

Imagining the Canadian Agrarian Landscape: Prairie Settler Life Writing as Colonial Discourse

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Abstract: This essay discusses the power of settler life writing to replace Indigenous conceptions of the prairies with colonial visions in southern Alberta. Pioneer memoirs promote myths of the prairie as a fertile utopian environment or a hostile frontier. Both myths are founded on the georgic mode, which Virgil established circa 34 BCE and which emerges in English literature that emphasizes land and labour. By accentuating their social status and the labour they have performed to improve their ranches and farms, pioneer life writers support their claims of entitlement to colonize land.

Keywords: prairie settlers, settler narratives, settlement myths, frontier, agrarian utopia

To mark the “golden, silver, and diamond jubilees” in Alberta, many pioneers celebrated the success of their homesteading projects by writing their personal histories (Dempsey, “Local” 171). These memoirs include Georgina Thomson’s *Crocus and Meadowlark Country: Recollections of a Happy Childhood and Youth on a Homestead in Southern Alberta*; Joan Key’s *The Third Radfords: A Pioneer Adventure*; Monica Hopkins’ *Letters From a Lady Rancher*; and Herbert (Bert) Sheppard’s *Spitzee Days and Just About Nothing*. These texts contribute to a body of work that supports settlers’ claims of entitlement to colonized land. Along with these, I also explore a set of diaries composed during the settlement period: the account book diaries of Henry Norman Sheppard, Sr. and the farm logs

of two of his sons, Henry Fleetwood Sheppard, Jr. and Bert Sheppard, which cumulatively provide unrevised accounts of the family's ranching experiences between 1907 and 1953. Finally, I examine the letters of Claude Gardiner, written between 1894 and 1896 and published as *Letters From an English Rancher*. Regardless of their form, these texts represent their authors' daily lives; however, the diaries and letters were written within hours or days of the authors' experiences and convey ideologies prevalent at the time, while the memoirs reflect ideologies of the 1960s and 1970s. Moreover, in recalling their settlement experiences several decades later, the memoirists imbue their accounts with aesthetic and literary dimensions and give meaning to their experiences. As a result, Key, Hopkins, and Thomson promote myths of the prairie as an agrarian utopia, while Bert Sheppard disseminates myths of the prairie as a frontier. Both utopian and frontier myths justify the authors' sense of entitlement to colonized land.

In the frontier myth, entitlement is a pioneer's reward for overcoming the challenges he or she faced in settling in a rugged and even hostile environment. Thus, Bert Sheppard writes about his success with emphasis on the labour he and his family members performed to carve out their lives on the frontier. In the utopian myth, entitlement is bestowed on refined Anglo-Canadian settlers who established lives of plenitude, prosperity, and gentility. To imply a sense of entitlement, Hopkins and Key frequently accentuate their social status. Key and Thomson, who both arrived in Alberta as children, narrativize their experiences as progressing toward a utopian horizon and, imagining they achieved a state of gracious living at some point in their respective pasts, conclude their memoirs with a nostalgic yearning for those golden years. Frontier and utopian themes often blend or shift in predominance within one text. At times, the memoirists portray their successes as triumphs over adversity by exaggerating the dangers and adding suspense to their narratives, pretending they cannot foresee the outcome of potentially tragic situations regardless of the fact that they have lived through the events they depict. At other times, they emphasize plenitude by embellishing their narratives with flowery descriptions of the environment that surrounded their farms or ranches. Often, especially when they fail to cultivate a gen-

teel mode of existence on the prairies, they humorously describe their foibles to downplay their ineptitude and their discomforts. Gardiner's letters are a blend of both utopian visions and romantic notions of the prairie as a frontier. He wrote letters home to his parents in England in which he expressed his goal to become a gentleman rancher, described the execution of his plans to achieve that goal, and implied that he was achieving a quality of life he felt he deserved. The Sheppard journals, which span fifty years of ranching, document the progress the family made to achieve their goals of improving their agricultural operations and increasing their prosperity.

I was initially drawn to these texts by the authors' portrayals of their lives and agricultural practices in the pattern of agrarian cycles. Thus, I examined them with an analytical lens shaped by traditions founded on Virgil's *Georgics* (circa 39 BCE). The agrarian cycle of Virgil's four books of poems serve as a suitable model on which to base an analysis of farming records. Simply defined, georgic discourse refers to farm work. Translator David Ferry explains that the title of Virgil's text, "*Georgica*[,] derives from Greek words for farmer, agriculture, working in the earth (*geo*, earth, and *ergon*, work)" (189; emphasis in original). The Sheppards recorded their yearly performance of labour in their farm logs and account book diaries. These forms of pioneer life writing, Kathryn Carter observes, were "endorsed by the *Canadian Farmer*," a trade magazine for agriculturalists, as early as 1869 and were commonly used by immigrant English farmers to provide "a modicum of control" and a sense of economic security amidst the uncertainty of the settlement experience (137). Seen in that light, account book diaries and farm logs were useful tools of colonization. Indeed, as colonial discourses, my primary texts serve political purposes because they are "performative" in J. Hillis Miller's use of the term to refer to both discourse and behaviour (146). While pioneer memoirs performatively re-enact the settlement process, Gardiner's and the Sheppards' behaviour (documented in their manuscripts) performatively enacted the process by helping to impose Eurocentric patterns of culture and agriculture in the region.

Virgil's literary representation of farming indirectly shaped the subsistence practices that British settlers imported to the prairies. Anthony

Low attests to Virgil's centuries of influence in England, which began in the seventeenth century when the "the scientific-technological movement" instigated by The New Science of Francis Bacon "harnessed the old Virgilian vision" (Low 118). Low explains that "this combination of pragmatic experience with literary insight proved remarkably fertile" (118) and, by the eighteenth century "when Dryden established the georgic as a popular mode and genre . . . [the] long transformation in English agriculture finally reached its culmination in what was called the New Husbandry and, later, the Agricultural Revolution" (119). A result of the revolution, Low states, was the formation of societies such as "the Royal Society," which owes much to Bacon's scientific movement (129). Low also cites various manuals, like those by Gervase Markham, which offered "practical advice on kitchen-gardens and cattle . . . and the breeding of fighting cocks" (125). Donna Landry notes that, from the seventeenth century onward, agricultural manuals, "no matter how prosaic, continued to legitimate themselves . . . as publishably genteel discourse by invoking Virgilian precedent" (17). Georgic husbandry methods rose to prominence a century later in North America with the spread of agriculture across the continent. Terry Jordan offers a history of cattle ranching in North America and describes the practice of many generations of ranchers. He asserts that, initially, there were "three equally diverse herding cultures": the Texan, Californian, and Midwestern cultures (313). However, the Midwestern culture with its "preference for British cattle breeds, obsession with haying and its paraphernalia, desire to build pasture fences and sizeable barns, tendency to irrigate meadows and form stock raisers' associations, and practice of carefully tending cattle while instilling herd docility" became prevalent (Jordan 313). Thus, georgic husbandry became the principal method used in commercial ranching and was imported to Alberta along with the first herds of Hereford and Shorthorn cattle.

The indirect influence of Virgil's *Georgics* on North American culture and agriculture is also evident in the history of settlement. At the expense of clarity, however, historians have used the terms "georgic" and "pastoral" interchangeably. Anthony Rasporich refers to the "pastoral ideals of [John] Ruskin, [Thomas] Carlyle, and [William] Morris" as

the intellectual foundation that “shaped the Anglo-Canadian mentality of the early Northwest before World War I” (150). Likewise, he cites the “pastoral vision of happy farm life” as responsible for the failure of some newcomers who, in their “quest for self-fulfillment in nature” in Alberta and British Columbia, did not consider their own labour as necessary to agrarian enterprise (134). Separating the terms, Landry argues that in pastorals, “no one labors and everyone is nourished by a natural plenitude,” while in georgic verse the farmer feeds his family through his labour (16). Translator L. P. Wilkinson argues that “[h]ard work is a dominant theme” in the *Georgics* (52). Labour is also an important theme in Gardiner’s letters and in the Sheppard journals, and is abundant in Bert Sheppard’s, Key’s, Hopkins’, and Thomson’s memoirs. Whether these life writers depict labour taking place in an agrarian utopia or in a rugged frontier environment, their narratives are georgic.

Land title as a reward for labour is written into the Dominion Lands Act, which promised homesteaders that, after “occupying the land for at least three years and performing certain improvements, including building a house and barn, fencing, breaking and cropping a portion of the land [they] could apply for patent (title) to the land” (Alberta). The foundation of tenure is John Locke’s assertion that labour is “the ultimate basis for legitimate property rights” (qtd. in Greer 366). Consequently, in written accounts of their experiences, settlers tend to emphasize the labour they performed while downplaying the labour of the hired hands whose contributions ensured their success. For example, feeling a sense of pride from having participated in her family’s farming enterprise, Thomson proclaims that she, “too, had a hand in [the first] harvest. Hadn’t I picked stones and poisoned gophers?” (163). Transforming the picking of stones and the poisoning of gophers into metonyms for general farm labour and attesting to having completed them is a self-legitimizing act, a proclamation that she possessed the qualities of vitality and industry that enabled settlers to succeed at their homesteading ventures.

Before discussing the roles pioneers played in promoting utopian and frontier myths of settlement, I will provide brief biographical information about the primary authors. Key, who self-identified as a genteel

pioneer, was born in Yeovil, England in 1903 and immigrated to Alberta in the spring of 1910. Her memoir exemplifies *apologia*¹ because she uses it to recall the lost Eden of her childhood. After reminiscing about the illustrious estates of her Victorian grandparents, she writes: “We left our home, the second Radfords, in Yeovil, Somerset, on March 30th, 1910 on a cold and windy morning” (Key 5). She then describes her family’s journey to Canada, which was, for her father Harry Petter, “an exciting adventure, the sort of thing he had dreamed of doing all his life” (4). To reclaim her parents’ former social status as members of the British landed gentry (and hers by association), Key foregrounds their British heritage and the customs and manners they tried to maintain on the prairies. She also details her and her family’s arrival at the Third Radfords, their new home near Strathmore, Alberta. The prairie farmhouse was a disappointment to them for it had “no running water, no plumbing, and no gas for cooking”; thus, her father admitted that it would afford little more than a style of “primitive living for a while” but promised there would soon be improvements made, such as the addition of “a verandah, and stables and chicken houses . . . then a garden,” all neatly fenced (27). Theirs was a utopian vision in the midst of a harsher reality. Defending her parents’ tenacious grasp on their culture of origin, Key contends that “the stubborn and sometimes ridiculous refusal of the English newcomers to adapt was not so much to impress their neighbours, as an attempt to keep up their own courage, and to assure themselves that there was hope that someday all the traditional customs and comforts they had left behind, would be theirs once more” (37). Evidence of similar kinds of faith in utopian ideals is found explicitly and implicitly in the life writing of all of my subjects.

Like Key, Hopkins crafts a self-portrait as an English settler who retains her refined social practices in spite of her relocation to Alberta. Hopkins was born in Dorset, England in 1884 as Amy Monica Maggs, the daughter of a clergyman (Jameson viii). Her husband, W. R. Francis (Billie) Hopkins, a horse rancher, “was born in County Wicklow, Ireland, in 1879” and, in 1902, filed on a homestead on Fish Creek, which is nine miles southwest of Priddis, where he built a log cabin (viii). Hopkins’ memoir is a remembrance of her arrival and first two

years of residence on an Alberta horse ranch. She wrote it in epistolary form and addressed the letters to a fictional interlocutor named Gill. Editor Sheila Jameson contends that because Hopkins had “remarkable powers of recall” and “access to original documents” (xvi) —letters she “had written to her parents and friends” (xv)—her memoir “reflects the flavour of the period with freshness and contemporary feeling” (xvi). Jameson writes that “[i]n 1943, when Billie was 62, the couple left their farm and moved to a small house on an acreage owned by [a] good friend,” which is where “Monica rewrote and expanded upon the letters” (xv). With hopes of publishing the letters as a memoir “entitled ‘Log Cabin and We Two,’” Hopkins transcribed them to capture their “essence” (xv). Hopkins’ manuscript is housed at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, Alberta; however, the location or even the existence of the letters is unknown, which precludes comparing them to *Letters From a Lady Rancher* to establish what information was altered to prepare them for publication.

“Hurrah for the Golden West!” Hopkins exclaims on the opening page of her memoir. “‘Home for Europe’s starving millions’ as the posters at home so poetically put it. Well, one of the millions has at last arrived, bag and baggage” (1). Her feigned impoverishment appears designed to lower readers’ expectations, for the story she relates is one of modest achievement. She recalls the first view of her ranch house, writing: “It is very pretty, a low log house standing on a knoll with the creek on three sides and a lovely bush of timber behind” (Hopkins 7). The “sitting room,” Hopkins continues, is cozy, “with the curtains drawn and the lamps lit” and the “two Turkish rugs that Billie’s cousins in Ireland gave us” on the floor (19). Yet she creates an incongruous image when she boasts that their “wedding presents look very nice, the silver all aglitter” within a space decorated by “four heads—a deer, bear and two lynx—all shot by Billie,” which, she observes, are “quite in keeping with the log house” (19). The juxtaposition of these possessions, some symbolic of English customs and others the relics of Billie’s bachelor past, infuses her narrative with uneasy contradictions and tensions that suggest her dissatisfaction with her circumstances. This tension is echoed in an anecdote about the pleasures of an overnight stay in a hotel while

on a shopping trip to Calgary, in which Hopkins confesses how “lovely” it is to enjoy the convenience of indoor plumbing, to “have a real hot bath and pull a plug” (32). While Hopkins claims that although she and her husband were “getting a great deal of joy and fun out of living” they were not making their “fortunes” from raising horses (57), which implies that she aspires to a more gracious style of life in keeping with her sense of entitlement. Her utopian dreams are thus made conspicuous by her inability to realize them.

Thomson’s *Crocus and Meadowlark Country* represents her experiences after her family migrated from Galt, Ontario and settled in Nanton, Alberta in 1904. The Thomsons came to Alberta with the intention of growing grain and keeping a few cows, chickens, and pigs, a pattern that was no doubt modelled on their subsistence practices in eastern Canada. Thomson learned to write when she was a child and states that her memoir is based partly on material she composed when she was “only fourteen years old” (208). As a young woman, she obtained a degree in education at the University of Alberta and became a schoolteacher. After retiring, she wrote about her settlement experiences. Her purpose, she declares, in having “written down all that I can recall of those times . . . [is] so that children and grown-ups too of future generations may know what it was like to live on a homestead in Southern Alberta at the beginning of the twentieth century” (Thomson 5). She focuses on the joyful aspects of growing up on a prairie farm; her text is an *apologia* to support the wisdom of her family’s decision to homestead.

Thomson also uses her memoir to refute her family’s less than flattering impression of her as a youth and replace it with a more pleasing self-portrait. “Like many adolescents,” she relates, “I used to feel sorry for myself, and think that my family and others lacked sympathy and understanding” (108). She confesses that she had been quite “fat after [her family] came out west” (108), but she transformed herself when she took on the role of schoolteacher at sixteen years of age and rode her horse to and from school. She boasts: “I lost twelve pounds in weight which pleased me very much” (259). Thomson describes how she grew into a robust and self-assured young woman. Unlike Key and Hopkins, she refrains from aesthetic embellishment and offers a plainly

worded narrative that provides diverse, detailed information about the culture and agriculture of her rural community. What her writing lacks in cohesion it makes up for in its reflection of the diversity of human life: Thomson includes anecdotes about her family's domestic economy, leisurely pastimes, church and community events, and common experiences like schooling, sports, courtship, marriage, and the births of the next generation.

Henry Sheppard, Sr.'s journals are also remarkable for their diversity. They reveal him to have been an influential figure in the Anglican Church, a mayor of High River, an insurance salesperson, and an investment broker. He was born in Sheffield, England in 1861 as "the son of a rector" and was educated at Oxford but chose to give up that gentle existence for the labour-intensive life of a pioneer rancher when he immigrated to Alberta in 1887 to raise and train horses to sell to the military (*Leaves* 98). The Sheppards homesteaded on "Hay Creek, which is now called Sheppard Creek" (*Leaves* 98). He may have begun writing his diaries at Hay Creek; however, the early volumes are missing and the extant collection begins in 1907 when he and his wife Bee (née Beatrice Godden) lived at the Cottonwood Ranch and were kept busy raising their four sons, nursing them through childhood diseases like mumps and measles. They found the time, nevertheless, to mingle with other expatriates in typical British activities. On 23 June 1907, Henry wrote: "Mowed lawn and played croquet afternoon." The next day, they "went to High River to see Light Horse sports." His journals reveal his self-identification as a member of an elite equestrian society.

Henry Sr. documented his experiences from 1907 to 1934 in ledgers, which reveal that he strove for prosperity not only as a rancher but also through employment as a magistrate. He "was appointed Justice of the Peace in March, 1898" (*Leaves* 99) and used his journals to record the delivery of summonses, the names of those charged and fined for violations, and the sum of the fines. Neglecting to differentiate between farming and legal activities, he wrote on 25 April 1912: "Put in 3 rows of potatoes Tried Jasper Thompson for Prairie Fire on [Huths?] land."² In his role as magistrate, Henry Sr. was an agent of the colonial government and reinforced Anglo-Canadian values and customs. The

Sheppards sought to maintain their British customs in Alberta and attended events such as tea parties, polo matches, horse shows, dinners, and dances. Upon the occasion of their arrival as newlyweds, Henry and Bee stopped at the High River Horse Ranch where their host, Phil Weinard, held a wedding reception and, to honour “the young couple, set the table with a white table cloth and the most beautiful cut glass and silverware brought out [from England] by the McPhersons. The guests were seated, and the first and only course was brought in—a big, black iron pot of corn meal mush, which was all they had to eat on the ranch” (*Leaves* 99). The host’s creation of an elaborate table setting suggests the kind of formality these British settlers tried to recreate. The food, or lack of it, reflects their material conditions. The two images reveal a tension between utopian desires and a frontier reality that delayed their fulfillment.

Gardiner was another avid equestrian who left England to pursue a career in Alberta as a rancher. Hugh A. Dempsey identifies Gardiner as “the only son of Lt. Col. and Mrs. Edward James Gardiner, of London, England” (Introduction v). After learning to ride on “his grandfather’s estate in Worcester Park, Surrey” (v), Gardiner joined the military and became a member of “the Queen’s Westminster Volunteers, rising to rank of lance corporal. This regiment provided the opportunity for him to pursue his love of horseback riding” (Dempsey, Introduction v-vi), as did his occupation as a rancher in southern Alberta. The formality of Gardiner’s writing suggests that he had been a member of the upper middle class before he was temporarily relegated to the labouring class when he arrived in Alberta in 1894. The first two of Gardiner’s letters constitute a travelogue, describing the journey of a young Englishman setting out on an adventure to seek his fortune as a rancher in a British colony. They reveal his economic status and validate his self-identity as a first-class British passenger, especially when he compares his accommodations on the ship and train to those of less affluent travellers. In his next letter, dated 20 May 1894, he writes: “The railroad agent has telegraphed to reserve me a good berth at Montreal where I change trains” (4). His insinuation seems to be that he was one of the few passengers who could afford to travel first class, a sign of his privileged

social position. In a letter dated 25 May 1894, he underlines his status by revealing his family's connections to influential figures in high-level administrative positions in Canada. Gardiner penned it at Hudson's Bay House in Winnipeg, where he stayed with "Clarence C. Chipman, Chief Commissioner of the Hudson's Bay Company" (Dempsey, Introduction vi). Mr. Chipman "has got me a berth," he tells his parents, "on a ranch at a place called MacCloud; it is to the south of Calgary near the border of the States" (Gardiner 5). Gardiner's use of the word "berth" as a metaphor in this letter reveals that he was well educated and suggests a kind of literariness in his discourse, which was perhaps necessary for conversing in polite company.

After a couple of years working as a hired hand on the Belleview Ranche, owned by James W. Belle, one of the most successful old-time ranchers, Gardiner bought his own property, the Wineglass Ranch near Pincher Creek (Dempsey, Introduction ix). His letters describe his progress as he developed the ranch. Gardiner's are journal letters; that is, they were written over the course of days and sometimes weeks. For example, Gardiner began a letter on 2 September 1894, added to it a week later, and completed it on 13 September in time for it to be mailed in Pincher Creek. Unlike Hopkins, Gardiner did not reacquire his letters; they were discovered in a family home in England after his death (Dempsey, Introduction xi). Contrary to Dempsey's understanding that the "location of the original letters [was] unknown" (Introduction xi), they are now held at the Glenbow Museum and have been digitized and made available on the Glenbow website.

The Sheppard journals are housed at the Museum of the Highwood in High River, Alberta, where they were left untouched until I began my research on them. They reveal that the eldest Sheppard son, Henry Jr., was an expert equestrian like his parents but that he interacted with horses mostly within the context of farm work. He was born in 1889 at the Sheppards' first ranch "on Hay Creek" (*Leaves* 99). The first volume of his diary documents his experiences after his release from four years of confinement in a German prisoner-of-war camp. In 1913, Henry Jr. and his brother Jay, the second eldest son, had enlisted in the army and gone to Europe. Jay died at Vimy Ridge (*Leaves* 99). Henry Sr. wrote on

6 May 1917 that he had received a “wire from Military Department” telling him that “Jay was killed on April 9th.” Henry Jr.’s 1919 volume marked his return home. The subsequent volumes account for twenty-five years of his agrarian life in High River, on land that is now the Sheppard Family Park, a designated historic site. Each volume represents a cyclical history in which Henry Jr. recorded the daily weather, the amounts of hay and grain handled, the names of hired hands, and the work performed on the ranch. He also kept track of crop development and his methods of soil enrichment, which are the practices that Virgil promotes in the *Georgics*. Wilkinson states that Virgil recommended alternating crops “a thousand years before anyone seems to have tried what is now commonplace practice” (48). Henry Jr. also used his journals to keep track of crop rotation. His inclusion of an article clipped from *The High River Times* suggests that he and his community were aware of issues of sustainability. The article, titled “Crop Rotation on 4 Year Principle” and published on 3 March 1938, identifies summer fallowing and livestock pasturing as two components of a weed control and soil revitalization plan. It is for these purposes, no doubt, that on 13 May 1938, Henry Jr. “plant[ed] Clover. . . . Harrowed garden [Took?] harrow over to fallow.” His journals preserve all but lost sustainable farming traditions.

Bert Sheppard claims in his memoirs that he had very little to do with farming. He self-identifies as a rancher, not a farmer. A farmer, he scoffs, wore “striped bib overalls” or “Teddy Bear suits” while cowboys wore boots and Stetsons (*Spitzee* 47). Bert was born on the Cottonwood Ranch in February 1901 and, like his parents, was an expert rider and horse trainer. As a young man, he worked as a cowboy and horse trainer on the historic Bar U Ranch. In *Just About Nothing*, Bert boasts that it was a realization of his “boyhood dream to become a Bar U cowboy” (83). In his later years, he ran his own ranches, the Rio Alto (OH), the TL (the initials of its founder Tom Lynch), and the Riverbend (originally the homestead of Phil Weinard), and became a successful breeder of pedigreed Hereford cattle. Bert kept track of his accomplishments in an unpublished history of the TL Ranch, which he hand-typed around 1951.³ He notes in that text that in 1947, “[t]hree TL steers in the ca-

pable hands of Ed Noad, were awarded championship ribbons in Major Shows. J.W. Maus [the handler] had the champion load of fat cattle at the Toronto Royal with some more of them” (TL 32). In the 1938 volume of his journals, Bert recorded the grooming and training of a prize-winning show calf in preparation for the Calgary Exhibition and noted his success with the calf on 26 March 1938. He also noted his purchase of an exceptionally high-priced bull at the show.

Bert’s breeding programs contributed to the building of the cattle industry in Alberta. Selective breeding has utopian aspirations in the sense of desiring to achieve the perfect herd. In Book Three, Virgil offers models of ideal bovine and equine specimens and recommends keeping the best calves for breeding. “With horses likewise you must use selection” (3.73), he writes, and advises farmers that “with those you destine to bring up / As the hope for the stable, from their tenderest age / To take especial pains” (3.74–76). Bert’s journals reveal that he took special care of his animals and sheltered them in sheds when the weather warranted their protection. His father’s and brother’s records also reveal careful treatment. In an entry from 27 February 1907, Henry Sr. recorded: “3 yr old heiffer calved calf weak had to bring it into the house.” A similar entry is found in Henry Jr.’s journal dated 31 March 1930, in which he wrote: “Hauled hay for cows & went to town p.m. nice day Bondy Cow Calved. calf [?] had to have it in house.” That the calf in Henry Sr.’s kitchen had been a Hereford, a breed raised for beef, while the calf in Henry Jr.’s had been born to a dairy cow reveals the subtle difference between the economic interests of father and son. Henry Jr.’s livelihood depended partly on the sale of cream, which he kept cold in metal containers in a “spring box,” a wooden crate in the creek, and sold to the creamery in High River. Henry Sr.’s livelihood (and Bert’s) depended on the sale of cattle. The Sheppards offer details of their culture and agriculture in records of the materiality of their lives. Their journals provide crucial evidence of the differences between the culture of colonists and that of local Indigenous peoples, who were not agriculturalists or even pastoralists. The authors in my study were like many other colonists in the British Commonwealth, who “arrived with crops, flocks and herds, and cleared land, extermini-

nating local ecosystems” (Huggan and Tiffin 7). Their enclosure of the prairies into defined, privately owned acreages for the purposes of growing crops and their importation of domesticated animals instigated changes that cannot be overstated. The fencing of the prairies for grazing horses and cattle irrevocably modified the pre-existing ecological conditions of the biome.

Bert Sheppard’s memoirs mythologize the everyday practices of agriculture. Bert suggests that raising prize-winning cattle is an achievement that had even greater significance for him than his cowboy career. Writing in ranching jargon, Bert enacts a literary recreation of branding to reminisce about his younger years. “The time of the branding was about the first of July, the year 1922,” he claims, “and the outfit I was working for was the Bar U” (Herbert Sheppard, *Just About* 139). In a mixture of the mythic and the mundane, he recalls that the cattle were gathered in a corral, “the wings” of which “had been built by ‘Six-Shooter’ Joe Reynolds and my brother Jay, ten or twelve years previously” (141). At various points, shifts occur in Bert’s narrative through a change of verb tense. Autobiographical theorist Philippe Lejeune describes this technique as telling a story in the narrative present in which “everything happens as if the story were becoming contemporaneous with its narration” (58–59). “As soon as the irons were hot,” Bert writes, employing simple past tense, “the go ahead was given by the heeler. That year the roping was done by that outstanding and expert Stony Indian cowhand and roper, Jonas Sam Rider” (Herbert Sheppard, *Just About* 141). As if the process had occurred just prior to his writing, Bert relates that the “calves were fairly thick around the fire and [Rider] just had to swing his horse to get one. Before the first calf was up [after being branded] a second one was down and a third in the hands of the wrestlers” (141). At times, Bert represents his life as a classic Western, emphasizing his and his cohorts’ physical labour. Hard work is the ethic of Westerns, which Jane Tompkins argues focus on “a world of men and things, where male adults in the prime of life find ultimate meaning in doing their best together on the job” (37). The plots of Bert’s frontier tales are consistent with the Western genre, yet they are georgic in their emphasis on labour (Landry 16).

Gardiner debunks the aggrandizement of the lives of cowboys in a letter to his mother, dated 13 October 1895, in which he relates his experiences riding night herd: "People write all sorts of rot about it but I fail to see the beauty of riding round and round a herd of cattle in the moonlight with the thermometer nearly at zero" (48). Instead of contributing to that "rot," he resentfully depicts the conditions in which he was forced to live when working as a hired hand. In a letter to his mother written in the fall of 1894, Gardiner openly condemns Bell, his employer, as "being very mean with his food" and describes the "grub" provided by his employer as "hardly edible" (17). His goal was to become his own boss and obtain better food and more comfortable living space. Gardiner became his own boss when he became a landowner. He also became an employer and hired workers, such as those he employed to bring in the harvest. In a letter dated 13 October 1895, he tells his parents: "I am getting my potatoes in now. I have a lot of Indians working on the job. They take their wages out in potatoes. I had one lot come and after a day's work they wanted cash but did not get it. I paid them in potatoes for what they did and they left. Then this lot came on and agreed to dig them out for potatoes. I cannot afford to pay cash as one gets so little for the potatoes" (50). Whether Gardiner could not afford to pay his hired hands or whether he merely felt their work was worth very little is debatable. He seems to feel less concern for his hired hands than for his cattle. He criticizes the open range system in a letter to his mother dated 29 June 1894, in which he observes: "A good many of the cattle owners do not [feed cattle in the winter], but I think the cattle pay for looking after; you do not get so many die" (10). His letters reveal his sense of moral superiority over the ill-mannered ranchers with whom he was forced to associate during his career as a cowboy. Moreover they, like the Sheppard journals, reveal the georgic ethos of stewardship.

How British settlers acquired knowledge of georgic traditions is a matter of conjecture. Henry Sheppard, Sr. would have studied the *Georgics* at Oxford before immigrating to Alberta; as Sheldon Rothblatt observes, texts by Horace and Virgil were among those studied at Oxford and Cambridge (37). Henry Jr. may have studied Virgil in Latin classes in high school, but a more likely explanation is that he learned

georgic methods through his father's modelling of them. According to Wilkinson, the "*Georgics* was present in every educated man's mind" (48) in England throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and was, for a long time, required reading in "the American colonies" where, "in the last decade of the eighteenth century it was among the specified American college texts" (49).⁴ Such writings, Rothblatt claims, exacerbated a growing antagonism between the country and the city while fostering "the benefits of retirement and return to the land" (37). Readings of Virgil's ideologies in their literary manifestations possibly motivated British colonists to come to Alberta in search of land.

In Britain, georgic traditions emerged in a stylized English pastoral form in poems such as Ben Jonson's "To Penshurst," which pays homage to a country house and its owner in a kind of feudal social arrangement. Ferry identifies georgic themes in the work of American poets like Walt Whitman and Robert Frost (xvii-iii). "As Virgil demonstrated," Ivor Indyk states, "the pastoral form can be made to speak of many things" (837). Like Landry, Indyk differentiates between pastorals and georgic verse. "In contrast to the pastoral mode," he remarks in a study of representations of colonial settlement in Australia, "the white settlers' commitment to working the land for profit takes the form of georgic" (845). In colonial regions like Alberta, georgic traditions emerge in settlers' visions of the prairies as a kind of Eden meant exclusively for members of the dominant Anglo-Canadian society.

Historians such as Doug Owsram have explored the myth of the prairie as a utopia. In *The Promise of Eden*, Owsram emphasizes British expansionism as a motive for settlement. Utopian visions were manifested in the goals of government ministers whose "social ideals," Rasporich claims, find "parallels [in] the late nineteenth-century utopian visions of Ruskin, Bellamy, Hudson, and Morris" (129). Similarly, historian Lewis G. Thomas sees a parallel in the aspirations of civil servants like William Pearce, who imagined "elaborate schemes for southern Alberta's development that combined large land holdings and peasant villages complementing one another in an ordered society that might have done credit to Sir Thomas More or even St. Augustine" (194). The "recurrent myth of a happier and more natural past" has been drawn, Raymond

Williams observes, “not only from the Christian idea of the Garden of Eden . . . but also from a version of the Golden Age which is more than that of a magically self-yielding nature” (54, 57). Cumulatively, pioneer memoirs, such as those I examine here, constitute a compendium of nostalgic reminiscence that continues to support popular notions of the settlement period as a golden age.

Reflecting on her father’s motivations for uprooting his family from their English estate and transporting them to southern Alberta, Key observes that he “and every soul was convinced that within a few short years he would be returning to his homeland a wealthy man” (4). When the Petters arrived, Key recalls, the “great surge of emigration was at its peak and the waves of colonists were flooding out from Britain towards the Land of Promise, Canada, the Golden West” (4). The time of a golden age, Grant McCracken asserts, “is always a historical period for which documentation and evidence exists in reassuring abundance” (107). Utopian visions exist “in the mind of the believer,” McCracken suggests; thus, pastoral societies “look forward to the opportunities for perfection that development will bring,” while industrial societies “tend toward a certain fondness for pastoral societies” and “[c]olonized countries tend to regard the ‘mother country’ or the ‘fatherland’ as the perfect fulfillment of local ideals” (107). Thomas reasons that “privileged” British immigrants (as were Gardiner, Hopkins, Key, and the Sheppards) imagined the prairies as similar to the English countryside (158) and, as a result of their aspirations to attain a way of life beyond their means in England, transformed the prairie from open and unfenced land into privately owned parcels clustered around hubs of agricultural communities. The ideologies that emerged from the Agricultural Revolution impelled English farmers to see “enclosure, the process of converting land from commons to private use” as necessary in order to practice soil improvement (Low 124). British immigrants thus saw land ownership on the prairies as the first step toward developing productive agricultural operations.

Reading the memoirs, Gardiner’s letters, and the Sheppard journals through a georgic lens reveals a colonization process on the prairies that bears similarity to the enclosure of the commons in England, which

Williams discusses in *The Country and the City*. Allan Greer distinguishes between two kinds of commons and differentiates between the civic encroachment of the English commons through privatization and imperial encroachment of an Indigenous commons in North America. The English, Greer states, conceived of the commons as land that was “collectively owned property,” which, according to Locke, was governed by laws (Greer 367–68). In contrast, Locke imagined “pre-colonial America” as lawless, that is, existing as a “state of nature . . . wide open and available to all” and “its lands constitut[ing] a commons of universal scope [that] corresponds to nature itself” (Greer 368). Greer contests this false notion and describes “America [as] a quilt of native commons, each governed by the land-use rules of a specific human society” (372). He asserts that an Indigenous commons was “subject to varying degrees of community control” and was “purely crop-based,” providing families with vegetables, but without “a significant component of animal husbandry. Because crops did not share space with domestic animals, fences and hedges were largely unnecessary, and in that literal sense, the land was not enclosed” (369). Thus, he concludes, the appropriation of Indigenous peoples’ land began as a “clash” of two kinds of commons, a conflict over land use in which colonists emerged as the victors (379).

In Alberta, cattle barons George Lane, Senator Matthew Cochrane, A. E. Cross, A. J. Maclean, and Pat Burns secured leases of pasturage at the rate of “one cent per acre per annum” (Evans 39), which resulted in the establishment of an open range system that allowed roaming cattle to graze on what had been an Indigenous commons. This commercial venture enabled them to secure control of “over 200,000 acres” of prairie land (Elofson 16). Warren Elofson notes that, in Alberta history, the cattle barons “have been viewed as shrewd businessmen with foresight and vision” (7); however, their success was temporary at best and depended partly on labour exploitation. “In summer,” Elofson states, they hired a few cowboys to round up the cattle and treat them for diseases, but in the “winter when the animals were expected to survive on their own . . . a number of the ranch hands were laid off and the manager, one or two foremen, and a few others looked after the entire operation” (6). Greer interrogates notions of land entitlement based on labour by

redefining the term frontier “as the zone of conflict between the indigenous commons and the colonial (outer) commons” (376). Ronald L. Meek also offers significant insight in his overview of Adam Smith’s “materialist conception of history” (9), which was “derived in one way or another from Locke” and envisioned social development occurring in four stages: “[H]unting, pasturage, agriculture, and commerce” (10). Perhaps Smith’s theories precipitated British immigrants’ sense of entitlement, for they saw themselves as socially superior to others. Rothblatt asserts, Oxford-educated British betrayed “national—at times racial—superiority” (135). There was little room in the agrarian society for Indigenous peoples whose worldview was, settlers believed, founded on naturalistic relationships with prairie land.

Bert Sheppard indicates his awareness of the decimation of the Indigenous population in the region and voices regret at the loss of what had once been a “proud people that named the area Spitzee,” people who nourished themselves “on pemmican from fat buffalo and ripe Saskatoons which grew along the river in abundance, while a thousand ponies grazed about” (*Spitzee* 170). He explains that “Chiniquai, head chief of the Stony Tribe of Indians,” surrendered Indigenous lands, which allowed “many fine ranches to be established in the upper High River country” (12). In the leaner days that followed, Bert relates, the “Indians” became “by necessity not too fussy about what they ate” (170). He recalls that, occasionally, they would travel to High River, set up camp nearby, and live there for a few days. They would rise quite late in the day and, Bert implies, go hunting and gathering: the “squaws” would go to the “nuisance ground” (the garbage dump) to search for and salvage carcasses of dead animals hauled there by the townsfolk (170), while the “bucks” went into town to “get what spoiled fruit and vegetables they could find” (170–71). Bert depicts a reversal of gender roles for the men, who were traditionally the hunters. He appears to be aware of their dispossession yet implies that they brought poverty on themselves.

Bert’s view of Indigenous peoples reflects a common prejudice that they were lazy, incompetent, and satisfied to live off scavenging and menial labour. In his journals and the TL Ranch history, he refers to

the “Indians” to whom he brings “grub” while they build fences for him (18). Greer notes that the dispossession of Indigenous peoples created “a class of low-wage agricultural workers” (380). Bert and Gardiner seem to have taken advantage of this situation. The colonial government could not imagine or chose not to recognize Indigenous peoples’ claims of possession of their commons. Either naïveté or politically useful misrepresentation is evident in formal history books, such as John Hawkes’ history of Saskatchewan (1924) in which he proclaims that the “Indian was not a natural farmer. He was a born hunter and warrior” whose “nomadic instinct” made the daily labour of agriculture “as foreign to his nature as a dog kennel to a fox” (Hawkes qtd. in S. Carter 3). Acting on such false beliefs, the Canadian government often placed Indigenous peoples on reserves where the land was unfit for agriculture in order to make room for immigrant agriculturalists (S. Carter 161–62).

Secwepemc elder George Manuel and Michael Posluns refute the notion that Indigenous peoples were not farmers and offer an extensive list of vegetables that had been cultivated before settlers arrived, and which the colonizers integrated into their diets. At the time of first contact, Manuel and Posluns write, “North American Indians were cultivating six hundred different types of corn; all the different kinds of beans known today[;] . . . potatoes; peanuts; and a host of other foodstuffs on which our present civilization is far more dependent than it is on whatever Europeans were eating before they got here” (14). Elizabeth Furniss offers an anthropological view of Indigenous subsistence practices, drawing from the work of James Teit, who reports that “each Secwepemc band had its own commonly used hunting, trapping, and fishing areas, . . . [and] these resources, plus berry-picking and root-digging grounds, were generally considered tribal rather than band property” (144), while the “the trapping-grounds and fishing places were divided among the crest groups [clans] of the nobility of each band” (Teit qtd. in Furniss 145–46). Furniss asserts that evidence of the adoption of clans and ranked classes reveals that key cultural traditions were disrupted when “colonial administrators and officials” who sought to profit from the mining resources forced “the sudden and unprecedented loss of Secwepemc control over their territories” (148). Her

study exposes the profit motives behind colonists' misrepresentation of Indigenous peoples and their culture.

The Sheppards sought to increase their wealth and add to the size of their ranches through land acquisition. Henry Sr. wrote on 28 June 1907 that he "drove onto Sections 29, 19, 23 West of 4 which I have applied for. Saw some good land south of Blackfoot reserve." Colonists and the colonial government chose to perceive the prairies as open unused land or as "nature" and divided the region through a process of surveying into parcels, thus making way for individual homesteads and the establishment of rural Anglo-Canadian communities. Following English traditions, homesteaders named these properties to honour their founders, reflect their geographic features, or phonetically express the livestock brands licensed to them. Bert Sheppard had shares in the Rio Alto, also known by its brand as the OH Ranch, and the TL (the initials of its founder Tom Lynch). Henry Sr. purchased ranches that had already been developed: the Cottonwood and the Riverbend, names chosen for geographical features. At times, the naming of homesteads created historical continuity for settlers. For example, Hopkins refers to her family's ranch as "Enmore," named after her husband "Billie's father's ship" (5); the Petters, Key's family, named their farm "Third Radfords" after two previous Radfords estates in England (Key 27); and the Thomsons called theirs "'Parkhouse' after a farm in Ontario where [they] had lived" (Thomson 121). This naming acted "as an incitement to the alteration of ownership" (Ryan 126). The naming of properties concretized possession while elevating the owners' status from landless immigrants to a kind of landed gentry.

Pioneer memoirists and diarists also referred to their land in terms of the numbered designations authorized by and published in surveyors' maps. The Sheppards, for example, noted the numbers of sections to indicate where they drove in wagons or rode on horseback to tend cattle, build fences, or cultivate the land. Billie Hopkins "homesteaded SW1/4-18-22-3 in 1902, patenting in 1907," and "owned NW1/4 7-22-3" as well (Park 304). Thomson writes that her father "filed on . . . the north-west quarter of Section 22, Township 15, Range 27, West of the 4th Meridian" (14). Cartographic metaphors readily apply to personal ac-

counts of settlement because memoirs, letters, and diaries serve similar purposes as maps. Postcolonial theorist Simon Ryan suggests that maps, by way of selecting “what they record and [by] their normal reference to that most vital of individual and national empowerments, land,” were “a crucial and fascinating element in the project of Empire” (115). Maps are “vehicles for creating and conveying authority about the world” because they shape “what we understand to be factual, real, and normal” (Pickles xi). These qualities strongly resemble the aim of autobiographical texts, which Lejeune maintains “claim to provide information about a ‘reality’ exterior to the text” (22). Settlers’ unpublished diaries and published memoirs strengthen notions of ownership and reassert colonial attitudes by claiming authenticity “in a way which not only legitimizes the representation but also enables the self-privileging of Western modes of knowledge” (Ryan 116). Like maps, pioneer accounts attempt to create an uncontestable reality.

While settlers metaphorically mapped the prairies, they also literally transformed it, replacing indigenous flora with exotic grains, grasses, fruits, vegetables, flowers, and lawns. Grasslands expert Don Gayton describes these plants as “alien” and observes that the prairie “is perhaps the most extensively altered biome on the planet” (108, 25). Gayton argues that, in much the same way that European agriculture erased the original “North American prairie” (24), so too did “colonial society, with its overwhelming sense of cultural superiority, effectively [deny] the histories” of Indigenous peoples, “rendering them all but invisible” (42). In their journals, the Sheppards recorded their attempts to increase their comfort by cultivating gardens and lawns. Henry Sr. reveals that he grew vegetables and flowers and entered them in local fairs. On 22 August 1913, he referred to the “High River Flower show” and wrote: “Splendid day. Splendid show of flowers, everything went off well, everybody pleased. We got 1st prize for White potatoes 2nd carrots 2nd pansies 2nd old lawn.” Henry Sr. also sought to create a pleasant terrain by planting trees around his property and in the High River cemetery. On 29 April 1913, he wrote: “Got the trees from Cluny and planted 73.” On 8 May, he noted that “Jay planted out 50 Russian Poplars.” Following the practice, Henry Jr. planted trees on his farm on the outskirts of High

River. In an entry for 23 April 1936, he wrote that while the hired hand “Ed [was] hauling manure, [he] tried harrows & trimmed trees along the road.” On 28 April, he “cut caragana.” Henry Jr. also identifies the kinds of vegetables he grew for his family’s table and those he grew for the market. On 30 May 1932, he wrote: “Nice day,” and indicated that he “planted cabbage and lettuce and cauliflower, p.m., harrowed east 9 acres disced and harrowed hill also garden.” Thomas maintains that, among the British immigrants he knew while growing up in the region, “[e]veryone had a kitchen garden and almost everyone a flower garden [which] reflected the transatlantic heritage of the gardeners” (136). He explains that “[p]lants and seeds were exchanged and the hardiest flourished,” especially varieties such as “Scarlet lychnis or Maltese Cross, perhaps one of the first ‘exotics’ attempted at Sheep Creek” (136). Such were the attempts of the Sheppards and settlers like them to civilize the wilds of the prairies as they sought to realize their georgic visions.

Hopkins betrays her utopian dreams when the Enmore Ranch fails to provide her with the kind of sustenance that comes naturally. That is, she seems to imagine living on “unbought provisions,” which is a notion that Fowler identifies as a georgic topic (16). Alternatively, she may be entertaining the notion of natural plenitude. This notion is a georgic topic that Fowler defines as belonging to the class *sponte sua* analogies (16). Yet, Hopkins finds that if she is to feed herself it must be at the expense of her own labour. “Gardening is quite new to me,” she admits, “I never did any at home, never even had the slightest inclination to do so, though I enjoyed the results of someone else’s efforts” (Hopkins 52). Cognizant of the fact that her attitude will probably offend “enthusiastic gardeners” (52), she quickly moves on to pastoral descriptions of the landscape. The foothills, she writes, are “various shades of green; the new leaves on the poplars are apple green while the spruce and pine are dark green—the bare hillsides are green, too,” and her view of “the Rockies” towering behind the foothills, “all white and glistening with the sun on them . . . was so lovely that it was hard to return to the prosaic work of planting potatoes” (53). She does continue with the task, though, since she writes that she and Billie often ride on horseback in the evening to work together in the garden. Often, pastoral and georgic visions mix in

settler narratives as the authors reflect on the natural beauty of their land while imagining the future aesthetic pleasures their labour will produce.

Depictions of weather also serve to build utopian images. In a chapter titled "January 4, 1910," Hopkins rejoices that the "snow is very deep now and the sleighing good" (38). The cold weather is a time for amusement, especially at Christmas, when she and her party of friends and family, after having "a jolly time" skating on the frozen creek, return home to feast on the leftovers of their turkey dinner (Hopkins 36). Likewise, Bert Sheppard recalls that in snowy weather "everyone got out their sleighs and cutters, and the merry ringing of sleigh bells could be heard from afar on the frosty air. It was a pretty sight, to see a swift moving team and cutter go racing by with the bells jingling, and the occupants warmly clad in their fur coats and hats" (*Spitzee* 146). His recollection of winter activities is a nostalgic remembrance of places and events in a utopian past. Thomson also fondly recalls winter weather, writing: "As winter set in in earnest, we had plenty of time on our hands," which allowed her and her sisters to head off to a nearby frozen slough to skate (77). Her descriptions of winter activities as happy ones counters pioneer memoirs that portray the prairies as a hostile environment. One of these is *Gully Farm* by Mary Hiemstra, whose family, the Pinders, was one of many that made up the ill-prepared Barr colony. Recalling her experiences as a traumatic ordeal, Hiemstra depicts the cold as a malevolent force. With ominous foreboding, she writes: "It was during this first savage onslaught of winter that the coyotes began to howl" (211). Hers is a tale of martyrdom in which she blames her parents for subjecting her to the discomforts of deprivation. Her life story unfolds in a dystopia, not on a frontier, which is the realm of strong and courageous individuals proving themselves by facing adversity. In contrast, Key relishes winter weather; her family was kept warm by a huge "Nautilus heater" which, she boasts, was designed by her grandfather and cast in his foundry in England (5). She describes her first prairie snowfall in fanciful terms, stating that the "[s]ky and land disappeared, and we seemed to be suspended in a fantasy world of whirling white" (Key 58). Financial security (or lack thereof) appears to be a determining factor in the type of narratives that prairie settlers write. A

secure and comfortable way of life enabled the Sheppards to document their labour and activities in their journals. With similar stability, Key, Thomson, and Hopkins pay homage to their prairie estates. Their settler narratives are not about deprivation but entitlement.

They also claim entitlement by emphasizing hardships, but in a different manner than Hiemstra. Writing in the frontier trope, Bert Sheppard celebrates the courage and vigour of pioneers who, he reasons, chose their lives because “they had adventurous spirits, and by necessity and environment they were men of action. The very nature of their work, handling wild cattle and horses, swimming rivers, fighting prairie fires and bucking blizzards, made them observant and resourceful” (*Leaves* 245). Settler life writing tends to promote myths of the prairie as an agrarian utopia and a frontier, a rugged and hostile environment, or as Daniel Francis describes, the “Mild West” and the “Wild West” (qtd. in Katerberg 65). Whether settlement accounts are constructed as utopian or frontier narratives, recalling a blissful or an adventurous past, they are based on georgic traditions. By imbuing representations of their experiences with aesthetic and literary dimensions, they transform their lives into fiction and themselves into characters who faced the challenges of prairie settlement with courage, tenacity, and dignity.

Settler life writing thus contributes to a body of “social” myths that promote “racial superiority, manifest destiny, or the dictatorship of the proletariat, like the ‘myth’ of the New World and its divinely sanctioned conquest” (Bringhurst 793). Among the ideologies embedded in the manuscripts of these seven pioneer writers are their racial biases. In justifying their privileges and those of other expatriates and migrants from eastern Canada, they fail to imagine living in peaceful cohabitation with Indigenous peoples. The Sheppards divulge that, with the exception of assimilated “Indians” like Jonas Rider, their ideologically constructed georgic world is designed exclusively for them and their society; it affords no room for Indigenous peoples. Settlers imported their culture to Alberta in the form of their material goods, farm machinery and implements, and domesticated animals. Indeed, the wholesale transportation of their English lifestyles to Alberta farms expedited the erasure of Indigenous culture on the prairies and its replacement

with European practices and customs. Rather than constituting “moves towards justice and positive integration,” settler life writers employ their narratives to assert claims to colonized land and create documents that Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel might describe as “encroach[ing] on Indigenous sacred histories, homelands and cultural practices in somewhat familiar ways . . . to mask the ugly truths” (602). Regardless of whether the seven writers in my study imagined settlement as unfolding on prairie farms where they cultivated gracious lifestyles or on frontier ranches where they laboured under difficult conditions, their accounts are highly political narratives that support their claims of entitlement.

Notes

- 1 An apology, as described by Hart, is “a personal history that seeks to demonstrate or realize the integrity of the self” (491). Smith and Watson write that, in the service of women’s autobiography, an apology is “a defense of women’s intellectual and moral equality” (183).
- 2 The Sheppard diarists often omitted punctuation in their daily entries. As an alternative to missing periods, for example, I have used three spaces. When the authors’ handwritten words are undecipherable, I have inserted a question mark in square brackets.
- 3 The TL Ranch 1887, an unpublished manuscript, is housed at the Bert Shepard Stockman’s Foundation Library and Archives in Cochrane, Alberta.
- 4 See also Patterson, who maintains that Virgil has influenced scholars since the Renaissance (61); his philosophy, she argues, emerges in the ideas of Sir Francis Bacon who saw a parallel of good governorship in Virgil’s verse and proposed “a program of intellectual husbandry, whose fruits [were] great advances in the proximate fields of ethics and politics” (135).

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