfully from 1900-1950 than any another group before or since.”¹⁵⁷

Foght’s *Survey* was the first of its kind in Canada, petitioned by the government of Saskatchewan with the surveyor on loan from the federal government in Washington D.C. Its outcome, highly prescriptive and obvious to Saskatchewan policy makers before its completion, was the identical solution to those proposed by noted social efficiency educators like Elwood Cubberly and

¹⁵⁵ Raymond E. Callahan, *Education and the Cult of Efficiency: A Study of the Social Forces that have Shaped the Administration of the Public Schools* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1962), 112.

¹⁵⁶ Tyack, 18. Ellen Condliffe Lagemann chronicles the beginning of the school survey movement in the 1890’s when “school administrators had become increasingly concerned with finding ways to gather precise information about the ‘efficiency’ of the schools.” See Lagemann, *An Elusive Science: The Troubling History of Education Research* (Chicago: U of C Press, 2000). 79.

¹⁵⁷ Tyack, 17.

others.¹⁵⁸ Though a few Saskatchewan school inspectors had spoken the language of efficiency in their *Annual Reports* prior to Foght's arrival, there emerges a noted shift in the language of these reports following 1917.¹⁵⁹ Prior to the *Survey*, the dominant dialect of the reports was one focused on the challenge of Canadianizing the immigrant population, and the importance of schools in creating a truly Canadian citizenry from within a countryside largely inhabited by foreigners. Though these concerns would persist throughout the decade of the 1920's, they became couched within the vernacular of social efficiency.

At various points in his *Survey* Foght assumes a decidedly scientific and statistical approach to school reform in Saskatchewan—to the modern day observer, one quite removed from his substantive arguments in favor of consolidation. For example, in Chapter VII on "Organisation and Adaptability of the Rural School," Foght devotes much attention to the ratio of glass area to floor space in the rural school. The author reminds his readers that roughly 10 percent of outdoor light is absorbed through a window; if that window is dirty that number may double or triple. He follows that analysis with a series of pie charts depicting from where the light enters the classroom. Only 32 percent of the schools surveyed in rural Saskatchewan maintained correctly lit classrooms—where light enters the room either from the left, only, or from the left and rear. Foght also provided a detailed chart outlining the percentage of schools having

¹⁵⁸ Kliebard identifies Cubberly as a social efficiency educator. See Kliebard, 191.

¹⁵⁹ Not surprisingly, Inspector Kennedy of Weyburn, that individual who religiously attended the annual conventions of the NEA, was already aware of efficiency in education before the arrival of Foght. In 1913 he wrote in his *Annual Report*, "The efficiency of your school is not to be measured by the number of students who pass their examinations but by the provision that is made for the education of every child in the district and the solid foundation laid for future citizenship. We must keep in mind the fact that the great majority of our pupils are not going into the High Schools but into actual business of some kind or other; we should then prepare them for the life they must live, so that they may be intelligent and useful citizens." Saskatchewan, *Annual Report*, 1913, 43.

shades, cloak rooms, the extent of sweeping and dusting in schools, etc.¹⁶⁰ Only an expert in education could make such a case for these numbers as crucial to a modernizing system of schools.

In a similar vein Foght devotes a chapter of his *Survey* to "School Population: Enrolment and Attendance." Here he tackles the issue of "waste" as represented by average attendance and the percentage of students held in a specific grade for over one year. Though he discovered city schools performed better in terms of waste when compared with rural schools, the author took little solace in the fact:

City and town officials should take no uncton to their souls from the superiority of the urban schools over the rural in this regard [lower incidence of waste in urban schools]. The urban record shows a waste of pupil material that would be unpardonable were it not for the fact that it has been the habit of the school and the community from time immemorial to give no heed to the pupil who leaves school or lags behind.¹⁶¹

Foght's ability to cite statistics from the American states put him at a distinct advantage relative to his provincial counterparts, thereby assuring his role as the expert in such matters. Regardless of the numbers displayed in his charts, graphs, etc., the outcome of these statistical explanations for the rural school problem were identical: Saskatchewan needed consolidated schools, full year schooling, and a greater emphasis on systemic record keeping to closely monitor waste and inefficiency in schooling. These themes, among others, were the hallmarks of the administrative progressives.

Foght's dependence on statistical analysis and his emphasis on efficiency leads me to a more detailed discussion of the influence of social efficiency in Saskatchewan education following 1918. The language of social efficiency will replace the more traditional language of schooling in Saskatchewan; one that emphasized citizenship, particularly as it related to the education of foreign

¹⁶⁰ Foght *Survey*, 57.

¹⁶¹ Foght *Survey*, 81.

immigrants in rural Saskatchewan. Traditional concerns around schooling in Saskatchewan assumed a common form. In 1911, the inspector for Yorkton, an area largely settled by immigrants from the Ukraine and Eastern Europe, succinctly articulated the problem in his district:

From what I have seen of these foreign people, no matter of what nationality, it seems obvious that more stringent regulations should be enacted in order to compel them to send their children to school. These children are growing up in the same ignorance as their parents and are practically drifting right before our eyes further and further away from that high ideal of Canadian citizenship upon which the future of our vast western prairie land depends.¹⁶²

In 1914, his replacement reiterated the problem: “In the evolving of a Canadian national type our school is the greatest factor in the life of Western Canada.”¹⁶³ By the time of Foght’s *Survey*, however, the American penchant for finding ways to gather precise information about the efficiency of schools—a practice that began in the 1890’s south of the border,¹⁶⁴--would take hold in the province of Saskatchewan.

Kliebard describes social efficiency educators as one of four interests groups that competed for pre-eminence across the entire breadth of American school reform from 1893 to 1958.

It was social efficiency that, for most people, held out the promise of social stability in the face of cries for massive social change, and that doctrine claimed the now potent backing of science in order to insure it. This was vastly different science, however, from either Hall’s natural order of development in the child or Dewey’s idealization of scientific inquiry as a general model of reflective thinking. It was a science of exact measurement and precise standards in the interests of maintaining a predictable and orderly world. ... The scope of the curriculum needed to be broadened beyond the development of intelligence to nothing less than the full scope of life activities, and the content of the curriculum had to be changed so that a taut connection could be maintained between what was taught in school and the adult activities that one would later be called to

¹⁶² Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1911*, 54.

¹⁶³ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1914*, 71.

¹⁶⁴ Lageman, 79.

perform. Efficiency became more than a byword in the educational world; it became an urgent mission. That mission took the form of enjoining curriculum-makers to devise programs of study that prepared individuals specifically and directly for the role they would play as adult members of the social order. To go beyond what someone had to know in order to perform that role successfully was simply wasteful. Social utility became the supreme criticism against which the value of school studies was measured.

In a general sense, the advocates of social efficiency were educational reformers.¹⁶⁵

Foght's *Survey* is a testament to the influence of social efficiency in the author's own thinking and its broadening influence across North America, particularly when one focuses on the scope of the curriculum. Like social efficiency educators elsewhere in North America, in Saskatchewan schools Foght found an entirely traditional curriculum devoted to the study of ancient languages and preparation for those few who sought an education beyond the level of the high school. Saskatchewan high schools and collegiate institutes, located almost exclusively within urban settings, were entirely devoted to preparing students for University. Foght invoked a familiar hint of Populism in his rhetoric when he stated:

The high schools and collegiate institutes of Saskatchewan offer almost exclusively the traditional course of study of the eastern provinces and the eastern states of the American union. Economic, social, and civic demands are only beginning to make themselves felt. Agriculture, the one great industrial interest of the Province, fills a relatively unimportant role as compared with Latin and mathematics. The high schools of Saskatchewan are meeting the needs of one small group of boys and girls who are going to college or into teaching; they are neglecting the large mass of boys and girls who most need high school education in a democracy.¹⁶⁶

Furthermore, he found the Saskatchewan curriculum in need of a complete revamping in order to align it with present day standards (American, no doubt) in secondary education.

¹⁶⁵ Kliebard, 77-78.

¹⁶⁶ Foght *Survey*, 88.

For Foght the solution to this problem, which closely related to his conception of the rural school problem, was very simple, and one espoused by social efficiency educators across the United States: abandon the traditional curriculum in favor of one related to “present and future problems.”¹⁶⁷ In Saskatchewan the curriculum must emphasize agriculture:

It has been repeatedly pointed out in this report that agriculture is the chief vocational concern of the Province, and that the fundamental vocational training is therefore agricultural education. ... The entire Survey report constitutes a report on vocational agricultural education to the extent that it seeks to relate education in the Province definitely to the basic occupation of the people.¹⁶⁸

Agriculture, though not a part of the urban school curriculum at the time of his *Survey*, must also be included through related courses in city schools.

Town and city schools should also be considered in this conception of agricultural life. City people may not be expected to become farmers, but what they do become will depend largely on the agricultural prosperity by which they are surrounded. Practical courses in agriculture, rural sociology, and farm economics in the secondary schools are required to forge a bond of sympathy and understanding between town and country people, and would ultimately place agriculture on the lofty plane which it should occupy in the esteem of all Saskatchewan people.¹⁶⁹

A great many of Foght’s recommendations around changes to the Saskatchewan curriculum were implemented, including an increased emphasis on vocational education, household science, the teaching of hygiene, etc.¹⁷⁰ In

¹⁶⁷ Foght *Survey*, 73.

¹⁶⁸ Foght *Survey*, 131.

¹⁶⁹ Foght *Survey*, 19.

¹⁷⁰ *Annual Reports* chronicled the evolution of these various divisions within the Provincial Department of Education. The Vocational Education Act was passed by the Provincial Legislature in 1920. From among these newly created divisions, for example, Fannie Twiss, the Provincial Director of Household Science, took a year’s leave to take a course in Home Economics at Columbia University in 1920. See Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1920*, 81. Providing sabbatical leaves to provincial educationists was another of Foght’s recommendations.

1920 Saskatchewan legislators wholeheartedly adopted the language of social efficiency with the enactment of *The Vocational Education Act*. The legislation...

...[P]rovide[s] for the instruction of pupils in the following classes of schools:

- (a) day schools, which shall have an independent organization or be constituted as a department of an existing educational institution, the purpose of such schools or departments being to train adolescents for greater efficiency in industrial pursuits and for the duties of citizenship;
- (b) evening schools, in which adolescents and adults may receive theoretical and practical instruction in such occupations as they are engaged in during the day.¹⁷¹

Though Saskatchewan education policy makers embraced the reforms suggested by Foght, problems persisted in implementation, given that the vast majority of high schools existed only in cities: "On account of the fact that the basic industry of the province is agriculture, and that our urban centres are mainly assembling and distribution points, the opportunity for technical education is restricted."¹⁷² Regardless, the language of social efficiency dominated the province's *Annual Reports* until the end of the 1920's.

Despite attempts to alter the province's curriculum, the "rural school problem" in Saskatchewan persisted, as did the dilemmas posed by a traditional curriculum:

The criticism is sometimes made that our high schools prepare for the professions, including that of teaching, while those anxious to follow some form of industry for a life work, find little to interest them. This has resulted in a direct attempt to broaden the curriculum to satisfy all. ... While the number of industries apart from agriculture, is limited at present in this province, there must be many boys and girls throughout the province to whom the so-called academic courses do not appeal strongly, but who would be interested in furthering their studies along industrial lines, if means could be found of bringing the advantages of the

¹⁷¹ Saskatchewan, *The Vocational Education Act*, 1919-1920, c. 42, s. 3.

¹⁷² Saskatchewan, *Annual Report*, 1923, 14.

training provided by *The Vocational Act* to their attention and of giving them some assistance in seeking these advantages.¹⁷³

Rural education did, however, achieve some success along the lines articulated by Foght. Agricultural Education broadened its role in the rural curriculum, as the Director for Rural Education reported in 1922: “While no statistics are available, excepting those secured through gardening projects of the boys’ and girls’ clubs, there is abundant evidence that school gardening is gradually reaching a stage of more efficiency and greater usefulness.”¹⁷⁴

Social efficiency of the sort Foght was proposing necessitated a certain depth of understanding in order to be legitimately received or adopted into the province. While most educationists within the province embraced the spirit of social efficiency within the province’s schools, there were some Saskatchewan education policy makers who seemingly betrayed a rather simplistic understanding of efficiency in their subsequent *Annual Reports*. To put it another way, their adoption of the language of efficiency seemed to lose something in its journey from the American milieu to the Canadian prairie.¹⁷⁵

Within some *Annual Reports* employees were expected to be efficient cogs within the efficient school system. Poor teachers were described as “inefficient” while those who labored long and hard were “faithful and efficient servants.”

¹⁷³ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1923*, 98.

¹⁷⁴ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1922*, 79.

¹⁷⁵ Daniel T. Rodgers denotes a similar misinterpretation by Americans of European social policy that, having crossed the Atlantic, often lost some of its meaning in transit. This he attributes to the fact that latecomers to the social policy process in the North Atlantic Community, as Americans often were during the period surrounding the turn of the twentieth century, witnessed only the end product without experiencing the process that transpired in a specific policy’s evolution. As I have argued throughout Chapters Two and Three, policies appeared in Saskatchewan some 10 to 20 years following their adoption in the US. Saskatchewan education policy makers were themselves latecomers to the education policy process, as witnessed by the adoption of the language of social efficiency, for example, some 20 years following its introduction in the American states. See Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings*.

The efficiency of any school district depended on quality training for its teachers, for the extension of terms for teacher training, and in the provision for a full year of study for students.¹⁷⁶ Poor attendance, brought on by short school years and/or influenza, signalled a reduction in efficiency. School nurses were lauded for their efforts in reducing “waste” by nursing sick students back to health quickly. Those school boards which took their jobs seriously were commended for keeping their schools “attractive and efficient.” Students were also awarded for their efforts in efficiency in areas like physical training. In 1922 Cadets were awarded “efficiency prizes” in a variety of areas.

Another prominent American theme that emerged occasionally within Saskatchewan education was the issue of intelligence testing within the high schools.¹⁷⁷ Revisionist historians in the United States have tended to view intelligence testing as a sorting mechanism to protect the interests of the middle and upper classes at the expense of the lower classes. American educationists, such as Edward L. Thorndike, who proposed such methods at the time, saw intelligence testing as a means to producing greater efficiency in schooling by designating who, through scientific measurement, was able to attend university and who should not. In Saskatchewan in 1923, rising high school attendance rates were causing similar concerns for educators.

The attendance in the high school classes continues to increase steadily, and as intimated last year, financial problems of a serious character continue to face many town and village school boards. It is not surprising that one occasionally hears the remark that too many students are getting

¹⁷⁶ In one Inspector’s Report, the order in which the various aspects of his inspections were chronicled was itself quite telling. The Inspector’s discussion of Students and Teachers appeared near the middle of the Report, well after his discussion of the length of school term, buildings, school grounds, heating, and water supply. His discussion of Teachers appeared in between “Toilets” and “Progress of Pupils.” See Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1919*, 119.

¹⁷⁷ For a very negative assessment of the intent behind intelligence testing within American education see David Nasaw, *Schooled to Order: A Social History of Public Schooling in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), particularly Chapter 9.

into our high school classes. Some people go so far as to say that the municipality and the province are overdoing themselves in attempting to provide education, almost free, of a secondary character. ... Many thoughtful people, however, while not opposing free training of an advanced character, would limit the advantages to those who can profit by it. These people would recommend some form of intelligence tests to supplement the regular Grade VIII examinations, and thereby select those really capable of benefiting by further school instruction.¹⁷⁸

Clearly, by 1923 efficiency was the dominant educational dialect in the province of Saskatchewan, as it was throughout many North American jurisdictions. By 1930, however, social efficiency was itself replaced by another stream of American education reform.

Robert S. Patterson suggests that by 1929 the province of Saskatchewan was leading the way among Canadian provinces in pursuing a more progressive curriculum.¹⁷⁹ Depending upon one's definition of the term progressivism, it might be more accurate to state that progressivism, like the larger American influence in Saskatchewan generally, had existed in prairie schools for quite some time before 1929. Although Patterson would disagree with Kliebard on the existence of a *bona fide* progressivism in education, Patterson identifies a shift in emphasis away from vocational education toward a curriculum that emphasized moral values and citizenship, led by the dean of the movement, John Dewey.¹⁸⁰

For example, the Superintendent for Saskatoon's *Annual Report* in 1929 highlighted an experiment whereby two Grade One classrooms were compared. The one classroom adopted wholesale the Winnetka Plan, including all its materials and methods, while the other retained a "traditional" course of study.

¹⁷⁸ Saskatchewan, *Annual Report*, 1923, 97.

¹⁷⁹ Robert S. Patterson, "Society and Education During the Wars and Their Interlude: 1914-1945," in *Canadian Education: A History*, 374. In my mind, the pursuit of greater efficiency in education was itself a sign of American Progressivism at work in Canadian schools. Patterson's definition of what is Progressive and what is not is much narrower than historians like Herbert Kliebard and Lawrence Cremin.

¹⁸⁰ See Kliebard, Chapter 7, "The Heyday of Social Meliorism," 155-178.

At the time of his Report, the superintendent could report no significant difference in levels of achievement from one class to the other. Regardless, the following summer two more Saskatoon teachers made the trip to Winnetka to complete the summer course there.¹⁸¹

Further into the same inspector's 1930 *Annual Report* mention is made of another American educational practice to successfully cross the border into Saskatchewan. In 1930 the Saskatoon Public School Division began working cooperatively with a University of Saskatchewan professor of educational psychology, Dr. S.R. Laycock. Dr. Laycock conducted research on the psychological well being of the city's students; his research made possible through a grant from the Laura Spielman Rockefeller Foundation to the National Committee for Mental Hygiene.¹⁸² The work of American philanthropic organizations had penetrated northward to the prairie of Saskatchewan. As Chapter Four will show, this movement had been ongoing for some time, particularly in the realm of higher education, and exercised a significant role in the evolution of the University of Saskatchewan which became a hallmark of American influence under the leadership of the University's first President, Walter C. Murray.

V Conclusion

The transfer of American educational practice, meanings, and language of reform occurred along many avenues between 1905 and 1930. In the classroom teachers practiced American models among students whose textbooks were often written in America. At the level of the provinces' educationists and bureaucrats American meanings of the rural school and school district reorganization were

¹⁸¹ In 1929, five other Saskatchewan teachers completed the summer course in Winnetka in addition to their Saskatoon colleagues.

¹⁸² Saskatchewan, *Annual Report, 1930*, 96.

received following the dissemination of the Foght *Survey* in 1918, a report researched and written by an American expert on rural education whose Populist roots permeated his thinking around the rural school. At the level of the people, however, the acceptance of American democratic meanings and language of local control prohibited the adoption of consolidation until the 1940's. Finally, Foght's *Survey* also signalled a shift in the decade of the 1920's in the language of Saskatchewan schooling from a traditional purpose to one bent upon the concept of social efficiency. Saskatchewan's system of education developed in ways largely parallel to those in the US, particularly in regard to rural education as it existed in the Midwestern and northern Plains states, but evolved some 10 to 20 years later on the northern side of the international boundary. This pattern of parallel development, so prevalent within Saskatchewan K-12 schools, will intensify in the realm of higher education where, beginning in 1907, the *Wisconsin Idea* will secure its place on the banks of the South Saskatchewan River in the city of Saskatoon.

Chapter Four: The University of Saskatchewan and Its Culture of Emulation, 1907-1937

I Introduction

Created in 1907 by an Act of the Province of Saskatchewan, the University of Saskatchewan was to be the sole university for a province that encompassed more territory than North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska combined. It was formed "for the purpose of providing facilities for higher education in all its branches and enabling all persons without regard to race, creed or religion to take the fullest advantage."¹ The University's first President, Walter C. Murray, decreed it to be a people's university and a servant that would touch the life of the entire province. Though such grand, Populist statements might fall fresh on the ears of most citizens in a province barely two years old, such democratic utterances were quite common amidst other institutions of higher learning across the continent. Reform in American higher education, begun immediately following the conclusion of the Civil War, was proceeding well in advance of comparable Canadian institutions of higher learning. Indeed, many reforms initiated at American land grant and state universities, particularly in the American Midwest in the period from 1862-1930, were appropriated by the University of Saskatchewan as it sought to become a "world class institution" in its own right. On the occasion of the first cornerstone being laid on the College Building, Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier suggested the University of Saskatchewan would one day become one of the world's greatest universities and would stand beside other great universities like Oxford and Cambridge. History has shown, however, that Saskatchewan's first university has instead emulated the University of Wisconsin.

¹ *University Act, 1907.*

To articulate the extent to which the University of Saskatchewan was influenced by American models of higher learning, I first focus on four major developments prevalent in the reform period of the American university following the *Morrill Act* of 1862 until about 1937. Three of these areas correspond to the cultural *practice* of the university, to use Sewell's attributes of culture, and include its organizational structure, the evolution of academic freedom, and the influence of large American philanthropic foundations on the form and function of the U of S, particularly the Carnegie Foundation. In all three cases the development of the University of Saskatchewan bears striking resemblance to the previous developments of American institutions of higher learning particularly as they manifested themselves within Midwestern land grant and state universities. Specifically, the University of Wisconsin was the American university that University of Saskatchewan President, Walter Murray, most wished to emulate. The University of Saskatchewan was, to a large degree, an American style institution placed in the middle of the Canadian prairie.

In the fourth development within American higher education following the *Morrill Act*—the formation of the academic ideal of the university—the historian strikes at the *meaning* of the University. The meaning of the University to the province of Saskatchewan unfolded in a manner identical to that of the University of Wisconsin's meaning to its state—it was to be a service university reaching to every corner of the province. Unlike K-12 education in the province, however, which evolved through the interplay of meanings as expressed by policymakers and educators, on the one hand, and the people on the other, the meaning of the University of Saskatchewan was delivered to the people and policy makers through the efforts and single-minded devotion of its President, Walter Murray.²

² One might suggest that Murray's devotion bordered on obsession, if not, in fact, a personal crusade; one that not only assured the University's place among the

The second section of this chapter provides a concise examination of the four major developments that occurred on American university and college campuses in the period from 1862-1930.³ The third section focuses on the extent to which the University of Saskatchewan adopted and adapted these "innovations" into what amounts to a hybridized version of the American land grant and state university. In section four I focus on the meaning of the University of Saskatchewan.

II *American Higher Education at the turn of the Twentieth Century*

Since American institutions of higher learning developed earlier than their Canadian counterparts, particularly in the Northeastern states, these colleges initially looked across the Atlantic for their inspiration. However, through the examination of some *standard* texts in the history of American higher education a reader soon learns there are also uniquely indigenous features that take hold across major American campuses in the latter part of the nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century. Laurence Veysey identifies three conceptions of academic reform initiated in American higher education at the end of the Civil War.⁴ The first borrowed directly from the great German universities and focused on pure *research*. The second demanded a more *cultural* orientation and was appropriated from Oxford and Cambridge Universities in England. The third strand was entirely American in its essence. It emphasized *service* and *vocational training*, particularly in the areas of applied science and

brotherhood of "great" universities in North America, but also inextricably linked Murray's own stature and status with that of the University.

³ I do not mean to suggest there were only four developments during this period, but instead simply want to focus on these four, since I believe these to be obvious within the development of the University of Saskatchewan.

⁴ Lawrence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

engineering.⁵ While most campuses maintained enclaves of support for all three philosophical positions, the service university emerged as the dominant mode in American higher education at the end of the nineteenth century, particularly in the American Midwest. The passage of the *Morrill Act* of 1862 by the United States government paved the way for federal financial aid for states committed to creating colleges devoted to agricultural and mechanical instruction. The "land grant" university was born.

Most American commentators agree this period in American higher education marked a democratization of the university. Kerr suggests this democratization reflected a Populist turn in society that demanded the university serve the needs and interests of the entire state, and not simply those of the "gentleman scholar."⁶ With the advent of progressivism the American college curriculum assumed a technocratic orientation based around the notion of efficiency and a differentiated curriculum. This was particularly the case following World War I.⁷ The pragmatic American university catered toward preparing the student for a specific occupation or profession, which necessitated

⁵ Veysey, 12.

⁶ See Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University: With Postscript-1972* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 46-47. For a somewhat contrary viewpoint see David O. Levine, *The American College and the Culture of Aspiration, 1915-1940* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986). For a concise discussion of the development of agrarian populism in the United States and Canada see S.M. Lipset, *Agrarian Socialism: The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971) and Paul F. Sharp, *The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada: A Survey Showing American Parallels* (Winnipeg: Hignell Printing Ltd., 1997). This version is a reprint of the original first published in 1948.

⁷ Clyde Barrow examines this issue from a Marxist perspective and suggests this period in American higher education saw the employment of the university as a tool of the elite business class to create a corporate ideal among mainstream American citizenry. As such, the university became part of the "ideological state apparatus." See Clyde W. Barrow, *Universities and The Capitalist State: Corporate Liberalism and the Reconstruction of American Higher Education* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990).

a modification of the curriculum and a lowering of admission standards to accommodate both the practical and status-minded of students.⁸ Business and engineering colleges expanded rapidly during this period, as did other professional schools.

In a similar vein, the organizational structure of the American university assumed a much more efficient and corporate-like structure throughout this period. At the head of the institution was a powerful and often charismatic leader who assumed the responsibility for most aspects of the academic and business affairs of his institution. Aloof from the faculty and administrative staff, this President often unilaterally personified the aspirations of his corporation.⁹ The division of labor that emerged within the University, with the creation of academic colleges administered by Deans, and a further division of colleges into departments, led by a department chair, extended the corporate metaphor still further. The issue of whether the faculty were shareholders within the corporation, or mere employees of it, became a prominent one throughout the period of higher education reform.¹⁰

To accommodate an increased demand for some degree of higher education the State University assumed a greater degree of prominence in most states, as what were once Teachers' Colleges and the like became transformed into four year, access-oriented regional colleges or universities.¹¹ The state college or university became one of the true democratic institutions of mass higher education as it attempted to meet the growing educational needs of the states it served. As more students sought participation within this American "culture of aspiration," as Levine describes it, the emergence of two-year Junior

⁸ Levine estimates that two thirds of all students sought preparation for a specific profession following graduation. See Levine, 40-43.

⁹ Veysey, 306-310. The corporate nature of American higher education is a prime focus of Barrow's work.

¹⁰ This was also to be the case at the University of Saskatchewan in 1919.

¹¹ See Levine, Chapter 8, "The Junior College and the Differentiation of the Public Sector," 162-184.

Colleges also increased throughout the decades of the 1920's and '30's. General in nature, these institutions were designed to take higher learning to the people in more remote parts of a particular state, in addition to helping maintain the academic integrity of the larger, academically rigorous four-year institutions. Concerns over too much vocationalism in the university and excessive amounts of intellectual diffusion were voiced regularly by scholars during this time of curricular reform: "It [vocationalism] deprives the university of its only excuse for existence, which is to provide a haven where the search for truth may go on unhampered by utility or pressure 'for results.'"¹² Notwithstanding these small pockets of dissent, the expansion of various forms of higher education continued relatively unabated throughout the 1920's. Only the onset of the Depression could slow such remarkable growth.

Academic freedom within American institutions of higher learning also manifested a unique evolution during this period--an evolution divergent from the German universities where the concept emanated, and somewhat distant from what American faculty members envisioned the concept to mean. In essence, when transplanted into American society, academic freedom became tied rather tenuously with the concept of academic responsibility. The result of this tense relationship, Barrow argues, was a narrow conception of freedom on the part of Presidents and trustees and an unbridled belief in complete academic license on the part of faculty. However, this relationship was constantly disciplined by the moral and political values of the *status quo*.¹³ The final arbiters in such issues were invariably the founders and trustees of the university, and not the faculty. Though disputes over the extent of academic freedom enjoyed by faculty members were often public, and the individual faculty members involved

¹² Robert M. Hutchins, *The Higher Learning in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937), 43 as cited in Levine, 90.

¹³ See Chapter 7 of Barrow, "Discipline and Punish: Defining the Institutional Limits of Academic Freedom, 1894-1916."

of high profile, the decisions regarding their continued *employment* at a particular university were made behind closed doors and not open to public suasion.¹⁴

The late nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century witnessed a marked transformation of the American college in one further, uniquely American feature; the dominating influence of huge, external philanthropic organizations on the university. Rudolph posits that these "...foundations surveyed the educational situation in various areas and states and held out the promise of attractive gifts if measures were taken to eliminate duplicate facilities, or to put state systems of financial support into better order, or to consolidate into a more efficient organization neighboring competitive institutions."¹⁵ Particularly between 1920 and 1940, the Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations attempted to invoke a standardized approach to American higher education through the gifting of large sums of money to worthy institutions, and the withholding of money to those deemed unsuitable. Inevitably, this created an asymmetric system of higher education that benefited few institutions at the expense of the many.¹⁶ While American authors understandably focus on the influence of these American corporations on American universities, recent scholarship by a Canadian historian of higher education, Jeffrey Brison of Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, confirms this standardization traveled northward as easily as did American scholars.

To borrow a term used extensively by the American philosopher, Richard Rorty, the *vocabulary* of Saskatchewan higher education from its outset was very much American, Populist, and progressive in tone. From the first days of his appointment as President of the University of Saskatchewan, Walter Murray

¹⁴ The issue of *employment* versus *tenure* was a prominent one in American higher education and will become an equally important issue at the University of Saskatchewan.

¹⁵ Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History* (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1990), 432.

¹⁶ See John R. Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 238-239, and Barrow, 84-85.

impressed upon his Board of Governors that a trip south must be undertaken to visit "... some of the universities to the south whose problems are similar to those of Saskatchewan."¹⁷ While numerous well-established universities did exist in Canada's East,¹⁸ Murray instead looked south for his inspiration. As was the case in Saskatchewan education policy in elementary and secondary education during the same period—where policy makers looked south rather than east—in higher education the American Midwestern State University was deemed the most appropriate institution upon which to model the province's only university.

III *The Academic Practice of the University of Saskatchewan, 1907-1937*

As Walter Murray, first President of the University of Saskatchewan, left his home in Halifax on the long trek to the Canadian prairie he was exiting a promising academic career at one of the most prestigious universities in the East. But he was also leaving behind the denominational struggles and local conflicts that plagued many of Canada's eastern universities in the preceding decades. Arthur Morton, professor of History at the University of Saskatchewan who wrote one of its first histories, credits the then Premier of the province, F.W.G. Haultain, with recognizing what was needed in the West was a university different from those in Ontario and the Maritimes.

Too often the institutions of the West have been humble imitations of those in the East. But Haultain's mind was too virile, and his decisions grew too much out of his own experience and knowledge, for him to follow slavishly the example of the older sections of Canada. At this time [1903] he laid down a principle which, followed a few years later, was to

¹⁷ Arthur S. Morton, *Saskatchewan: The Making of a University* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959), 37.

¹⁸ Murray himself had been on faculty at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia prior to his appointment at Saskatchewan.

make the University of Saskatchewan an institution without its like in Canada.¹⁹

Though unlike universities founded in the nineteenth century in Canada, the University of Saskatchewan was to be patterned in a great many ways after some of the finest state and private universities in the American Midwest.

This practice of replicating key aspects of American higher education began first with the choice of architectural design for the campus buildings. While on an information gathering expedition south of the border shortly after assuming the role as President, Murray and two members of the Board of Governors agreed on the “Collegiate Gothic” design as it existed at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. All who witnessed the architectural style in St. Louis were very impressed with its aesthetic beauty. Once it was learned that Collegiate Gothic was adopted at Princeton University the Board of Governors quickly agreed that such a style was most suitable for the University of Saskatchewan.²⁰

John Thelin articulates that architectural design in the American university was not solely about producing beauty or function. The choice of design spoke to the values of the campus itself. “Architecture is essential for capturing and conveying the historical motifs that each campus projects via its monuments and memorials.”²¹ In replicating a particular campus style that was prominent among some of the United States’ most respected universities, the Board of Governors of the University of Saskatchewan were making a statement as to the form and function of their institution. By design, the University of

¹⁹ Arthur S. Morton and Carlyle King, *Saskatchewan: The Making of a University* (Toronto: University of Saskatchewan Press, 1959), 59. Morton did not complete his manuscript before his death. The book was assembled and published with Carlyle King as its editor.

²⁰ Morton, 58. Though the architectural design was borrowed from St. Louis, the architects responsible for the University’s first buildings hailed from Montreal.

²¹ Thelin, xx.

Saskatchewan would borrow heavily from its southern cousins. It would also adapt the structure of the American university as its own.

(i) *Corporate Structure at the University of Saskatchewan*

When Murray and his comrades took their exploratory tour of the various American state universities they undoubtedly encountered at the helm of each a powerful and relatively autonomous individual in the office of President. As Veysey posits in his history of American higher education, the University President fulfilled two basic roles, first as the spokesman for the educational experiment and second as the manager of a concrete enterprise.²² As such, the President was often somewhat isolated from the rest of the faculty and, ultimately, on many campuses, very powerful in relation to the faculty. This certainly was the case for Walter Murray at Saskatchewan. "He [the President] knew more about the matters than any of the other participants, and he was the only person to sit on board, senate, and council. The constitution of the University of Saskatchewan had made it possible for the president to be strong. Murray chose to take advantage of these provisions."²³ Similarly, Hayden suggests:

Murray's action in 1919 was consistent with his philosophy after 1908—the president should be the one man to choose the faculty and divide the money. The faculty could provide advice but was not to be trusted to have the perspective necessary for choosing and dividing. He admitted that the faculty had an important role in the administration of educational matters, and that is why he modified the form of the council. In practice, however, Murray ran the council.²⁴

²² Veysey, 310.

²³ Michael Hayden, *Seeking a Balance: The University of Saskatchewan, 1907-1982* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), 35.

²⁴ Hayden, 116.

Like Van Hise of Wisconsin and Hill of Missouri, Murray soon came to personify the university he guided—a patriarch with influence over virtually every aspect of higher education, not simply in Saskatoon but across the entire province. At the time of his passing in 1945 he was simply called “Murray of Saskatchewan,” so closely was he defined with the institution he formed over the course of 30 years. In terms of his understanding of higher education he was clearly unmatched by anyone in the province. As such, his decisions were virtually never questioned on campus, and his requests for assistance from the province usually granted. He so successfully separated himself from the social elite in Saskatoon that he never really had to answer to them. This aloofness from life outside the University of Saskatchewan only seemed to hurt him on the single occasion his leadership was challenged in 1919.²⁵ But this quickly passed as the 1920’s saw unparalleled growth at the U of S. As the campus grew so too did Murray’s stature within the province.²⁶

The framers of the Saskatchewan *University Act* in 1907 had at their disposal the University of Toronto Commission Report of 1906. Hayden suggests this document served as the blueprint for the University of Saskatchewan organizational structure. The University of Toronto plan, however, was itself a mirror of several state universities from south of the border, including the University of Wisconsin. Therefore the borrowing of the “Toronto Plan” was an indirect appropriation from American sources.²⁷ Given that a high percentage of the U of S faculty during this period were either American born, or received their

²⁵ I will leave this discussion for the section on academic freedom at the University of Saskatchewan.

²⁶ This is especially true to the extent he, alone, was able to lobby the provincial government to ensure a second university was not created in the provincial capital, Regina. He, perhaps more than any other influence, was the reason the University of Regina did not come to fruition until 1974. Murray’s efforts at eliminating competition for his University was entirely in keeping with the expectations of the Carnegie Foundations, whose Board he was a member on several occasions.

²⁷ Hayden, 35-36.

graduate training in the United States, there was little reason to assume there would be objections within the faculty to how the organization was structured since it was so similar to what they were accustomed.²⁸

Of the first five faculty members hired, two completed their graduate work in the United States. In 1910 when five more faculty were hired, three of these had completed graduate work in the Ivy League. In 1911, one of two new faculty members hailed from the US; in 1913, two of three. In its earliest phase the U of S depended on American trained graduate students, particularly in Math and Sciences, since graduate study in Canada was in its infancy. In this regard, Murray heeded the advice of his friend and colleague, President A. Ross Hill of Missouri, who suggested the following to him in 1908:

If I were seeking now, for instance, a man in Philosophy, I should turn naturally to Harvard, Columbia and Cornell. If I wanted a man for English, I should likely inquire of Harvard and the Johns Hopkins, and so on. After you once have your heads of departments, your leading men can advise you as to the best place to find younger men in their line. Though I may be somewhat prejudiced in this matter, I should say that in your situation you would do well to seek for Canadians who have studied in the United States and know something of the conditions in the Middle West especially.²⁹

By 1929, at the time the University of Saskatchewan was surveyed by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, the lead surveyor reported that 18 of a total of 31 doctorates held by Sciences faculty at the U of S came from American Universities. In total, 27 of 61 doctorates were held by American-trained professors on staff in Saskatoon.³⁰ Furthermore, seven of 25 faculty who held Master's degrees gained them through American campuses. Given that such a large percentage of faculty members completed their graduate

²⁸ Morton, Chapter VIII.

²⁹ A. Ross Hill to Walter C. Murray, September 8, 1908, University of Saskatchewan Archives, Jean Murray Collection, A. IV 82.

³⁰ Howard J. Savage, "Supplementary Memorandum on the U of S," October 15, 1928, 13. University of Saskatchewan Archives, President's Office fonds, Walter C. Murray fonds, B. Vol. 21.

work at American universities, it is little wonder that an American structure was so easily maintained in Saskatoon.

From its outset the organizational structure of the University of Saskatchewan closely resembled that of most American universities. With the creation of the College of Agriculture, W.J. Rutherford was appointed its Dean.³¹ His status on campus was second only to that of the President. In fact, the Dean of Agriculture was the only such position to have his own residence provided on campus. With the creation of the College of Arts and Science, George Ling, Professor of Mathematics, who completed his graduate work at Columbia University, was appointed Dean. As new Schools and Colleges were added, Deans continued to be appointed and, as specialization increased, Departments soon followed. As Barrow would suggest, the corporate ideal was alive and well at the University of Saskatchewan.

This American corporate ideal was extended beyond the University of Saskatchewan campus to various “branch offices” around the province in the form of junior colleges. The most noteworthy was Regina College which emerged as a somewhat disappointing consolation prize to the province’s largest city and site of the provincial capital, but rejected as the locale for the state university.³² Regina College remained a subsidiary of the University of Saskatchewan from 1910 until the middle of the 1930’s, but existed always as a feeder to the U of S. As Murray wrote in 1910: “We can let it be known that we are benevolent in our attitude to them [the Methodists in Regina] on the

³¹ Rutherford had instructed at Iowa State College and the University of Manitoba prior to moving to the U of S. Morton, 83

³² Many involved in the creation of the University of Saskatchewan, including Murray himself, were rather shocked when Regina was not awarded the site for the University, particularly since the Wisconsin model connected the state university to the state capital in Madison. It was assumed geographic proximity would ease the request for, and granting of, funding. Murray’s personal papers also convey the expectations and belief that Regina was the most suitable location for the U of S.

understanding that the purpose of the college is as outlined in their petition to the city council, and that they intend to become a feeder to the University and not a competitor.”³³ Indeed, Murray very much favored the creation of junior colleges as a means to limit their capacity to challenge the supremacy of the University of Saskatchewan. By 1929 there were seven colleges of this sort, each a private religious school except for Moose Jaw Central Collegiate.³⁴

Unlike their American cousins, Saskatchewan Junior Colleges were much less vocational and far more religious in focus. Regardless, they did increase access and served a certain utility in a province whose vast landscape was difficult to traverse at the best of times, but especially so in the dead of winter. Junior Colleges did, however, represent a degree of democratization in higher education within the province, particularly when President Murray viewed their utility in ways entirely similar to the efficiency gained from American junior colleges.³⁵

(ii) *American Philanthropy at Saskatchewan*

As mentioned previously, Murray’s influence over higher education extended across the entire province and was instrumental in ensuring there would be no challenging the stature of *his* university. Murray’s close affiliation with American brands of higher education, and specifically his close attachment to the Carnegie Corporation, was a significant determinant of his actions in regard to what emerged as a corporate model of higher education in a land with few corporations.

While President, Murray viewed Carnegie Foundation support for his university as essential to Saskatchewan’s acceptance into the “club” of North

³³ As cited in David R. Murray and Robert A. Murray, *The Prairie Builder: Walter Murray of Saskatchewan* (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1984), 81.

³⁴ Hayden, 121.

³⁵ See Levine, Chapter Eight.

American universities. While on faculty at Dalhousie, Murray had witnessed firsthand the spoils associated with “association” under the Carnegie umbrella, as Carnegie money sought to create a “Scotian Harvard” at Dalhousie. As the chosen campus in Canada’s East, Dalhousie benefited disproportionately from Carnegie financial support, thereby making Dalhousie the most elite of universities among Canada’s maritime provinces. The end result of this selective approach to American endowment in Canada, however, created a two-tiered system of universities that mirrored that in the United States. Those campuses that received large sums of money quickly became first-tier universities. Those that did not were destined for second-class status.³⁶

Murray pursued Carnegie support with zest even before his first building was complete. Though he persistently made several appeals for financial support, he was little more than a pretender for large scale financial support as initially his University was only successful at appearing on the Carnegie Institute’s mailing list,³⁷ and received only roughly 15,000 dollars during Murray’s three decades as President—a far cry from the tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands that other Canadian universities received from Carnegie or Rockefeller. As such, though Murray was the quintessential “Carnegie man” at Saskatchewan, his connection to the Carnegie Corporation did not secure Saskatchewan a place as a first tier university. In pursuing Carnegie support Murray attempted to replicate the American corporate structure and organization, yet in the eyes of the Corporation his campus never quite “measured up.” Regardless, in pursuing Carnegie support Murray consistently

³⁶ See, Jeffrey D. Brison, *Rockefeller, Carnegie, & Canada: American Philanthropy and the Arts & Letters in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), especially Chapter 2, “The Early Years of American Philanthropy in Canada: Building Schools, Building Canada,” 43-65.

³⁷ W.M. Gilbert, Esq., to Walter Murray, November 3, 1916, University of Saskatchewan Archives, Jean Murray Collection, A.IV. 14.

crafted the University of Saskatchewan into an American style campus largely similar to those that did receive Carnegie support.

One aspect of the Carnegie corporate ideal that did prevail in the province of Saskatchewan under Murray's tenure was the expectation within American corporate philanthropy that a duplication of services and sharing of resources between institutions was inefficient. Thelin argues that beginning around 1920, "[s]ystemwide efficiency, according to the representatives of the major foundations, demanded that institutional missions be reworked to avoid program duplication."³⁸ In the US this meant that a hierarchy of institutions quickly developed, with the Northeastern, private universities benefiting disproportionately from the huge philanthropic organizations when compared to their public competitors. In Saskatchewan this meant that Regina College was maintained as a feeder to the University of Saskatchewan, not its competitor. Murray, in a rather clandestine and deceitful fashion, used his influence with the Carnegie Foundation to ensure the sole potential rival to the U of S did not receive financial support to build up its campus, and thereby challenge the monopoly in Saskatoon. His close connection with Carnegie saw that several requests for financial support from Regina College were rejected. Conversely, the Carnegie Corporation did fund a study designed to examine the "junior college problem" in the province. Not surprisingly, as least for Murray, the study found "... that under the existing conditions, the concentration in one responsible state-controlled institution of the authority within the province to issue and evaluate educational degrees is sound and should be perpetuated."³⁹ Not only had Murray ensured that the corporate ideal was successfully transplanted to

³⁸ Thelin, 239.

³⁹ As cited in Murray and Murray, 191. Murray's thinking was very much in keeping with the ideal of the American university as expressed by Frank Vanderlip of the Carnegie Foundation in 1908, who saw no purpose in "useless competition." See Barrow, 82. Barrow also chronicles the "survey movement" in some states. Survey results rejected the notion of inefficient duplication or fragmentation of education in the New England states. Barrow, 99-100.

Canada's West, he was obviously one of the Carnegie Foundation's most dutiful employees.

The influence of American philanthropy is also noteworthy in its absence at Saskatchewan to the extent that in the 1920's the Rockefeller Foundation was providing large endowments to found medical schools in the West. As Brison argues, "Concerns for efficiency and scientific management always dictated Carnegie and Rockefeller approaches to reforming and/or creating educational infrastructure."⁴⁰ Due to the small population of Saskatchewan relative to its provincial neighbors, and the low population of Saskatoon relative to other cities in the prairie region, the inefficiency of providing large sums of money to create a medical school at the U of S was obvious. Thus, while the University of Alberta received \$500,000 to create a medical school, and the University of Manitoba gained \$750,000 from Rockefeller, Saskatchewan received nothing. In providing large forms of financial aid to a limited number of Canadian institutions, these became the model for other medical schools to follow in the region. In pursuing an Alberta or Manitoba model for medical education, Saskatchewan was in fact pursuing an American model similar to the ones established by the General Education Board in the US.⁴¹

In 1926 the University of Saskatchewan did finally create a "medical school" which provided the first two years of medical training. Students who successfully completed their first two years at Saskatchewan could finish their degree at another, *major* Canadian university. It was not until 1956 that a complete medical school was finally created, allowing a student to begin and complete a medical degree at the Saskatoon campus.⁴² Failure to secure American philanthropy, whether from Carnegie or Rockefeller, therefore had a tremendously stifling affect on the University of Saskatchewan, and insured it

⁴⁰ Brison, 49.

⁴¹ Brison, 59-60.

⁴² http://scaa.usask.ca/gallery/uofs_events/articles/1926.php. Retrieved Sunday, December 3, 2007.

remained a *minor* Canadian university relative to its regional counterparts in Alberta and Manitoba.

Universities in Canada's West pursued American foundation support for a host of reasons. There were no comparable foundations north of the border, and endowment from wealthy philanthropists was difficult to come by on the Canadian prairie. Murray witnessed the benefit of Carnegie support while still at Dalhousie University where membership within the pension fund for the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching was a crucial means to attracting new and talented faculty to the campus.⁴³ In addition to the benefits of the pension fund, Murray himself sought influence on the Board of Trustees and in 1919 was selected trustee. From 1922 to 1924 he served as Vice-Chairman of the Board, and in 1934-1935 its Chairman.⁴⁴ Murray sought Carnegie evaluation of the University of Saskatchewan to add credibility to its program and focus, and in 1929 the U of S was finally accepted under the Carnegie umbrella.

Though Murray was largely unsuccessful in landing large-scale Carnegie financial support for his University, he did acquire small-scale grants for the U of S. Murray successfully landed a three year grant, beginning in 1930, to establish a Chair of Music. The grant was renewed for three more years in 1933.⁴⁵ As a further aid to the nascent music program in 1931 the U of S received \$2500 for the purchase of musical equipment.⁴⁶ Finally, in 1935, Carnegie funded a guest professor to the U of S for two years for a total of \$4500. The German physicist and displaced scholar, Dr. Gerhart Herzberg, arrived in Saskatoon as a guest to

⁴³ Murray and Murray, 179-180. Barrow would likely argue that membership within the Pension Fund was part of a larger free market to allow the free flow of *employees* from one campus to the next across the entire continent. See Barrow, 84.

⁴⁴ Murray and Murray, 180.

⁴⁵ Murray and Murray, 196.

⁴⁶ Walter C. Murray to J.P. Keppel, President of the Carnegie Foundation, November 27, 1931, University of Saskatchewan Archives, Jean Murray Collection, A.IV. 14.

escape the persecution that befell many German Jews beginning in 1934.⁴⁷ Herzberg remained on faculty at Saskatchewan for a total of 10 years, and continued his illustrious career at the University of Chicago, the University of Toronto, and the Canadian National Research Council.

While such small-scale funding certainly aided the University of Saskatchewan in a time of agricultural drought and economic depression, Murray's penchant for pursuing Carnegie support led the U of S to become a replica of the American corporate university. Barrow's Marxist critique of the evolution of American higher education is a powerful examination, if not condemnation, of the corporate ideal and the influence of the corporate model on the American campus. The U of S's own rationalization during Murray's tenure fits very neatly into Barrow's model of corporate rationalization, which included a separation of administration from operations, increasing departmentalization, and centralization of decision making in a hierarchical pyramid.⁴⁸ It was during this early portion of the twentieth century that, as Barrow articulates, University presidents were socialized to the norms of the American corporation. As a representative of the Carnegie Corporation in the province of Saskatchewan it is certain that Murray himself became imbued with the spirit of the corporate ideal in higher education.⁴⁹ This created dire consequences for those "employees" who

⁴⁷ Dr. R.M. Lester to Walter C. Murray, November 18, 1934. University of Saskatchewan Archives, Jean Murray Collection, A.IV. 14.

⁴⁸ Barrow, 16.

⁴⁹ When Murray's tenure at the U of S ended, so did Carnegie financial support. In 1941, John Marshall, associate director of the Rockefeller Foundation's Humanities Division, surveyed a number of universities in western Canada, including the U of S. Interestingly, the key outcome of his survey was the belief on the part of many western Canadian academics that a study of the consequences of a binational Great Plains region would bear great fruit. The result was a series of conferences hosted in New York City, Lincoln, Nebraska, and Saskatoon, each sponsored by the Humanities Division. See Jeffrey D. Brison, 84-88.

dared challenge his position and authority at the University of Saskatchewan in 1919.

(iii) *Academic Freedom at the U of S: Faculty as Employees at the University of Saskatchewan*

What some commentators characterize as the “crisis of loyalty” of 1919 is most significant in its outcome, rather than its causes. Unlike the Ely case at Wisconsin, which emerged over the professor’s socialist ideological pronouncements over an extended period, the crisis at the University of Saskatchewan stemmed from four faculty members publicly challenging the accounting practices of President Murray and, ultimately, the dictatorial manner in which he carried out his work at the head of the “corporation.” Its result saw the dismissal of the “gang of four” and the nervous breakdown of Walter Murray.⁵⁰

Most significantly, however, was the extent to which the crisis led to an articulation of the practice and limits of tenure at the University of Saskatchewan. Following an investigation of the charges leveled against Murray, and then a further investigation of the manner in which the professors were dismissed, a university-appointed investigator confirmed that the professors were not protected by tenure but were employed “at the pleasure of the board.”⁵¹

To make what is a long story much shorter, the Director of Extension Work at the University of Saskatchewan, S.E. Greenway, went to the provincial government in March of 1919 with the charge that Walter Murray had falsified

⁵⁰ Murray did not perform his duties for the 1919-1920 academic year.

⁵¹ The public outcry over the firing of the four faculty members resulted in the appointment of a Visitor who, under the constitution of the University, was granted authority to investigate the matter. See *Judgement of the Visitor, Statutes of the University of Saskatchewan, 1920*, as cited at http://scaa.usask.ca/gallery/uofs_events/articles/1919.php.

financial reports and misappropriated funds. Greenway went to the Provincial Treasurer without speaking to Murray about his concerns, nor informing him of his intention to launch a complaint. Greenway and three other professors, one the Head of the Chemistry Department, another the Head of Physics, and the third from Law, also expressed their contention that Murray no longer held the confidence of his faculty in Saskatoon—a charge taken very seriously both by Murray and the Provincial Cabinet. When the opportunity to prove these accusations was granted by the University of Saskatchewan’s Board of Governors Greenway withdrew his request for an investigation and attempted to suggest he never intended to accuse Murray of dishonesty. The three other professors, however, never appeared before the Board to publicly argue their case or to respond to Murray’s rebuttal. When a vote of confidence was taken, minus the four malcontents, confidence in the President was overwhelmingly assured. The four dissidents were given the opportunity to take a paid leave, at the end of which they would resign. When the four refused, and carried on as if nothing had happened, they were summarily dismissed.⁵²

Despite the fact it was the Board of Governors who presided over the investigation of the charges leveled against Murray, it was Murray’s influence and insistence that carried the day in his favor. Murray was quite aware of the high profile dismissals of faculty members at American campuses during the early part of the century, and was adamant that dismissal must occur or he would resign.⁵³ Only a man of Walter Murray’s stature could so easily turn the table on his accusers. His reputation in higher education in the province was so beyond reproach that he, the accused, could essentially judge the accusers.

⁵² See Murray and Murray, Chapter 7, “A Crisis of Loyalty,” and Hayden, Chapter Three, “The First Crisis, 1914-1920.”

⁵³ Murray and Murray, 116-117.

It was Murray himself who sought to educate the Board of Governors on the issue of tenure with the composition of a memorandum. In the midst of the crisis Murray wrote:

It is now generally recognized that freedom to think, to learn and to teach is vital to the life of the university. This academic freedom is at times interpreted to permit activities in speech and deed that make for a change in the form of the personnel of the Government of a university. ...

There is an insidious criticism that resorts to intrigue and insinuation and never comes into the open. Such criticism breeds an atmosphere of suspicion and jealousy, saps public confidence and ultimately weakens and paralyzes, if it does not destroy the institution which permits it to continue unchecked. Every man has the right to express his opinions of the administration of the institution in which he serves, but that carries with it corresponding responsibilities. He must be prepared to justify his criticism or take the consequences.⁵⁴

While it is true Murray personally suffered greatly as a result of this crisis, his position as President was never more secure at the University of Saskatchewan. Similarly, never before, or since, was the role of the faculty within the University more clearly defined.

One other issue involving the extent of academic freedom at the University of Saskatchewan bears mention. The event occurred in 1938, shortly after Murray's retirement as President in 1937, and shortly before Canada's entry into World War II. Despite the fact Murray was no longer at the helm of his University, one can certainly view it as a legacy of the Murray period.

Carlyle King, then a junior Professor in English, made a number of speeches criticizing current thinking as the world moved toward a second general war. "An outspoken pacifist and CCF activist, King made a series of speeches in 1938. In each speech he criticized British imperialism, attacked the policies of British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, and called for

⁵⁴ As cited in Murray and Murray, 116. Walter Murray's pronouncements on the issue of academic freedom vs. responsibility bear striking resemblance to those articulated by Barrow in his "managerial conception" in pages 195-199.

international disarmament.”⁵⁵ King was publicly accused of sedition, being a communist, and adversely influencing the minds of his students. In private meetings with the new President, James Thompson, he was told to cease his public criticisms, which he did. The University’s student newspaper, *The Sheaf*, published an article questioning the existence of academic freedom at the U of S. The article, “Does Academic Freedom Exist at this University?” supported King’s right to freedom of speech. The answer to the question posed by the paper, however, was that there were obvious limits to freedom of speech among the faculty, and that the University administration determined where those limits were placed.⁵⁶ Much like Barrow’s managerial employees in “Twilight of the Idols,” the administration at the University of Saskatchewan was expected to regulate academic radicalism.⁵⁷ It did so in a private way, and in a manner in which the former President would approve.

IV *Transplanted Meanings: The “Wisconsin Idea” as the Blueprint for Saskatchewan*

The Wisconsin Idea, as Veysey suggests, brought about two major changes in American higher education. First, it introduced the entry of the expert into technical and social planning, thereby creating a much more influential and crucial role for the academician in everyday society. Second, it took higher education directly to the people, and created an extension movement to provide

⁵⁵ The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, or CCF, was a social democratic political party beginning to emerge on the political landscape of Saskatchewan. The CCF would later form the provincial government in the province of Saskatchewan. Its successor, the New Democratic Party, retains power in the province today.

⁵⁶ See *The Sheaf*, 30 September, 1938. Interestingly, Carlyle King would later write a history of research at the U of S. His book, *Extending the Boundaries: Scholarship and Research at the University of Saskatchewan, 1909-1966*, does not mention the boundaries of freedom of speech.

⁵⁷ See Barrow, 246.

classes to, and ultimately serve, the entire state.⁵⁸ This democratization of higher education saw the service university assume a preeminent role within American higher education, but particularly within the Midwestern heartland. The expansion of vocational and professional schools accelerated rapidly throughout this period, particularly in the areas of agriculture and engineering.

Prior to the earliest phase of construction at the University of Saskatchewan a decision was required as to what kind of university Saskatchewan would become. As mentioned at the outset of this chapter, President Murray himself had declared it to be a people's university—one that would avoid the denominational struggles of Eastern Canadian universities while servicing every corner of the province. In his first "Report of the President" in June, 1908, Murray paid deference to the University of Wisconsin: "In Wisconsin they [the Committee] saw an admirable example of a University whose watchword is service of the State. In the University of that State there is a happy blending of the best of the old and the new—a harmonious combination of the Liberal Arts and Pure Sciences with the Sciences applied to Agriculture and the Professions."⁵⁹ As a people's university whose goal was to provide service to the province, agriculture was to be at the core of the University of Saskatchewan.

Central to the *meaning* of the U of S relative to the people was the location of the College of Agriculture. In a province where the primary industry was farming, and where virtually every secondary industry somehow related to farming, the choice for the location of this College would dictate if Saskatchewan would live up to the spirit of Murray's statements, or would repeat the practice of its Eastern predecessors and cater largely to the societal elite. From the outset Murray knew what he wanted—the College of Agriculture as the centerpiece to

⁵⁸ Veysey, 108.

⁵⁹ Walter C. Murray, "Report of the President, 1908-1909," 2, found at <http://www.usask.ca/archives/history/president1-report.php?css=plain>. Retrieved July 24, 2007.

his U of S campus. His challenge, however, was to convince the Board of Governors and the provincial government that this was best for the U of S and the province it served.

While on his southern sojourn, President Murray was most impressed with what he discovered while visiting the University of Wisconsin.⁶⁰ Here, historian Michael Hayden writes, Murray found his model. Writing his long time friend and University of Toronto President, Robert Falconer, in 1930, Murray emphasized the influence the University of Wisconsin had on the University of Saskatchewan:

Perhaps the greatest contribution from American sources is the larger conception of the purpose and scope of a State University – the conception of it as the scientific arm of the state for Research, for carrying the benefits of Science to all and sundry in the state, and for the supply of information to Legislative assemblies and their Executives.

To Saskatchewan Wisconsin appeared in 1908 as an excellent example of this kind of University as contrasted with the Oxford type – a place for Liberal Culture and preparation for the Learned Professions.⁶¹

As models for the unified campus, where all colleges coexisted without waste, jealousy, or bitterness, Murray cited the benefits of union as exemplified at the Universities of Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, and Minnesota. Each of these campuses, he wrote, were “... strong, efficient and progressive.”⁶² The creation of a strong College of Agriculture as the centerpiece to the University was a further reflection of the Wisconsin Experience.⁶³ As Murray traveled throughout

⁶⁰ The Saskatchewan trio visited the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, several universities in Ontario, the Universities of Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan. On the return trip they also visited Washington University in St. Louis and the University of Chicago.

⁶¹ Murray to Robert Falconer, Feb 22, 1930, as cited in Michael Hayden, 35.

⁶² Murray, “Report of the President, 1908-1909,” 3. Murray also noted that President Snyder of the Michigan Agricultural College, a long time champion of separation from the larger campus for his institution, favored a unified campus for new countries.

⁶³ Hayden, 37.

the American Midwest, and the provinces of Ontario and Manitoba, he solicited advice from many “university men” in the hope of convincing the Board of Governors of the need to house the College of Agriculture on the Saskatchewan campus.

Of all the personal correspondence Murray received, only one piece suggested he not locate the College of Agriculture on the larger Saskatchewan campus. G.C. Creelman, President of Guelph University in Ontario—the one campus devoted to agriculture in that province--opposed uniting the work of Agriculture with the other work of the University, although he gave no specific reason why.⁶⁴ All the other correspondence Murray collected emanated from Presidents of Midwestern and northern Plains American Universities, and even from President Pritchett of the Carnegie Fund for the Advancement of Teaching. Each American source agreed that the College of Agriculture be placed alongside the other branches of learning at the U of S and housed on the same campus. Murray rejected Creelman’s Eastern Canadian advice in favor of a Wisconsin, or Midwestern model.

The Canadian-born President of Missouri, A. Ross Hill—a close friend and confidant to Murray—outlined his recommendation in the following way:

2. With reference to the location of the Agricultural College, by all means have that made a department of the University. In any case you will need to have a campus of reasonable size for your University, instead of locating the institution in the midst of a city or large town. If you locate the institution on the outskirts of a town you can easily have adjoining it the land necessary for an experimental farm, and it is entirely desirable that you have the whole University on one campus. ...I have worked for eleven years in universities that included Colleges of Agriculture, and I see no serious disadvantages in the intimate relationship. You are able thereby to graduate a more cultured body of agricultural students, and you avoid duplication of fundamental sciences that will be necessary if you have the Agricultural College established as a distinct institution. The most difficult problem connected with having the Agricultural College a

⁶⁴ G. C. Creelman to Walter Murray, October 8, 1908. University of Saskatchewan Archives, Jean Murray Collection, A. IV 82.

department of the University arises from the fact that it is more difficult to maintain high standards of admission to the Agricultural College and at the same time reach the people in the communities which it serves.⁶⁵

Ross' in-state colleague, Chancellor D. A. Houston of Washington University in St. Louis, agreed. "In my judgment it is a hideous mistake to separate the agricultural from the other university work, and to locate any educational institution in the country. Preferably I should locate it in the suburbs of the largest city at all conveniently situated."⁶⁶

In a carefully crafted Report to the Board of Governors in early 1909, composed before the location for the University of Saskatchewan was chosen, President Murray revealed the extent to which he relied on an American model for the location of his University so that it might be a true people's university and serve the entire province. Relying on his sociological tour to several American campuses for his evidence, Murray wrote:

President James of Illinois writes "It would be a great advantage to the University to be located in or near a large city." Chancellor Houston of Washington University writes "It would be a hideous mistake to locate any education institution in the country." President Van Hise of Wisconsin believes that "the best location for a University is in the town of moderate size." "If a University is located in too small a place it dominates the community, if in too large a city it is lost." President Pritchett says "It is impossible to conduct technical departments and professional schools in a small town."⁶⁷

Though Murray and his companions had traveled to Canada's East, and Murray had solicited advice from University men in Ontario, he made no mention of

⁶⁵ A. Ross Hill to Walter C. Murray, September 8, 1908, 3-4. University of Saskatchewan Archives, Jean Murray Collection, A. IV 82.

⁶⁶ D.A. Houston to Walter C. Murray, November 4, 1908, 1. University of Saskatchewan Archives, Jean Murray Collection, A. IV 82.

⁶⁷ Walter C. Murray, "Report respecting the principles which determine the location of a University," Regina, Sask., January 29, 1909, 5. University of Saskatchewan Archives, Jean Murray Collection, A. IV 82.

Ontario practice in his Report to the Board of Governors. The Wisconsin model was his model.

Murray took the Wisconsin idea a step further in the same Report by promoting the notion that the best location for the University was at the seat of the state government, as was the case in Wisconsin and several other states. When located at the state capital, Murray quotes his American brethren, the University better serves the entire state, has a greater influence on the tenure of legislation, and more easily works in partnership with the government by providing scientific advisors in all directions. While Murray cited several reasons for locating the University of Saskatchewan at the seat of the provincial government, the most compelling reason he attributed to the Wisconsin model:

The greatest reason is the service the University can render the State. Wisconsin, we were told, renders its state three to five times more service than the Universities which are distant from their capitals. Last year Wisconsin had 41 professors serving the state in various capacities, some in three or four, and nearly all gratuitously.⁶⁸

Though Murray envisioned the U of S would be located in Regina, his voice on the Board of Governors was only one of nine. The decision as to location resided with the Governors, but provincial politics also played a role. The recent provincial election had returned Conservatives to seats in both Moose Jaw and Prince Albert. Given this the Liberal Premier, Walter Scott, declared these locales officially out of the running. The choice of location lay between Saskatoon and Regina. The vote on location occurred on April 9, 1909, but was never officially recorded, nor the contents of the discussions disclosed then or since. Either by a

⁶⁸ Walter C. Murray, "Report respecting the principles which determine the location of a University," Regina, Sask., January 29, 1909, 8, University of Saskatchewan Archives, Jean Murray Collection, A. IV 82. In all, Murray's Report cites six different American "University men" at the foundation for his proposal to the Board of Governors. Only one Canadian source, Principal Robertson of the Macdonald School of Agriculture, McGill University in Montreal, was noted by Murray.

vote of 5-4, or 6-3, Saskatoon was the victorious site.⁶⁹ Though Murray was unsuccessful in having his way in regard to location, he was nevertheless very successful in maintaining the Wisconsin Idea as the central meaning to the U of S. All commentators agree that taking learning to all corners of the province, particularly in the realm of Agricultural Science, has been Saskatchewan's, and Murray's greatest success.⁷⁰

From the time the University of Saskatchewan was first envisioned, the College of Agriculture was to be an integral part of the campus and the province. Morton confides that despite the fact a College of Arts and Science must obviously enroll more students than any other, there was always a tacit understanding that it must never overshadow the College of Agriculture in its place on campus.⁷¹ Throughout the other Canadian provinces the College of Agriculture was removed from the central campus and existed for research at arms length from the State University. The U of S was to be the first Canadian university to house the College of Agriculture on its campus, as was the case at Madison and other Midwestern Universities. Maintaining University control over agricultural and teacher training, argue Murray and Murray, was key to achieving a close relationship with the life of the province.⁷² Creating a diverse and active Extension Program was a further key to taking science and technology to the people of the province.

The Extension Department was created at the University of Saskatchewan in 1910. Its main focus was agricultural, despite the fact most Saskatchewan farmers viewed learning farming from "professors" somewhat laughable.⁷³ Regardless, from 1913-1914 traveling professors encouraged "...agricultural

⁶⁹ From http://scaa.usask.ca/gallery/uofs_events/articles/1909php. Retrieved December 28, 2007.

⁷⁰ It is largely impossible to judge the affect the U of S' location had on its relationship with, and influence over, the Provincial Government in Regina.

⁷¹ Morton, 81.

⁷² David R. Murray and Robert A. Murray, 67.

⁷³ Hayden, 66.

societies, plowing matches, homemakers clubs, winter meetings, seed grain fairs, stallion shows, and standing fields competitions and short courses..."⁷⁴ The University's building were made available to those whose interest lay in the betterment of farming. A mobile library of technical books and fiction accompanied instructors in their travels. Lectures in philosophy and history were also given in some of the province's major cities. Though agriculture was the focus, Murray encouraged professors in many disciplines to take their service to the people.

The vocational focus to the University of Saskatchewan is also exemplified in the growth of professional schools from its founding until 1937. The College of Law was first established in 1912 as the third independent College on the U of S campus. By 1913 the College of Pharmacy began work with one instructor. In 1914 a School of Civil Engineering was established. By 1916 the College of Engineering was born. Much like American campuses during this period, the movement toward a general war, and its onset in 1914, greatly increased the demand for skilled engineers and professionals trained in the practical sciences.⁷⁵ Throughout the 1920's agricultural, electrical, mechanical, and ceramic engineering classes were added. Also in 1914, what was to become the College of Business offered a Bachelor of Accounting.⁷⁶ The School of Household Science began in 1928.⁷⁷

These developments in vocational education at the University of Saskatchewan might be viewed as part of a larger, continental movement toward greater *social efficiency*,⁷⁸ or, as Levine would argue, as part of a North American

⁷⁴ Hayden, 67.

⁷⁵ For a discussion of American developments in professional education, see Chapter Three of Levine, "Business Goes to College," 45-67.

⁷⁶ Hayden, 126-128.

⁷⁷ Carlyle King, *Extending the Boundaries*.

⁷⁸ I use the term social efficiency in the same context as Herbert Kliebard, who sees the social efficiency interest group as one of four interests groups within the larger progressive movement. Each interest group vies with the others for pre-

culture of aspiration that demanded the social and economic expectations of society be championed through higher education.⁷⁹ Similarly, Barrow's assertion that the American University became an ideological tool to create a corporate ideal to control the means of mental production can also be applied to the Saskatchewan experience.⁸⁰ Whatever the reason for this *culture of emulation* at the University of Saskatchewan, I believe it accurate to say that these developments in American society and higher education almost always predate similar developments in Canada. Canadian developments in higher education in this period are in a constant state of emulation, rather than innovation.⁸¹

It is also clear from Murray's own statements that much of what he did in creating his University was to move away from Canadian models of higher education. "Nearly every University has suffered because short views were taken in the beginning. It is true that fifty years ago it was well-nigh impossible to forecast the extent of the growth of a progressive University. McGill, Toronto, Queen's, Dalhousie and Manitoba are notorious examples of overcrowding."⁸² When citing an example of forward thinking in regard to space and growth,

eminence within the movement. Kliebard suggests that the period from 1900-1920 was one where social efficiency was at the forefront. See Kliebard, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum, 1893-1958, 2nd ed.*, (New York: Routledge, 1995), particularly Chapter Four and Five.

⁷⁹ Levine, 18.

⁸⁰ See Barrow, Chapters One and Two. Unlike many large American Universities, however, which placed business tycoons and the social elite among its Boards of Governors, no such elite existed on the Canadian prairie. The dangers of placing an American business model out of context in a prairie community will be examined in Section IV.

⁸¹ The one exception lies in the manner in which Canadian universities recruit and mobilize for war in 1914. Since Canada enters the Great War from the outset, and the United States waits until 1917, Canadian Universities were forced to be innovative in how they recruited and trained soldiers and officers. In the case of the University of Saskatchewan, its small size and multi-ethnic makeup means it probably borrowed its practices from much larger Eastern universities whose populations were preponderantly Anglo Saxon in origin.

⁸² Murray, "Report of the President, 1908-1909," 6.

Murray commended the work of Presidents Angell of Michigan, Schurman of Cornell, and Judson of Chicago. Particularly in his early years as President of the U of S, but certainly throughout his entire tenure, it was American institutions to which Murray turned for inspiration, and eastern Canadian campuses from which he turned away.

When contemplating the meaning of what was then Saskatchewan's only university one cannot help but think that its meaning was imposed from above by its President, Walter Murray. The University of Saskatchewan, while certainly the people's university to a degree, is more accurately described as Murray's university for he, more so than any individual or piece of legislation, dictated to whom the university would open its doors, and through his unilateral hiring practices, who would grace the halls of his campus as an employee. In assuring that Regina College could not rival the U of S, Murray reassured his own place as the supreme expert of higher education in the province.

V Conclusion

Upon leaving the friendly confines of Halifax and Dalhousie University, Murray also abandoned the denominational squabbles and institutional wrangling that typified higher education in Canada's East. Eastern Canadian universities, much more so than universities west of Ontario, resembled universities from across the Atlantic. Traveling westward to Saskatchewan to take the helm of a brand new institution was not only an opportunity to create a university unlike any other in Canada, but also symbolized the opportunity for Murray to recreate himself, free of the burdens of the East.⁸³

⁸³American writers in the pastoral tradition identify westward movement as a key condition to a simpler life, free of the trials and tribulations of the more complex and conflict-ridden east. These writers also suggest that American writers idealize western life, and equate western expansion with producing a society or way of life that is superior to its more easterly precursor. See Leo

Pastoralism, as it has unfolded in history and in the United States, implies an idealization of the rural life. By placing the College of Agriculture at the center of his university, and maintaining an Extensions Division reaching to every corner of the province, with agricultural practice at its core, essentially Murray was guaranteeing the continuation of the idealized rural life in Saskatchewan. By maintaining his university as the only campus in the province, thereby guaranteeing his own preeminence in policy making in higher education, Murray guaranteed, at least during his tenure and hopefully in the years that followed, that the aesthetic, morally superior, and regenerating existence of country life in the province could continue.

Historians of the west like Richard Slotkin argue that myths like those contained within the pastoral ideal were propagated to reduce the world to a series of compelling metaphors, designed in this case to motivate people to leave the East and head west. If, as Slotkin suggests, myths contain three basic structures: a hero, a universe in which the hero can act, and a narrative where the action of the hero within the universe is described, then certainly the history of Walter Murray's University of Saskatchewan is a myth created by the President's own hand.⁸⁴

Any history of the University of Saskatchewan, from its creation through the tenure of its first President, must pay homage to those institutions, structures, and principles around which it was first patterned—the state and land grant Universities of the American Midwest. Though the University of Saskatchewan was truly unique north of the forty-ninth parallel, it was very much a product of that first visit made by Walter Murray and his Board of Governors to those

Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) and Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).

⁸⁴ See Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 8-9.

“southern universities whose problems were similar to those of Saskatchewan.” In unquestioningly transplanting an American corporate model on the Canadian prairie Murray ensured that the University of Saskatchewan became part of a larger North American “club” of major state universities. Through the pursuit of organizational rationalization, Carnegie Foundation influence and financial support, and the regulation of faculty dissent and academic freedom, not to mention the tacit acceptance of these structures by the university faculty, Murray did achieve what was first intended in the 1907 *University Act* – the creation of a world-class institution in its own right.

With Murray’s departure in 1937, however, came the departure of Carnegie financial support. The American corporate model was firmly entrenched, yet the Canadian corporation lacked the strength, sophistication, and financial resources to carry through on the promise of the American model. As American Midwestern state universities found myriad ways to generate income and remain competitive in a highly competitive North American market, the University of Saskatchewan continued to depend on provincial government funding in a province whose revenue is entirely tied to the vicissitudes of an agrarian economy with minuscule corporate or individual endowments relative to the large American universities. Regardless, the American notion of the *service* university remains a cornerstone to the role and function of the University of Saskatchewan. Though the U of S is now one of two universities in the province, its fundamental role in taking higher learning to all corners of the province, particularly in the area of agriculture, remains its highest achievement. For this success alone, the Wisconsin Idea in higher education has served well the people and province of Saskatchewan.

Chapter Five Conclusion

I Restatement of my Argument

Before Saskatchewan achieved provincial status in 1905 it and its neighbor to the west, Alberta, were part of the Northwest Territories. As such, its system of government replicated that of the province of Ontario and the other eastern Canadian provinces—those provinces that comprised a relatively homogenous, Loyalist, English Canadian political culture. The system of Kindergarten to Grade 12 education that evolved in the Canadian Northwest before 1905 reflected this uniformity and paid homage to the great Ontarian school reformer, Egerton Ryerson. Ryerson typified a pro-British and anti-American bent in Ontario education reform, and took great efforts to rid the province of *republican* influences, whether they existed within American teachers working in Ontario schools, or among school textbooks authored and printed in the US. Disciples of Ryerson toiled on the Canadian prairies in an effort to reproduce a system largely identical to the one that developed in Ontario. For a host of reasons after 1905, this did not occur in Saskatchewan. Traditional histories of Canadian and Saskatchewan education pursue this pro-British, anti-American perspective, assuming that what developed in eastern Canada continued as settlement and progress moved westward. What most histories of Canadian and Saskatchewan education fail to acknowledge is the extent to which K-12 education developed in resistance to Ontario models, and instead paralleled developments from the American milieu, especially those that evolved among rural states in the American Midwestern and Great Plains.

The large-scale transfer of American culture, especially *moralistic* political culture, to the province of Saskatchewan in the two decades that preceded and followed 1905, explains the affinity that emerged between policy makers in Saskatchewan and America. In both the American Plains and the Canadian

prairies, various types of Populist reform and agrarian revolt prompted Saskatchewanians to reject eastern Canadian models in favor of those coming from their American cousins. Parallel physical environments produce parallel problems, and demand parallel solutions. Though settlement and development in Saskatchewan lagged similar events on the American plains by approximately two decades, Saskatchewan policymakers adapted American solutions to shared problems, including the most obvious educational problem of the early twentieth century—the rural school problem. In an effort to resolve the problem, the Government of Saskatchewan invited an American expert in rural education, Harold W. Foght, to lead the process of reform. Though Foght's recommendations for school consolidation failed to produce the desired results, he did usher in a period of education reform based around what Herbert Kliebard describes as “social efficiency.”

The transfer of American education policy to Saskatchewan K-12 education was part of a larger transfer of culture from the American Midwest and Great Plains, and is obvious in the three critical aspects of culture articulated by William H. Sewell Jr.: practice, meaning, and language. American-trained teachers teaching in Saskatchewan schools, textbooks written and/or published in the US but used in Saskatchewan schools, and Saskatchewan teachers trained in provincial Normal Schools on American methods, each represented an adoption of American *practice* in Saskatchewan schools. Similarly, Saskatchewan educators traveled southward for advanced education on American campuses, or attended conferences south of the border, only to return to spread the word of reform across the province. The *meaning* of the local school as the center to the rural community was shared across the continental plains, and while local control of rural schools first developed in the US, local patrons in Saskatchewan were able to exercise their control over the school—that most democratic of grass roots institutions--much later into the twentieth century than their American cousins. Finally, whether one thinks of Foght as a social efficiency educator, or

what David Tyack identifies as an “administrative progressive,” Foght’s *Survey* ushered in a *language* of the rural school that was paradoxically Populist and expert-centered. His dialect of reform was embraced among the bureaucratic elite of the province, but entirely rejected by the citizen. This indicates a powerful reception of American political culture into Saskatchewan that is both moralistic and Jeffersonian at the level of the people.

In the realm of higher education, the sole university in the province of Saskatchewan, the University of Saskatchewan, developed from its creation in 1907 as a rejection of eastern universities, particularly those that suffered from denominational struggles and undo governmental influence. Though the U of S’ first President was himself an easterner, or perhaps because of it, Walter C. Murray looked southward for his inspiration when fashioning a university from prairie soil. In the American Midwest he found his model—the University of Wisconsin. His university was to become a service university which would touch the entire province, particularly in its technical core—the field of agriculture. The U of S depended on faculty trained on American campuses, pursued philanthropic support from the great Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations, and assumed a corporate-like administrative structure identical to those universities that comprised a continental market in higher education. Identical to his American colleagues like A. Ross Hill of Missouri or Van Hise of Wisconsin, Murray personified his University and dominated its entire operation.

The University of Saskatchewan was almost entirely crafted at the hand of President Walter Murray. In meaning it was a people’s university that would touch every corner of the province. In practice the U of S mirrored the development of American campuses, copied its collegiate gothic architecture, treated its faculty as employees, maintained a limited concept of academic freedom patterned after American experience, and pursued American philanthropy with persistence and devotion. Though Murray failed in his bid to place his university among the great universities in North America, the pursuit

of his “culture of emulation” produced a language of higher education in the province of Saskatchewan that Barrow and Brison would describe as American and corporate. One hundred years since its creation, the University of Saskatchewan has changed little from its American heritage.

II Retrospectives and Future Pathways for Research and Writing

The preceding history was researched and written with an eye to challenging the few prevailing interpretations of the history of Saskatchewan education and its place within the larger historiography of Canadian education. Now complete, I wish to provide a meta-historical comment on where I feel my argument succeeds and falters and, given this, where one might continue to pursue such an interpretation in the future. In making such a statement I do intend to suggest that the previous five chapters serve only as an re-introduction into a theme – that of a north-south historical perspective around the continental Great Plains region – that in my mind, and the mind of John Marshall, associate director of the Rockefeller Foundation’s Humanities Division in 1941, remains fertile yet largely unbroken ground.¹

When examining the history of Saskatchewan K-12 education I cannot help but think that because it falls within the realm of provincial jurisdiction, unencumbered by federal intrusion, one should expect to find more book-length, provincial accounts of its history. Yet there are none. Instead the inquisitive

¹ In 1941 Marshall conducted a survey of several Western Canadian campuses for the purpose of finding Canadian proponents for the Rockefeller Foundation’s work. One key outcome of his survey was the creation of a series of bi-national conferences focused on the continental Great Plains region, hosted in New York City, Lincoln, Nebraska, and Saskatoon. Like so many other policy initiatives, however, once Rockefeller Foundation funding dried up, so too did the conferences. See Brison, 84-88. Two obvious exceptions to my criticism of historians and social scientists for ignoring the north-south interplay are Sharp’s, *The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada* and Lipset’s, *Agrarian Socialism*.

reader finds chapter-length histories depicting fragmented interests or sub-topics, combined into anthologies which make no effort toward a sustained interpretation of broad trends or foci in provincial education. The most recent anthology, *A History of Education in Saskatchewan*, is an obvious example. Similarly, at the national level, *Histories of Canadian Education* assume a centralist perspective, one that equates Ontario policy as representative of all English Canada, despite the fact that Canada's western provinces developed their systems of education in very different ways, in very different physical environments, and at very different times, from that of eastern Canada.

Historians of Canadian Education, therefore, seem to occupy two extremes: on one extreme are those local historians whose focus is so narrow their histories have limited explanatory power beyond the contracted group of which they write, while the other extreme takes such a broad perspective it ignores regional distinctiveness on the assumption of a single, homogeneous English Canadian political culture that I, and others, argue does not exist.² This history, I hope, has landed squarely in the middle of those extremes, emphasizing the province as the logical unit of study in K-12 education without becoming stranded in minutiae that is too local to allow comparative analysis and deeper understanding. In this regard, I hope this history fills a much need gap in histories of Saskatchewan education. Secondly, a regional or provincial account of Canadian education encourages the use of political culture as a backdrop to understanding why neighboring provinces might pursue vastly different education policies. The field of political culture remains a potentially powerful theoretical tool that, apart from this study, is seldom if ever utilized in Canada.

A second gap I hope to have filled within accounts of Saskatchewan education lies in my reaction to the penchant for historians to mention the *Foght Survey* as crucial to understanding the early development of the province's

² George S. Tomkins, *A Common Countenance*, is a noted exception.

system of K-12 schooling, but to do so without examining how or why it was so important, let alone interrogate the cultural/political cultural roots to Foght's call for large-scale consolidation, utilizing American models, of Saskatchewan school divisions. Looking back to 1917 it remains somewhat curious to me why no researcher has since wondered about the choice of an American to help reform the province's schools. Ninety years seems a long time to wait for a sustained interpretation of an event deemed so important by so many.

A final gap that I hope to have spanned in the historiography of Saskatchewan and Canadian education is the connection between two seemingly disparate yet intensely democratic entities: K-12 public schools and Populist forms of protest, particularly the agrarian, anti-eastern sort that took hold in Saskatchewan in the early decades of the twentieth century. Placing K-12 schooling within the confines of a larger cultural movement from the American Plains and Midwestern states to the Canadian prairies is certainly open to opposing interpretations, yet too often I fear historians of Canadian education, and certainly Saskatchewan education, contextualize their studies within narrow and limiting bands of influence and investigation. Acknowledging cultural transfer as an influence on the province of Saskatchewan's K-12 schooling is, admittedly, a novel enterprise, but one that I hope might stimulate audacious, wider-ranging interpretations of a broader array of social policy. Given that the study of the History of Education seems to be waning in Canada, however, I fear such a plea to be largely inconsequential.

My chapter on the American foundations for the University of Saskatchewan has, I hope, re-constructed a wide array of pre-existing research and history, but applied it toward an argument previously unmade. While numerous historians have commented in passing about various American antecedents to the U of S, that theme never receives sustained examination by scholars from the U of S about their workplace. Perhaps therein lies one problem with existing histories of the University of Saskatchewan—they are largely

written by professors employed on Saskatoon's campus. One cannot help but wonder if such "house histories" lack a critical examination of some of the more controversial aspects of, for example, Murray's tenure at the university, or his single-minded pursuit of Carnegie philanthropic support for his university. Though my chapter is neither especially controversial nor exhaustive on the period, my distance from the campus does liberate me from feeling it necessary to pay homage to its first President, or accept without question the wisdom of his policies.

On a related note, as a Canadian studying at the University of Kentucky, I feel that my distance from Canadian schools of Education allows me to remove myself from what I see as a narrow body of writing and examine it critically, utilizing theoretical models largely untapped in Canada. This was true in the 1970's, I believe, for Robert S. Patterson when he completed his graduate work at Michigan State University, only to return to Alberta and write about American influences on prairie Canadian education, and true for me today. Without an introduction into the works of, for example, Daniel J. Elazar, William H. Sewell Jr., or Daniel Rogers, the history that I have written could not have emerged. Similarly, without first immersing myself into the history of American education, I would not have discovered, to my utter surprise, that the history of Canadian education was one I'd already read in the pages of Cremin, Kliebard, and Urban and Wagoner.³ While most Canadian historians of education, for example, applaud Egerton Ryerson as the anti-American patriarch of public schooling in English Canada, he reads to me like a disciple of Horace Mann, albeit it with an English accent rather than one from New England.

Finally, while most histories of education tend to focus on school practice, school administration, or organizational structures as the central element to any

³ My standard text as a Teaching Assistant in EPE 301, "Education in American Culture," was Wayne Urban and Jennings Wagoner, Jr., *American Education: A History* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1996).

history of schooling, my application of Sewell's theoretical framework around culture, which includes meaning, practice, and language, allows me to write what I feel is a history different from most (Sol Cohen's seminal work around language notwithstanding). Locating the meaning of Saskatchewan schools within the language of contemporary commentators is, as far as I have witnessed, something quite unique in the history of Saskatchewan education, and something I have not yet seen in larger Canadian histories. This, perhaps more so than any other aspect of my history, is its greatest strength. There are, however, aspects of my dissertation which need more thinking and research.

As much as I might wish to applaud myself for utilizing a political cultural analysis of K-12 education in the province of Saskatchewan, the utility of a parallel analysis of Saskatchewan higher education is not so powerful. The early years of the U of S are so inextricably tied to the patriarchal work of Walter Murray that, in my mind, any history demands he be placed at its forefront. While I can identify a Populist ring to his early statements about the purpose of the U of S, in the sense he saw it as a servant to the people of the province that would, through its Extension Program, reach to every corner of it, and can argue that his rejection of eastern models of higher education reflected a similar Populist bent, the *moralistic* tone I detect in Saskatchewan K-12 education is missing from the first President's statements. Murray seemingly took the advice of his compatriot, A. Ross Hill at Missouri, and sought advice and solutions from American campuses experiencing the same problems as the U of S, but those parallel answers to similar problems were, as far as I can determine from my research, pragmatic solutions to practical problems, and not a reflection of political culture. Had Murray been Saskatchewanian, born and bred, my conclusions might be different. But Murray was not from Canada's West, but instead was uprooted from a conservative, and traditionalistic province in the East. Murray modeled his campus after the University of Wisconsin and pursued Carnegie Foundation support for the U of S with zeal. In this regard the U of S

was certainly a model of American influence, its blueprint emanating from the same region of the United States that produced the moralistic political culture that greatly influenced K-12 education policy. But there is no clear indication this reflected a political cultural affinity between the northern and southern realms of the same physiographic region. This is why my dissertation title may not read: "A history of American political cultural influences on Saskatchewan education," as I had initially hoped.

This dissonance between my conclusions in Chapter Three and Chapter Four might be rectified by determining from where the American professors whom Murray hired had completed their graduate work, and from where they themselves originated, followed by an examination of the content of their scholarly work. I argued in Chapter Three, for example, that Harold Foght's Populist solutions to Saskatchewan problems originated from his early years growing up in a Populist Great Plains state. Can a similar case be made for an American professor of History, or Humanities at the U of S? Did the writings of social scientists reflect a Progressive bent as they did in the state of Wisconsin? Given that the decision to hire an American to survey the province's system of K-12 education by the government of the day was a political decision, and the choice of faculty at the U of S was an intellectual or academic decision, making comparisons across two different worlds is difficult, if not ill-advised. Regardless, there is more research to be done to draw conclusions on the utility of a political cultural backdrop to any history of the University of Saskatchewan.

In terms of methodological alignment, given my reference to American textbooks utilized in provincial Normal School classrooms in Chapter Three, acquiring course syllabi from among the archives of early U of S professors might produce a similar collection of rich data, whereby I could determine the course of study offered by instructors, and gather a list of textbooks required for course completion. This would obviously make my Chapters Three and Four align more completely in regard to methodology, although I am skeptical that

such syllabi still exist. Correspondingly, I write about the national origin of professors in Chapter Four, but could certainly benefit from a similar tally, for example, of local school board trustees as to their place of origin, thereby drawing a closer connection between American practices and experiences in Saskatchewan with such practices south of the border. I do recall that one *Annual Report* to the Minister of Education suggested that those school districts where consolidation was most successful were largely comprised of Americans who experienced the policy's benefits while living within northern US states. Again, it is unclear if such archival records of school board meetings are maintained.⁴

There is also a disconnection, I believe, between how local schools were perceived by the people of Saskatchewan versus the people's perception of the University. In 1907, when the U of S first came to fruition, it was a largely "foreign body" inserted into a portion of Canada with no history of such an enterprise, its development eagerly anticipated among a population largely rural and uneducated. Though Murray and his associates wanted to create a people's university, in the people's minds, which included a wide array of European immigrants, they were creating an institution for the gentleman scholar in a world comprised almost entirely of farmers. To put it another way, the U of S, regardless of its physical location within the province, was a long way from the experience of almost any inhabitant of Saskatchewan. Within this context, perhaps my attempt to create a parallel argument around the simultaneous development of K-12 education on one hand, and higher education on the other, is problematic. The second could not develop without the first having achieved some level of maturity. The local school existed at the center of people's lives in

⁴ In the course of my own research, a few years ago I asked if the Saskatoon Public School Division, with whom I am an employed, maintained any sort of archives. The answer was a chuckle, and "no." One challenge with accessing such aged records is that many of the schools, and school divisions, that existed in the early decades of the twentieth century no longer exist.

Saskatchewan--its university, however, was remote, both physically and experientially.

Furthermore, while the archives at the University of Saskatchewan house a great deal of Murray's private papers, which include personal communication between Murray and members of his family, for an academic analysis of Murray's thinking I would need to access much of his professional communication, especially with key individuals like Robert Falconer, close personal friend to Murray and President of the University of Toronto. While Falconer's papers are housed at the U of T archives, it is uncertain whether extensive communications from Murray to Falconer remain, although Hayden's history of the U of S does contain communications between the two. One does find in the U of S archives extensive return communication to Murray from a myriad of university presidents, etc., but the initial communiqués from Murray to others would, I assume, yield more of his philosophical thinking around the form and function of his university.

Upon considering the preceding history from a policy perspective, although it was not my intention to do so at the outset, much of what I have written in Chapter Three is a historical confirmation of John W. Kingdon's analysis of policy making processes in Washington in the 1970's. For Kingdon, elected officials and their appointees, rather than bureaucrats or nongovernmental actors, set the agenda, while a hidden cluster of specialists in the bureaucracy and within professional communities tend to specify the alternatives from which legislative choices are made.⁵ This was certainly the case in Saskatchewan in the decade surrounding the *Foght Survey*. Despite the fact provincial-level bureaucrats and school inspectors were promoting consolidation as a key policy alternative from 1916 forward, and identifying it as the only

⁵ See John W. Kingdon, *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*, 2nd ed., (New York: Harper Collins, 1995), 19.

alternative within a burgeoning school population, legislators still carried the day and, for all intents and purposes, resisted calls from the bureaucrats and their imported expert for their policy alternative to proceed to legislation. In a Populist age and moralistic political culture, Saskatchewan legislators bowed to the wishes of their constituents.

Though Foght entered Saskatchewan through what Kingdon calls a discernible “policy window,” largely created by what I argue are shared compelling problems and solutions across the continental Plains, that window was largely shut in the province by the middle of the 1920’s. It would not open again until the mid-1940’s under the government of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), a social democratic party that would, among other things, legislate universal health care in the province some years later. Unlike the previous policy window, which witnessed resistance to any reduction in local control over education, by 1944 such resistance had dissipated.

Today in Saskatchewan, the voice of local control over education has long since vanished amid a shrinking rural population and an ongoing threat to traditional forms of agriculture on the family farm. Rural school amalgamation has proceeded again under the government of the CCF’s successor, the New Democratic Party (NDP). The only threat to this recent form of consolidation may come through a change in “political streams” as the NDP was recently replaced in power by a much more conservative Saskatchewan Party. Though Kingdon’s study applies to the American federal policy milieu, it seems to me to have great applicability to a host of policy arenas, and I suspect could serve policy analysts and critics alike as they ask similar questions posed by Kingdon, but within the Canadian political context.

Given that one key component to this history was an examination of culture, I cannot leave the topic without first writing a few words about Saskatchewan’s aboriginal peoples. One of the largest impediments to writing a complete history of Saskatchewan education from 1905 until the mid-1930’s

comes from the fact that First Nations and Aboriginal education occurred completely under the confines of federal legislation, and not provincial jurisdiction. Therefore, attempting to include Indian and Metis education within this provincial history is difficult from the outset. As essentially wards of the federal government, First Nations students were forced to attend the school the federal government required, and that often amounted to residential schooling in denominational schools run by various churches.⁶ Rather than a reflection of a provincial political culture—one adopted from the American Midwest and Plains—schooling of Aboriginal children in Saskatchewan and across Canada was a reflection of national policy and fragmented denominational policies. In the *Annual Reports* to the Minister of Education, there is mention of schooling immigrants, the hearing impaired, etc., but not a single mention of schooling First Nations children.

Recent scholarship by writers like U of S historian, J. R. Miller, breaks new ground in understanding both the practice and meaning of residential schooling in Canada. Miller's book, *Shingwauk's Vision, A History of Native Residential Schools*,⁷ relies on federal government documents, denominational archives, and oral histories, as evidence. No doubt, similar pieces of evidence exist in the American context, thereby making future research and thinking along lines I have presented in Chapter Two through Four potentially fruitful. Until such comparisons can be made, the history of schooling in Saskatchewan from 1905 through the 1930's remains incomplete.

Lastly, utilizing the theoretical tool of political culture would also go far, I believe, in attempting to understand how and if, in the decades that follow the conclusion of my study, divergent political cultures produced divergent education policy. From the time both Saskatchewan and Alberta were created in

⁶ What Canadians refer to as residential schools were known as boarding schools in the US.

⁷ J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: U of T Press, 2000).

1905 the intervening two to three decades saw their own parallel developments, as both provinces borrowed heartily from American sources within largely similar political cultures. By the mid-1930's, however, these formerly similar political cultures diverge, with Alberta's moving noticeably to the right of the political spectrum with the election of the Social Credit Party in 1935, and the subsequent election of a social democratic party in Saskatchewan in 1944. Did these neighboring provinces produce similar policies despite this change in ideology, or did opposing policies emerge? The answer today is that opposing policies have emerged, as the province of Alberta has adopted wholeheartedly education reform that is very much American in tenor, relying on high stakes testing, site-based management, and a host of other American practices to bolster its education system to the highest performing among Canadian provinces.⁸ Though Saskatchewan's course in education reform is still evolving, my educated guess is that we will continue to look south for our inspiration, albeit selectively, rather than east or west.

III The American Influence in Saskatchewan Education Today

The American foundation to Saskatchewan education remains intact today. As I mentioned in Chapter Four, the long-term affect of the University of Saskatchewan not receiving substantial financial support from either the Carnegie or Rockefeller Foundations relegated it to second tier status among the cadre of Canadian universities. For all intents and purposes, it remains there today. Although the ranking of universities in Canada is a relatively recent phenomenon, and is far less sophisticated in the Canadian context relative to the American, *Maclean's* magazine publishes an annual ranking of the country's 47

⁸ I should mention this appears to come at a price, as high school graduation rates are much lower in Alberta relative to Saskatchewan. It is also the case that a 16 or 17 year old in Alberta can leave school early, head to the oil fields, and make 80,000 to 100,000 Canadian dollars a year without a high school diploma.

universities. Those universities that benefited from American philanthropy in the decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century (universities such as McGill in Montreal, Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario in the East, and Alberta and the University of British Columbia in the West) rank among the highest in the magazine's overall rating.

For example, the "best overall" category ranks McGill second, Alberta third, UBC sixth, and Queen's seventh. Saskatchewan ranks fifteenth. In "highest quality," McGill ranks first, Queen's third, UBC fifth, Alberta seventh, with Saskatchewan eighteenth.⁹ While there obviously exists a level of subjectivity in all such rankings, history has shown that selective American philanthropy gave a few Canadian universities a decided advantage over their competitors, as was the case in the American milieu where a select few northeastern campuses benefited disproportionately relative to their regional competitors. While the University of Kentucky, for example, can tout itself as "America's next great university," the deficit from which it began that promise, relative to those with far larger endowments over the course of the twentieth century, suggests Kentucky will not succeed in its goal any time soon.¹⁰ The same is true for the University of Saskatchewan in Canada, since it too seeks to raise its ranking among Canadian universities.

The 2007 rankings mark the seventeenth edition of *Maclean's* efforts to judge the quality of Canadian universities. One cannot help but wonder why, suddenly, in 1990, there emerged an interest or need to do so? The answer, I speculate, is that the Canadian market for higher education has taken on a form closely akin to that of the American, whereby competition for the best and brightest now reaches a national audience. Indeed, if Saskatoon high schools are any evidence of trends in a larger Canadian context, the market extends to the

⁹ "National Reputational Ranking," *Maclean's*, November 19, 2007 (Vol. 120, No. 45), 98.

¹⁰ Specifically, UK wanted to rank among the top 20 publicly funded universities in the United States.

entire North American continent where top-level high school graduates pursue the highest pedigree possible, often opting to forego Canadian universities entirely in favor of Harvard, Yale, or Stanford – those universities judged, rightly or wrongly, to be of the highest quality in the world.

Kindergarten to Grade 12 education in the province of Saskatchewan is similarly part of a continental marketplace for education reform. Policy makers and school principals today need only subscribe to *Education Week* to access a smorgasbord of potential education reforms. Failing this, attendance at a conference in the United States or, better still, completing an advanced degree at an American university, gives the Canadian policy advocate a head start relative to her more sedentary or rooted compatriots. In Chapter Three I suggested there existed a 20-year lag from the time policies developed in the US to their arrival in Saskatchewan. Today that lag may be reduced to a decade, but still persists. For example, site-based management has existed in American jurisdictions for quite some time, yet first reared its head in Saskatoon only five years ago. The champion of site-based management in the Saskatoon Public School Division was its newly appointed Director of Education (the equivalent to a Superintendent in the United States). Once he departed after a brief tenure, his replacement, an advocate of powerful teaching models and literacy, initiated a division-wide reform effort led by the American researcher and educator, Bruce Joyce.¹¹

American popular culture also manifests itself within Saskatchewan schools, often in unfortunate ways that detract from the learning purpose of schooling. American gang culture that prevails within most larger US cities has moved northward into Saskatoon schools, particularly among the disenfranchised and poorest of students—the city’s First Nations population. Formed as replicas to the Los Angeles “Bloods” and “Crips,” manipulated by Hell’s Angels, and copying the colors and gang signs of their namesakes,

¹¹ Joyce’s program is known as *Just Read*, and has existed since the early 1990’s.

intimidation, threats, recruitment, and violence are now far more common place in Saskatoon high schools than was the case 20 years ago.¹² Furthermore, First Nations students seemingly confuse themselves with African American and Hispanic gang members, adopting their clothing styles and manner of speaking while further removing themselves from their own culture—a culture deprived of their ancestors through the practice of residential schooling. In an era of free trade where publications, television, and internet know no boundaries, such cultural hybridization can only increase as technology further advances.

And what of the process of rural school consolidation? Since its first successful iteration in the 1940's, the number of school divisions in the province of Saskatchewan has slowly but consistently decreased. Now, with urbanization and rural de-population accelerating in Saskatchewan, rural schools are closing at an increasing rate each year. Local residents, no longer as able or powerful to resist school closures or amalgamation as they were in the 1920's, see this as the penultimate sign of the demise of their communities. Though rural communities have declined in the decades since the Second World War, the meaning of the rural school in the province of Saskatchewan remains intact. It is the one democratic institution that exists closest to the people. School closure, therefore, means more than just an erosion of a rural community—in both the American and Saskatchewan contexts it signals the erosion of grassroots democracy at a time and place where true democracy seems to lack roots of any kind.

Between 1905 and 1937, however, democracy and schooling flourished in the province of Saskatchewan, as did a Populist form of higher education at the U of S. Though histories of Canadian and Saskatchewan education have tended to ignore the north-south interplay of cultural and educational forces that prevailed amid the continental plains in the first decades of the twentieth

¹² The book, *Monster*, is apparently the “how to” book that Saskatchewan gangs have adopted to guide their development. See Sanyika Shankur, *Monster: The Autobiography of an LA Gang Member* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1998).

century, the budding historian cannot help but hope that this reinterpretation and re-description of historical artifacts pays appropriate homage to the American antecedents to Saskatchewan education.

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