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**The Forks of the Red and Assiniboine:
A Thematic History, 1734-1850**

by Robert Coutts

**Native Society and Economy in Transition
at the Forks, 1850-1900**

by Diane Payment

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PREFACE

The two studies contained in this volume have been written to support the development of interpretive exhibits and programming at the Forks National Historic Site in Winnipeg. With the signing in 1978 of the Canada-Manitoba "Agreement for Recreation and Conservation", a set of historical themes were formulated by the Canadian Parks Service that would help guide the future development of the Forks. Under the general theme of the Forks as a "historic place", a set of eight sub-themes describe the history of the site from precontact antiquity to the development of Winnipeg as an urban centre in the West. Representating change over three millennia, these themes relate directly to the evolution of aboriginal culture, Native and European settlement, and urban growth in the Red River Corridor.

Due to a number of factors, the planning of a national historic site at the Forks did not get underway until 1984-85. At that time the focus of the historical themes was broadened somewhat, with more emphasis given to Native history as well as the critical transition period between 1850 and 1900 which saw the dislocation and dispersal of the Red River Métis and "Halfbreeds".

Research on the history of the Forks was divided amongst various historians and archaeologists according to a grouping of the eight themes. Canadian Parks Service's

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Archaeology Section was given responsibility for the precontact era, while Historical Services was to deal with the following periods: Native-French contact at the Forks, fur trade competition, the settlement at Red River, events such as the Riel Resistance, and issues such as land rights that characterized the period of transition at the Forks before 1900. A report covering the last three themes - the history of immigration, railway construction and urban development at the Forks - was prepared on contract by the Institute of Urban Studies in Winnipeg. The two reports included in this volume deal with the history of the Forks between 1734 and 1900. The first study by Robert Coutts covers the period to 1850, while the second by Diane Payment focuses on the last half of the 19th century at the Forks, specifically the changing nature of the predominantly Native community that existed in Red River prior to 1900.

Due to time constraints and the existence of a sizeable body of published literature on the Forks, these two studies have been largely based upon secondary literature, although relevant archival material in the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, State Archives of Minnesota, Archives de l'Archevêché de Saint-Boniface and Archives paroissiales de Saint-Norbert, was also consulted. The authors wish to thank these archives for permission to quote from the documents. We also would like to thank Rosemary Kuzina for her editing work, David Elrick for map drafting and Jeannette Morin for typing these manuscripts.

THE FORKS OF THE RED AND ASSINIBOINE: A THEMATIC HISTORY,
1734-1850

by

Robert Coutts

1988

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INTRODUCTION

The Forks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, in the heart of what is now the city of Winnipeg, represents one of the major crossroads in the movement of people, culture and resources throughout much of the North American interior. The significance of the Forks as a "historic place" can be traced back as far as 3,000-6,000 years ago when the site played a key role in the establishment of precontact Native trade routes and served as an assembly point for the aboriginal people who travelled through the parkland belt. Later, the Forks served as a critical link in the western fur trade transshipment and provisioning network, a focus for Native, Métis and European settlement, a major debarkation point for immigrants to western Canada, and an important centre for railway and urban development in the West.

If, as the archaeologists tell us, Native encampments at the Forks date back thousands of years, then the European presence there represents only a minor period of use in the site's long history. Initial contact between Natives and Europeans at the Forks occurred in the 1720s and 1730s. At that time French traders, many of them independents, were attempting to exploit the fur potential of the Great Lakes basin. At the same time, the Cree, Ojibwa and Assiniboine who inhabited the West were in the process of shifting their traditional alliance patterns and moving into new territories to the north and west. While maintaining

traditional aspects of material and domestic culture, as well as seasonal movements associated with the food cycle, Native groups were occupying new lands within the parkland zone. The Forks was a key location at the borders of this region. Frequented by bands of Cree, Assiniboine and Ojibwa, the Forks served as a transition zone between parkland and prairie. Here Native people fished in the waters of the Red and Assiniboine and hunted the bison herds that sought winter shelter at the forest fringes of the parkland zone. Competition among various Native groups for the abundant game resources at the Forks suggest the area was inhabited for only relatively short periods of time.

In the early 18th century French commercial interests operating from New France established a network of trade and provisioning posts in the West. These "postes du nord", as they were called, were directed by the explorer and trader Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, Sieur de LaVérendrye. To offset the costs of the French search for the western sea, LaVérendrye traded for furs with bands of northern Ojibwa, Cree, Assiniboine and Gros Ventres living in the interior. As part of this trade network one of LaVérendrye's subordinates, Monsieur de Louvieres, constructed Fort Rouge at the Forks in 1738. It was abandoned sometime before 1749, possibly as early as 1740 or 1741.

With the ceding of New France in 1760, independent traders, or Pedlars, funded by British and American financiers in Montreal, re-established fur trade networks throughout the West. After 1774 the Hudson's Bay Company moved inland from its bayside posts to compete with the Pedlars (later the North West Company). The Cree and Assiniboine acted as commercial middlemen during this period, exchanging the furs of inland bands for European manufactured items. Strategically, the European fur trade utilized pre-existing Native trade networks which had an

important impact upon the social and economic development of the trade after 1760.

In the late 18th century the Cree and Assiniboine lost their role as middlemen in the fur trade. With the proliferation of inland posts after 1780 the Plains Indians assumed a new role as provision suppliers, hunting buffalo and processing the meat and hides to help support the expansion of trade into the Saskatchewan and Athabaska districts. In 1810-11, as part of this expanding trade network, the North West Company established Fort Gibraltar I, an important pemmican provisioning post, at the Forks of the Red and Assiniboine.

The emergence of a new and indigenous Native population - the Métis - was critical to the expansion of the fur trade. The Métis eventually supplanted the Plains Cree and Assiniboine as suppliers of pemmican and other country provisions to the fur posts and boat brigades of the interior. After 1804-05 a number of these gens libres settled in the vicinity of the Forks where they worked as commercial buffalo hunters and contract freighters for the NWC.

Bands of Cree and Saukteaux, or western Ojibwa, also lived near the Forks, having first moved into this area of the Red River Valley from adjacent woodlands in the late 18th century.¹ In 1817 the Saukteaux chief, Peguis, signed a treaty with Lord Selkirk which provided the Earl's Scottish settlers with land use rights along a narrow strip of property on each side of the Red and Assiniboine rivers from Lake Winnipeg to the Red Lake River in North Dakota.

The establishment of the HBC-sponsored Selkirk settlement at the Forks in 1812 represented part of that company's plan to disrupt the NWC provisioning supply line. A mile north of the Forks, the HBC constructed Fort Douglas in 1813. The conflict of the HBC and Selkirk settlers with the NWC and its Métis allies culminated in the destruction

of Fort Gibraltar and the subsequent battle at Seven Oaks in 1817. The union of the HBC and NWC four years later ended competition and assured the dominance of a fur trade economy in the West.

After 1821 the Forks became the centre of settlement in Rupert's Land and a major debarkation point for traders, explorers and Christian missionaries entering the North-West. At Red River the tiny colony of Cree and Saulteaux, Métis gens libres, Swiss, Demeuron, French Canadian and Selkirk settlers were joined by retiring Scottish traders and, after 1821, by a large influx of English-speaking "Halfbreeds"² and Métis voyageurs declared redundant after the union. The renewed colony established along the banks of the Red and Assiniboine was overwhelmingly Native in origin. These indigenous settlers pursued a mixed economy based upon agriculture, buffalo hunting, trade, and seasonal work on the HBC boat and cart brigades.

At the Forks the HBC reoccupied Fort Gibraltar, the old NWC post, and named it Fort Garry. Nearby, a new and larger fort called Upper Fort Garry was constructed of limestone in 1835-37. The post became the commercial and administrative centre of the settlement and played an integral supply role in the company's extensive transshipment network in Rupert's Land. Produce from local farms (and between 1836 and 1841 from the HBC's own experimental farm at the Forks) and pemmican from the buffalo hunt were transported via Red River cart and York boats to trading posts throughout much of the North-West. The establishment of the main company supply line between the Forks, York Factory and Portage La Loche in northern Saskatchewan promoted the expansion of the fur trade into the Athabaska and Mackenzie districts.

From its administrative headquarters at the Forks the HBC attempted to exert political and economic control over the affairs of the colony. Political power in Red River was

shared between the company, the church, and a small elite of affluent landowners and commercial traders. Tension arose between the HBC and the large Métis majority as a result of the latter's claims to free trade, or trade outside the company's monopoly. While many in Red River prospered outside of the "official" limits of economic activity and generated much of the settlement's real energy and growth, they were not rewarded with political power. With the establishment of an independent Métis economy in the West by 1850, the HBC could no longer protect its trade monopoly in the region. Subsequent decades would see the disintegration of its rule in Red River and the immigration to the settlement of Ontarian entrepreneurs determined to develop the West into a resource hinterland for the growing manufacturing centres of central Canada.

NATIVE - EURO-CANADIAN CONTACT, 1734-60

To those who find inspiration in tales of adventure, where romance blends with history, the story of French exploration in North America will always have a peculiar fascination. It is the story of a brave, adventurous people who found at their feet a vast, unknown continent of lofty mountains, endless prairies, mighty inland seas, great rivers, and impenetrable forests, a continent of undeveloped riches, inhabited by strange savages whose ways of life were different from their own.

N.M. Crouse,
LaVérendrye, Fur Trade and Explorer

Introduction

From grade school onward the study of Canadian history traditionally has emphasized notions of romance, adventure and heroism, focusing for the most part upon the "daring exploits" of historical personalities who have taken on a stature that is often more mythical than real. Such a process attempts to create a larger than life past by mythologizing and romanticizing our ancestors, imbuing them with qualities of nobility, bravery and an adventurous spirit. This glorification of a past viewed in essentially heroic terms has been used to support the idea of man's dominance of nature and the triumph of the daring individual over his environment.

The above passage, quoted from N.M. Crouse's biography of the explorer LaVérendrye, describes the early period of Indian-White contact and exploration in the West. The

central character in the unfolding historical drama - in this case, Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, Sieur de LaVérendrye - becomes an almost mythical figure whose "love of adventure" allows him to overcome the "impenetrable" forests, "lofty" mountains and "strange savages" of the unexplored wilderness. Within these chronicles Native people are portrayed as little more than part of the landscape to be either feared or ignored. When another biographer, Martin Kavanagh, makes the claim that "the history of North America is the story of the white man's coming into this great lone land"¹ or describes the prairies as the "exhaustless granary of a world where no one has been since the beginning of time",² he puts forth a Eurocentric view which not only ignores the presence of the Indians, but implicitly conceptualizes the narrative in terms of the hegemony of White progress.

Statues of the explorer, such as the one located at the east entrance of the Manitoba Legislative Building in Winnipeg or in LaVérendrye Park in St. Boniface, commemorate this particular mythology as well. The memorial in LaVérendrye Park, erected in 1938, is particularly instructive regarding such mythology. Three figures are featured in this piece: LaVérendrye, Father Aulneau and a kind of "representative" Indian. All three are facing in the same direction, gazing at some distant view. The explorer in the foreground, gun in hand, presents an image of mastery and dominance over nature. Father Aulneau, standing behind LaVérendrye, has a crucifix raised high over his head, signifying Christian mastery over the land and its people. Characteristically, the Native guide, on one knee, is considerably lower than his counterparts and obviously subservient to them. While the particular style of the LaVérendrye memorial communicates a great deal about the traditional and romantic image of exploration and conquest, it is the juxtaposition of figures within the sculpture

itself which is most instructive. "Civilization" represented by the European explorer and Christianity represented by the cross (the highest point in the sculpture) dominate the motif, and when paired together effectively dwarf the Native figure, who is almost childlike in stature. Such a heroic piece of sculpture, of course, says more about the attitudes of those who erected it than it does of LaVérendrye's real role in the West or the nature of contact between Natives and Europeans in the early decades of the 18th century.

Precontact and Early Postcontact Native Subsistence and Migration Patterns in Southern Manitoba

Initial sustained contact between Europeans and Indians in the vicinity of the Forks occurred in the 1730s. At that time commercial interests from New France sought to extend the lucrative trade in furs beyond the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Valley. In their search for the western sea French officials planned a network of posts throughout the North-West that would facilitate the gathering of furs from the northern Ojibwa, Cree, Assiniboine and Gros Ventre living in the interior. It was hoped the establishment of these "postes du nord" would serve to redirect or siphon off the traditional bayside trade of the Hudson's Bay Company and effectively extend French commercial hegemony throughout the western half of the continent. At the same time that Europeans were attempting to exploit the commercial potential of the lands beyond the Great Lakes basin, Native groups in these areas were shifting their traditional alliance patterns and moving into new territories to the north and west. The Cree and Assiniboine

occupied new lands within the parkland zone and along the borders of adjacent territories. The Forks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, located in the Red River Valley near the southern limits of the parkland zone, was a key location within this region.

The Forks lies along the southern fringe of the continental subarctic zone near the northern edge of the Manitoba tall grass prairie. Anthropologists and geographers have traditionally viewed this transition zone from parkland to prairie as functioning as a barrier to the movement of adjacent Indian groups during the prehistoric and historic periods. More recent research, however, suggests that geography did not limit the extension of territorial boundaries and groups of Algonquian-speaking Cree and Ojibwa and Siouian-speaking Assiniboine travelled through the area of the Forks on their migrations to the plains from traditional lands in Ontario, Minnesota and eastern Manitoba.³ According to anthropologists, the protohistoric homeland of the Assiniboine included parts of southeastern Manitoba, while the Western Woods Cree were located for the most part to the northeast between Lake Winnipeg and Hudson Bay with the northern Ojibwa even further east near Lake Superior.⁴ During the 18th century the Assiniboine migrated northwestward through the parklands, displacing the Gros Ventre and Blackfoot. A portion of the Cree, according to geographer Arthur Ray, migrated in a similar direction, pushing Athapascan-speaking Chipewyan bands further north, while others moved south to the Assiniboine and Red River valleys. The Ojibwa also moved westward, occupying lands in the Rainy River-Lake of the Woods district by the late 17th century.

The name "Ojibwa" comes from "ocipwe", a self-descriptive term used by a particular band that once lived north of present-day Sault Ste. Marie. Ojibwa bands

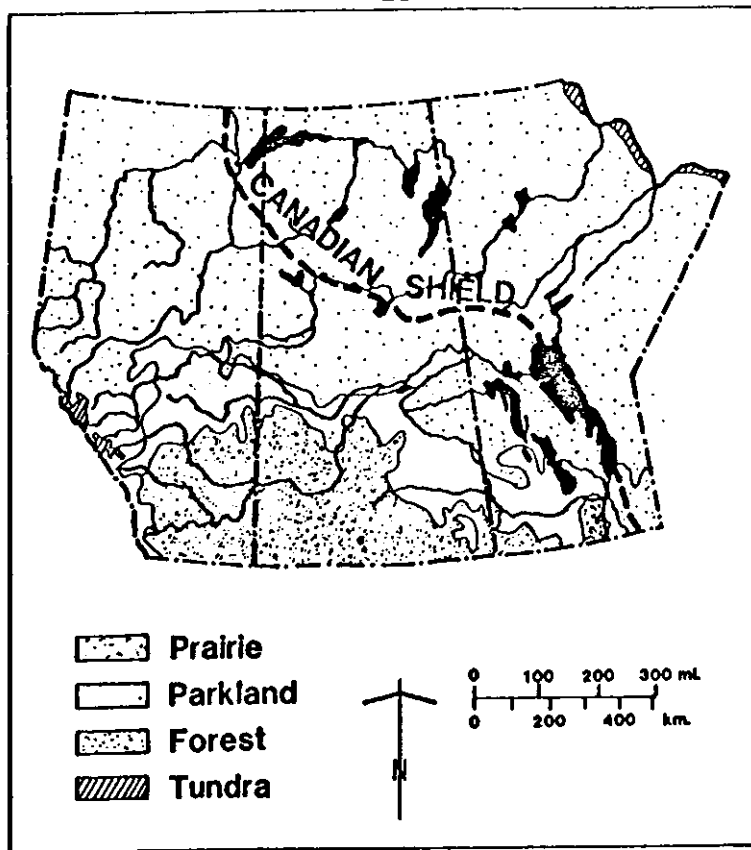
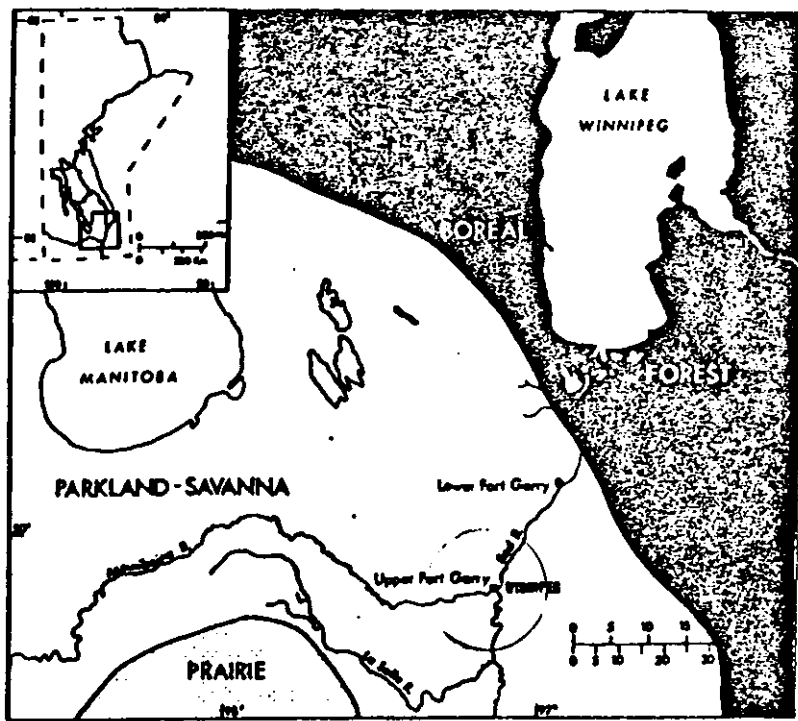


Figure 1, Vegetation Zones



that travelled further west in the 18th century came to be known as the western Ojibwa or "Saulteaux" (also spelled "Sauteux", "Saulteurs"). The name Saulteaux seems to indicate some connection between those western Ojibwa groups who eventually came to occupy territory around Lake Winnipeg and groups inhabiting traditional lands near Sault Ste. Marie. | It is important to note, however, that this connection might be in name only and probably had little to do with any direct migration of peoples from eastern Lake Superior to Manitoba. It might better explain how European designations for particular Native groups were often mistakenly appropriated or generalized. The westward movement of Ojibwa, for example, was no large scale systematic migration of a whole nation, but rather a process of small band movements and territorial shifts over time. Referred to as Saulteaux (or variations thereof) by North West Company traders, the western Ojibwa who travelled to York Factory and Severn, and later inhabited parts of the eastern great plains, came to be called "Bungi" or "Bungee" by Hudson's Bay Company traders. While some generalizations can be made about various population groups, as well as about postcontact territorial shifts among western Native groups, identifying specific linguistic and cultural affiliations remains problematic.⁵

It is through the use of fur trade records that ethnologists and ethnohistorians have been able to determine at least general population shifts among Native groups in the West prior to the mid-19th century. By the middle of the 18th century, tribal distribution had altered radically in the period since initial contact with European traders. At one time the Assiniboine and Western Woods Cree (made up of the Rocky Cree, Strongwoods Cree and western Swampy Cree) had served as trappers and purchasers of trade goods from the more eastern tribes who dealt with French traders from the Ottawa River district. After 1670, however, they

entered into more direct trade with the Hudson's Bay Company, assuming a new role as middlemen and traders of goods and furs between posts on Hudson Bay and Native bands living far into the interior. With the advantage of European goods, especially guns, the Cree and Assiniboine were able to expand their influence over a wide area in the West, displacing such groups as the Gros Ventre from their traditional lands in the eastern regions of the prairies.

The variety of biogeographical regions occupied by the Cree and Assiniboine - woodland, parkland and prairie - contained a wide diversity of resources. Where heavily forested areas of the Canadian Shield provided a habitat for large populations of small game animals (although moose and woodland caribou could also be found there), the grasslands of the south and west boasted a wealth of large game such as bison and deer. The parkland region, or the transitional zone between southern boreal forest and prairie, usually contained species from both regions, including abundant fish stocks in the waters of the Red, Assiniboine and Saskatchewan rivers.⁶ Arthur Ray contends the harvesting of these resources occurred in a cyclical pattern based principally upon seasonal and climatic changes. Bands of Cree and Assiniboine would have followed game animals such as bison from their spring and summer ranges on the prairies to winter shelter in the parkland zone.⁷ While food supplies were generally plentiful in all three regions during the summer season, only in the parkland could Indians find sufficient game to survive during the winter months. From mid-October until late spring woodland fisheries declined, waterfowl migrated south and large game animals scattered in search of shelter. Similarly, the winter season saw the migration of bison herds from the frigid windswept prairies to the relative protection of the parkland.

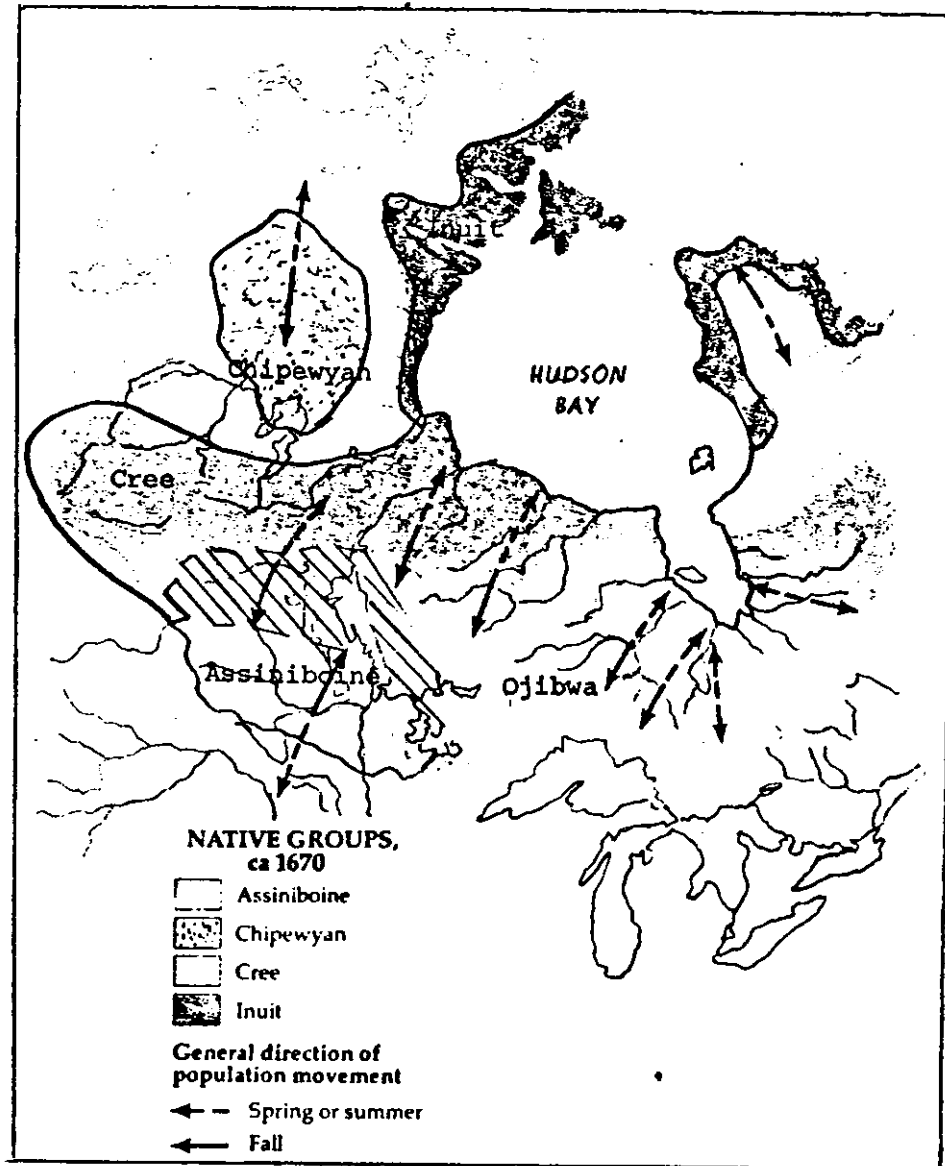
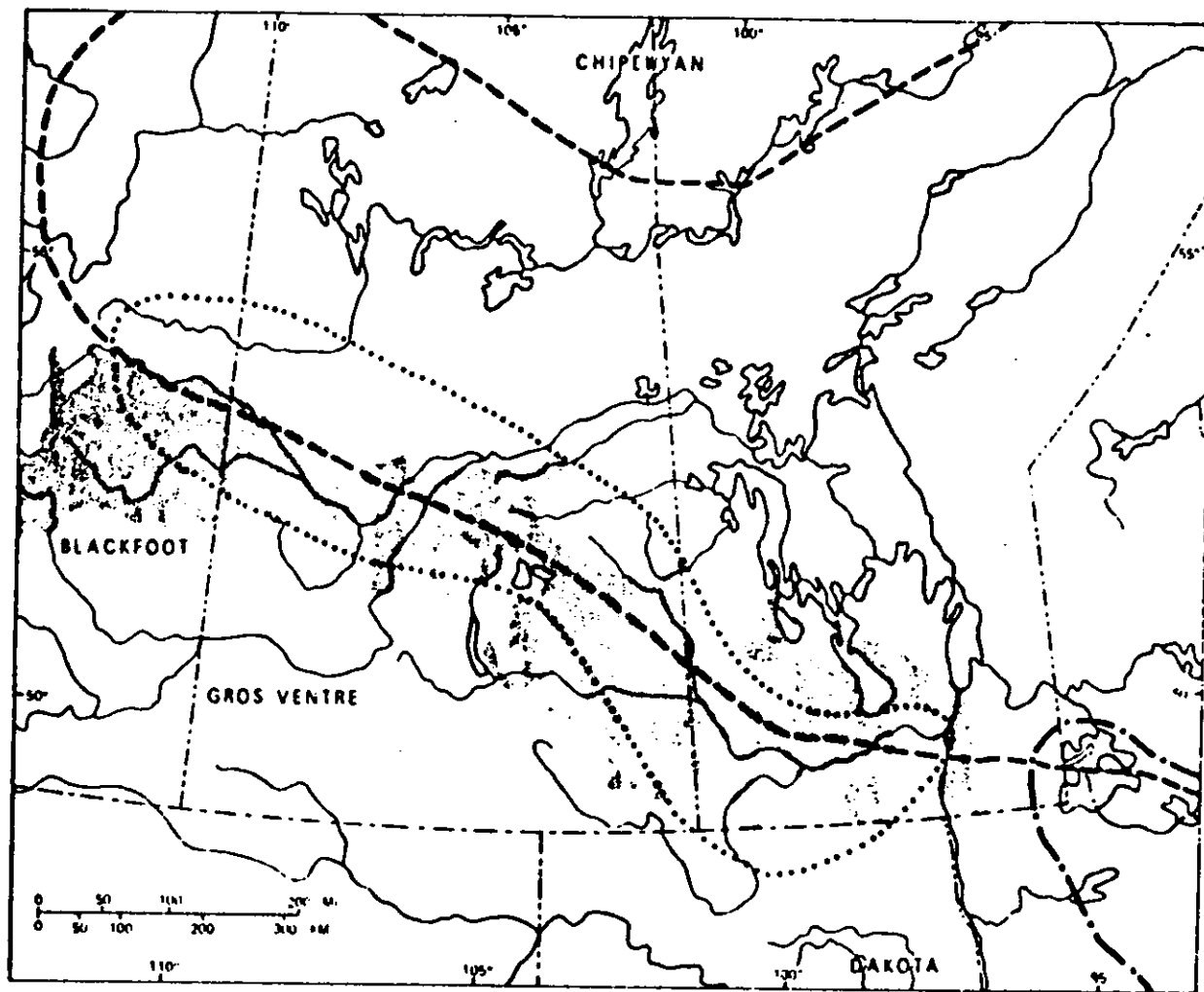


Figure 2, Native groups in the West, ca. 1670.
 (from R. Cole Harris, Historical Atlas of Canada.)

The economies of the Western Woods Cree and Assiniboine were based mainly upon hunting and gathering. Archaeological evidence from southern Manitoba suggests that in the protohistoric period Native groups exploited the resources of a particular region on a largely seasonal basis. Data from the Lockport site on the lower Red River, for example, suggests that where early Larter culture (1000 B.C.-200 B.C.) relied almost exclusively upon bison for food, later Woodland (Blackduck and Selkirk) cultures developed a diversified economy based principally on the seasonal exploitation of resources in the forest-grassland borders of the parkland region.⁸

LaVérendrye's journal from the 1730s provides early written evidence that a migratory exploitation of a wide variety of resources formed the basis of the Cree and Assiniboine economies in southern Manitoba. In a meeting with a number of Indians at the Forks in March of 1737, the explorer was told that at the beginning of summer the Assiniboine planned on travelling southwest across the grasslands to trade with the Mandan.⁹ Along the way they expected to hunt the large bison herds which roamed the region. Other references in LaVérendrye's journal indicate the parkland regions were more heavily populated during the winter months, probably because of the availability of game. In February 1737, with the weather "excessively cold", LaVérendrye journeyed from Lake of the Woods to the Forks, travelling through the parkland and along the fringes of the Canadian Shield. He remarked that in the 18 days needed to complete the overland trip, "nearly every day I came to lodges of savages who wished me bon voyage and offered me provisions."¹⁰

It appears the Assiniboine spent the winter months in the parkland, trapping small fur bearing animals in adjacent woodlands during spring and fall and returning to the grasslands in summer. The Cree wintered in the parkland as



..... Assiniboine - - - Cree
 - · - Ojibwa [shaded] Parkland Belt

Figure 3, Distribution of Native groups in the West, ca. 1765
 (from A. Ray, Indians in the Fur Trade).

well, but while some accompanied the Assiniboine to the prairies in summer, others camped along the lakes and rivers at the forest-prairie transition zone.¹¹

The Forks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, adjacent to the parkland and near this forest transition zone, was a region of considerable riverbank vegetation that served as a refuge to a large number of game animals. In the words of Alexander Henry the Younger in 1800, the riverbank was "overgrown with poplars so thickly as scarcely to allow a man to pass on foot".¹² Land beyond the vegetated riverbanks, according to Aaron Arrowsmith's 1816 map of the Red River settlement, was described as "Plains, Prairie or Grassy Downs...occasionally varied by small Lakes, Hills and tufts of Wood".¹³

The historical record provides evidence that suggests the Forks was an area contested by the southern neighbours of the closely allied Cree and Assiniboine: the Dakota. "Dakota" describes those people traditionally referred to as the "Sioux" in both scholarly and popular literature. Dakota is, however, the correct name. The word Sioux first appears in the letters and journals of early French traders and means "snake", "viper" or "enemy". Understandably, the Dakota today consider the term insulting. As for linguistic within the Dakota nation,

There are three primary dialects spoken by all Dakota people. Nakota and Lakota are traditionally viewed as branches from the Dakota trunk. Nakota, the "n-dialect" is spoken by the Assiniboine or Stonies, the Yankton and the Yanktonai. Lakota, the "l-dialect", is spoken by several western populations, including the Teton...The eastern Dakota include the Wahpeton, Mdewakonton, Wahpekute and Sisseton divisions of the nation, who speak the "d-dialect". The Dakota are the most numerous of their nation in Canada...Collectively, all the divisions of the three dialects are called Dakota, as are the "de-speakers".¹⁴

In response to raids into their territory, the Dakota made frequent forays north into the Red River Valley to attack Assiniboine camps as well as the camps of the Ojibwa who, by the late 18th century, had also moved into the area. Trader John Tanner, travelling to the Forks with a band of Ojibwa around 1800, noted it was a site "much frequented by the Sioux [Dakota] war parties, where they lie concealed and fall upon such as are passing".¹⁵ In fact, the Dakota, according to Douglas Elias, were sending war expeditions against the Cree and Assiniboine as far north as the head of the Churchill River. As an area of seasonal competition for abundant resources, the Forks was inhabited by various Indian bands for relatively short intervals throughout the year.¹⁶ Recent archaeological work at the Forks has uncovered evidence of human habitation dating as far back as 3,000 years ago. Evidence also suggests that Native groups camped at the site for only a month or so, hunting, fishing, trading and gathering berries. At the same time, they used the Forks as a staging area, or assembly point, for the trading and hunting expeditions that travelled annually to the southwest.¹⁷ Further archaeological research is needed to assess the exact role of the Forks within the context of aboriginal trade and settlement patterns throughout the precontact period.¹⁸ In the early postcontact era, however, the documentary record suggests the area was used by various Native groups for brief periods as a stopping place for such activities as fishing, hunting or foraging. On his trip from Fort St. Charles to Fort Maurepas in 1737, LaVérendrye noted some Cree and "two villages" of Assiniboine who were situated at the Forks.¹⁹ The following year he encountered only "ten cabins of Cree, including two war chiefs" at the same location.²⁰ When in 1737 LaVérendrye disclosed his plan to build a fort at the Forks the next year, an Assiniboine chief offered to help in the endeavour and promised that his

people would locate their village at the spot "in order to reside permanently near the fort".²¹ Clearly no long term settlement pattern was evident at the Forks during this period. Even 60 years later the journals of John Tanner, Alexander Henry and John Macdonell note only the presence of small, evidently nomadic bands of western Ojibwa and Cree at the junction of the two rivers.²²

Seasonal patterns of migration and exploitation of resources among Indians in the parkland region adjacent to the Forks remained fairly constant throughout the period of French expansion in the West. The number of posts and scale of trade during this period was relatively minor in comparison with the period of intense competition after 1780.²³ The small number of Europeans left to staff these posts reduced the necessity for Indians to take on the role of provision suppliers. Furs remained the primary commodity and were most easily acquired by trapping during the winter months at the edges of the woodland zones. It was only later in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, as the fur trade extended northwest to the Athabaska district, that provisioning the increasing number of posts with staples such as pemmican and fish altered traditional hunting and food gathering patterns among the Western Woods Cree, Plains Cree and Assiniboine. Moreover, the inland extension of the HBC post network after 1774 undercut the Indians' middleman role, a role the Cree and Assiniboine had absorbed into traditional precontact trade and alliance patterns.

To understand the development of trading patterns in the early 18th century, it is necessary to appreciate the strategic and economic basis of precontact trade alliances among Native groups in the West, especially those of the parkland region. French traders who arrived in the West in the early 18th century entered what John Milloy has called the "grand mart" of the plains.²⁴ Native trade and

political alliances in this period extended as far west as the Pacific and as far south as the Spanish territories. The Assiniboine of the prairies and parkland fringes travelled at the end of each summer south to the valley of the Missouri where they traded meat, fat and hides to the Mandan in return for corn, beans, tobacco and handicrafts. The Mandan trade empire extended over a huge area of the West and involved a large number of the bands that inhabited the parkland and prairie. After the arrival of English traders on Hudson Bay and French traders in the Lake of the Woods district, European goods represented an important new commodity in this traditional exchange network. From the Cree and Assiniboine, the Mandan now received knives, axes, fire steels, kettles and other metal products.²⁵ For their part the northern bands gained access to not only agricultural products, but horses from the southern plains. By the 1740s the use of the horse had spread northward as far as the parkland belt.

If the demographics of the Native trade network in the West were complex, so too were the cultural and economic factors which influenced it. Abraham Rotstein has argued that the exchange of goods between Native societies should not be viewed in a strictly economic context. Political, social and diplomatic considerations were all part of the trade process which signalled the forging of mutual protection treaties and alliances between various Native groups.²⁶ Native trade, argued Gerald Friesen, was

...more than simply an economic transfer, of the type that occurs in a modern supermarket; the negotiation that preceded the native trade [as well as later trade with Europeans], the ceremony that accompanied it, and the games and dances that surrounded it have no parallel in modern commercial relations. A better comparison in today's world would be an international treaty-signing ceremony that is sealed by an economic agreement and formalized at a conference that includes social events.²⁷

This elaborate and evolving Native trade and alliance system played a critical role in the distribution of European trade goods, and in the early 18th century, the location of various French posts. In this respect the pre-1760 fur trade was merely an extension of traditional commercial networks and might properly be labeled a "Native" rather than a "European" fur trade. After this date, however, the colonialist nature of the European trade more clearly emerged as fur trade companies vigorously exploited the fur resources of the interior.

Arthur Ray and Donald Freeman, however, maintain that while Rotstein's non-market characterization of trade best describes traditional Native exchange behaviour, it was no longer operative after the introduction of European goods, at least for those bands who dealt directly with English and French traders. According to Ray and Freeman, trade rituals were directed toward achieving the best price for furs, while the notion of a fixed exchange rate was largely a myth. Marginal costs, such as the quality of goods, distance from trading posts and the value of the overplus charged by the company, were important factors in the fluctuating rates of exchange. In short, economic factors took precedence over social and political ones in forming the Indians' motivation to trade with Europeans.

Pre-trade ceremonies [write Ray and Freeman] were probably more akin to the exchange of courtesies...which often precede business dealings in the modern Western world, rather than symbolic of the confirmation of military pacts or political alliances, even though they may have originally taken these forms in precontact times.²⁸

The Contact Experience

From the European perspective, the nature of the contact experience was influenced to a large degree by the attitudes

and priorities of explorers and fur traders such as LaVérendrye and his sons. What were their particular attitudes toward Native culture and to what extent were their beliefs shaped by economic necessity and French colonial tradition? In The Myth of the Savage Olive Dickason examines the early contact experience between Europeans and Indians in Brazil, Florida and New France during the 16th and 17th centuries. Focusing upon the concept of l'homme sauvage, she explores how traditional cultural and social beliefs and attitudes heavily influenced attitudes toward Native cultures.²⁹ Indian societies were ranked by the French on an evolutionary scale which placed North Americans somewhere between animals and humankind. For the French, the measure of "humanness" (or conversely, "savagery") was determined by such factors as modes of subsistence (hunting versus agriculture), the perceived absence of a political or social structure, language and the lack of writing, housing, diet, the practice of cannibalism and nudity. In their view of themselves as a "civilized" nation, the French considered it their duty to bring these "savage" races to Christianity and ultimately to civilization. The policy of la douceur, or co-operation with Native groups, Dickason argues, was the result of French cultural attitudes that were different from those of the English or Spanish. Moreover, these differences in attitudes were for the most part the result of diverse social, political and cultural structures and traditions in western Europe that varied from country to country.³⁰ Cornelius Jaenen disagrees with Dickason and has argued the European experience and tradition was basically a shared one with the differences between cultures not significant enough to substantially influence the contact situation.³¹ If French attitudes toward Native people were more conciliatory than those of the English and certainly the Spanish, this differentiation arose largely out of the

contact experience itself. Recent arguments conclude that Dickason's approach understates the effect of the environment and the particular role of the staple product and resource extraction upon the nature of the contact experience.³² The French established harmonious relations with the Indians, it is contended, because they needed their independent labour to extract the resource they valued most - furs. Being unfamiliar with the climate and geography of the interior and ignorant of Indian technology and alliance patterns, the French were forced to rely upon the Indians' desire for economic and material gain.³³ It was the particular nature of this economy that helped determine the character of Indian-White relations in early French Canada.

In turn, these factors influenced the course of French policy in the exploration and exploitation of the western interior. LaVérendrye's involvement with the Ojibwa, Western Woods Cree, Plains Cree and Assiniboine arose out of economic interests. The "postes du nord" policy, which established a network of fur trade posts across the West to help offset the cost of exploration, was premised upon the notion that trade could provide the economic basis for a search for the western sea. The success of the policy relied upon the forging of alliances with various Native groups in the West. Without their knowledge of the geography of the region, the river systems and the availability of game, and most importantly without the Indians' furs, LaVérendrye's task would have been nearly impossible. These alliances, however, did not represent a collaborative exploitation of fur resources by Indians and French traders. LaVérendrye's explorations and trading activities were in fact a colonialist phenomena, an attempt by French investors to establish economic hegemony over a new hinterland in the North American interior, and to exploit its available resources for use by developing mercantile and capitalist interests at home. In the context

of European-Native contact, therefore, LaVérendrye and his sons were part of a tradition that can be traced as far back as Jacques Cartier.

French Commercial Strategy in the West: Early Approaches

In their efforts to undermine the fur trade of the Hudson's Bay Company after 1670, the French adopted a two-pronged strategy. While attempting to dislodge the English from their bayside factories through a direct maritime military intervention, they sought the extension of the St. Lawrence-Great Lakes trade route to the lands southwest of Hudson Bay. Until the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 and the ending of military hostilities, the fur trade forts of the bay swung back and forth between the HBC and the French. As part of the economic strategy to intercept the flow of furs to the bay, the governor-general of New France, Comte de Frontenac, sent Daniel Greysolon du Lhut in 1678 to the territory beyond Lake Superior with instructions to search for the western sea and establish the fur trade in that area. In 1679 du Lhut constructed a fort at the mouth of the Kaministikwia River on Lake Superior (the later site of the North West Company's Fort William), and five years later established a post on Lake Nipigon. This latter post was positioned to intercept Cree and Ojibwa who traditionally used the Albany River route to Hudson Bay in order to trade with the HBC at Fort Albany. Jacques de Noyon, apparently an independent trader, followed du Lhut to the area and wintered as far west as Rainy Lake. While there, de Noyon heard accounts from local Indians of the rumoured western sea. His report was given little attention by officials in New France, however, who now concentrated much of their efforts on the extension of trade in the Mississippi basin. Although the French government did not

immediately follow up on the initiatives of du Lhut and de Noyon, the independent and often unlicensed private traders known as coureur de bois, who operated on the frontiers of French territory, continued to push west. By 1716 they were trading with the Assiniboine near Lake Winnipeg.

With the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht the French gave up claims to Hudson Bay and once again concentrated on extending their influence west and north of Lake Superior. Before 1730 the greatest impact of the French presence in this region upon the English trade occurred at posts on James Bay, specifically Fort Albany, Moose Factory and Eastmain. Their hinterlands, or the wide trading areas associated with each of these posts, were easily infiltrated by traders travelling the Saguenay, Rupert, Abitibi and Albany rivers. Account books from the period indicate HBC trade on James Bay dropped off noticeably in the period after 1715.³⁴ The French trade, however, had not affected the London company's commercial control in the largely unexplored western territories south and west of Hudson Bay. The quantity of furs traded at HBC posts at Churchill and York Factory, whose hinterland zones were out of reach of the French traders before 1730, steadily increased during this same period.³⁵

As part of the strategy to implement the "postes du nord" policy, Zacharie Robutel, Sieur de la Nouë, was ordered in 1717 to build a new post at Kaministikwia, as well as posts at Rainy Lake and Lake of the Woods.³⁶ He built his first post at Kaministikwia (replacing the earlier fort erected by du Lhut) but does not appear to have established any permanent quarters at Rainy Lake or beyond. Commander of the "postes du nord" until 1721, la Nouë was replaced by Jean-Baptiste Deschailions de Saint-Ours who held the position until the appointment of LaVérendrye in 1730.³⁷ Between 1721 and 1730 the French under Saint-Ours

were unable to penetrate beyond the Rainy River district and did not construct a single key post during this period.

Native Trade, the "Postes Du Nord" Policy and the Establishment of Fort Rouge

In the 1720s the French government at Versailles initiated personnel changes within its colonial administration both at home and abroad. A key change involved the appointment of Jean-Frédéric Phélippeaux, Comte de Maurepas, as Minister of Marine and Colonies in 1725. Maurepas was determined to find a North American route to the mer de l'ouest and extend France commercial hegemony throughout the region south and west of Hudson Bay. Accordingly, Maurepas sent the Marquis de Beauharnois to Canada as governor and Gilles Hocquart, an official of considerable talent, as intendant. Beauharnois and Hocquart set out to revitalize the "postes du nord" policy and renew the search for the western sea. Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, Sieur de LaVérendrye was chosen to carry out these initiatives. To fund the cost of his exploration, he was granted a monopoly over the fur trade in the North-West.

LaVérendrye was born at Trois Rivières in 1685, the son of that settlement's governor. In 1697 he entered the army as a young cadet and took part in a number of military operations against the English in New York and Newfoundland. In 1707 LaVérendrye went to France and served three campaigns with the Regiment de Bretagne. He was seriously wounded at the Battle of Malplaquet in the War of the Spanish Succession and spent 15 months as a prisoner of war.³⁸ Returning to Canada in 1711, he married Marie-Anne Dandonneau du Sablé and operated a farm and small store and trading post on his riverlot property near Trois Rivières. His wife gave birth to four sons and two daughters. In 1728

the colonial government put LaVérendrye in charge of trading posts on Lake Nipigon.

The Lake Nipigon posts operated close to the frontier of French exploration in the West. By now it was presumed by the government in Canada that the fabled western sea lay just beyond the Lake of the Woods district, at the end of a great river which emptied into it. At the time the overland search for the western sea and a passage to the Orient paralleled British maritime interests in the "Northwest Passage". For France securing a route to the Pacific was motivated by a number of political, economic and cultural factors. The country sought the opening of such a trade route for obvious financial reasons: as a market for European goods and a source of such commodities as spices and silk. Moreover, it would bring prestige to the Bourbon court and elevate France over both the English and Dutch in the 18th century balance of power.

While European interests in an overland route to the Pacific was as old as the colony of New France itself, commitment to the project among various officials of the French administration vacillated as more pressing political or military concerns demanded attention. In the 17th and early 18th centuries French initiatives in exploration and the establishment of the fur trade were concentrated for the most part south of the Great Lakes in the land of the Dakota. Fort Beauharnois was established there to tap the resources of the area and gather information from the Dakota concerning the territories to the west. In 1727 LaVérendrye, with the support of missionary Father Nicolas de Gonner, outlined a plan to shift the focus of exploration to the northern region, the lands inhabited by the Cree and Assiniboine. Since du Lhut and de Noyon (and the modest work of la Nouë), little had been accomplished by the French in exploration beyond Lake of the Woods. While visiting Quebec in 1730, LaVérendrye was given a mandate by Governor

Beauharnois to extend these North-West posts and explore the region west of the Rainy River district.

In 1731 LaVérendrye proceeded to Kaministikwia while his nephew la Jemeraye wintered at Rainy River and constructed Fort St. Pierre there. The next year LaVérendrye built Fort St. Charles at the western end of Lake of the Woods.³⁹ This fort served as LaVérendrye's base from which to launch his exploration of Lake "Ouinipigon" (Winnipeg) as well as the Winnipeg, Red and Assiniboine rivers. Larger than most previous establishments (which were rarely more than a few huts surrounded by a rough palisade), Fort St. Charles was comprised of four bastions, a church, living quarters, powder magazine and storehouse.⁴⁰ In 1732 la Jemeraye and one of LaVérendrye's sons attempted to reach Lake Winnipeg but failed due to ice conditions and the party was forced to return to Lake of the Woods.

Initially, LaVérendrye hoped to move quickly in his explorations of the Red River Valley but was delayed due to his involvement in trade and political negotiations with the Cree, Assiniboine and Ojibwa who lived in the region. At a meeting with 660 Cree and Assiniboine at Fort St. Charles, the French were asked to aid military initiatives against the Dakota. LaVérendrye allowed his eldest son Jean-Baptiste to accompany a raiding party that was to travel south deep into enemy territory.⁴¹ LaVérendrye's decision proved unfortunate for in 1736 his son, a Catholic priest named Father Aulneau and 22 men were killed by a Sioux band on an island near Fort St. Charles. Aside from allying themselves with the French politically and militarily, the Cree and Assiniboine hoped to dissuade LaVérendrye from building posts further west and establishing direct trade links with more remote bands. The role of middlemen in the trade was an enviable one among Native groups, bringing with it additional material wealth and political status.

In 1734 LaVérendrye instructed René Cartier, a "bourgeois" or trader, to descend the Winnipeg River to Lake Winnipeg and build a fort "a square arpent in size" near the mouth of the Red River.⁴² In June 1735 LaVérendrye wrote to Beauharnois, informing the governor that a post, named Fort Maurepas after the colonial minister, had been constructed "five leagues up the Red river, on a fine point commanding a distant view. There are many fish in this river, it is a fine spot and a pleasant place to live at; game abounds."⁴³ The exact location of the fort has never been precisely determined, although it is suspected to have been situated on the west bank approximately 15 miles from the mouth of the Red and a few miles north of the present town of Selkirk.⁴⁴ Intended as a new centre of operations for trade and future exploration, Fort Maurepas was considerably larger than Fort St. Charles.⁴⁵

In June 1736 two of LaVérendrye's sons returned to Fort St. Charles to inform their father (who had spent the previous winter in Montreal) of the death of la Jemeraye at the "Fourche des Roseaux" or the mouth of the Roseau River, south of the junction of the Red and Assiniboine. LaVérendrye, accompanied by a large group of Indians, departed Lake of the Woods in February 1737 and travelled overland to Fort Maurepas. Arriving on the 25th of the month, he immediately arranged with the Indians of the region for a general council in hopes of gathering information regarding a possible route to the western sea and to solidify trade links with the Assiniboine. LaVérendrye comments in his journal that they "settled upon the fourth of March as the date of the council, because time was required to notify two villages of the Assiniboine situated at the great fork of the Red River, which is the place to which I have proposed to transfer Fort Maurepas in order to facilitate navigation and commerce".⁴⁶ At the council an Assiniboine chief asked LaVérendrye to fulfill a

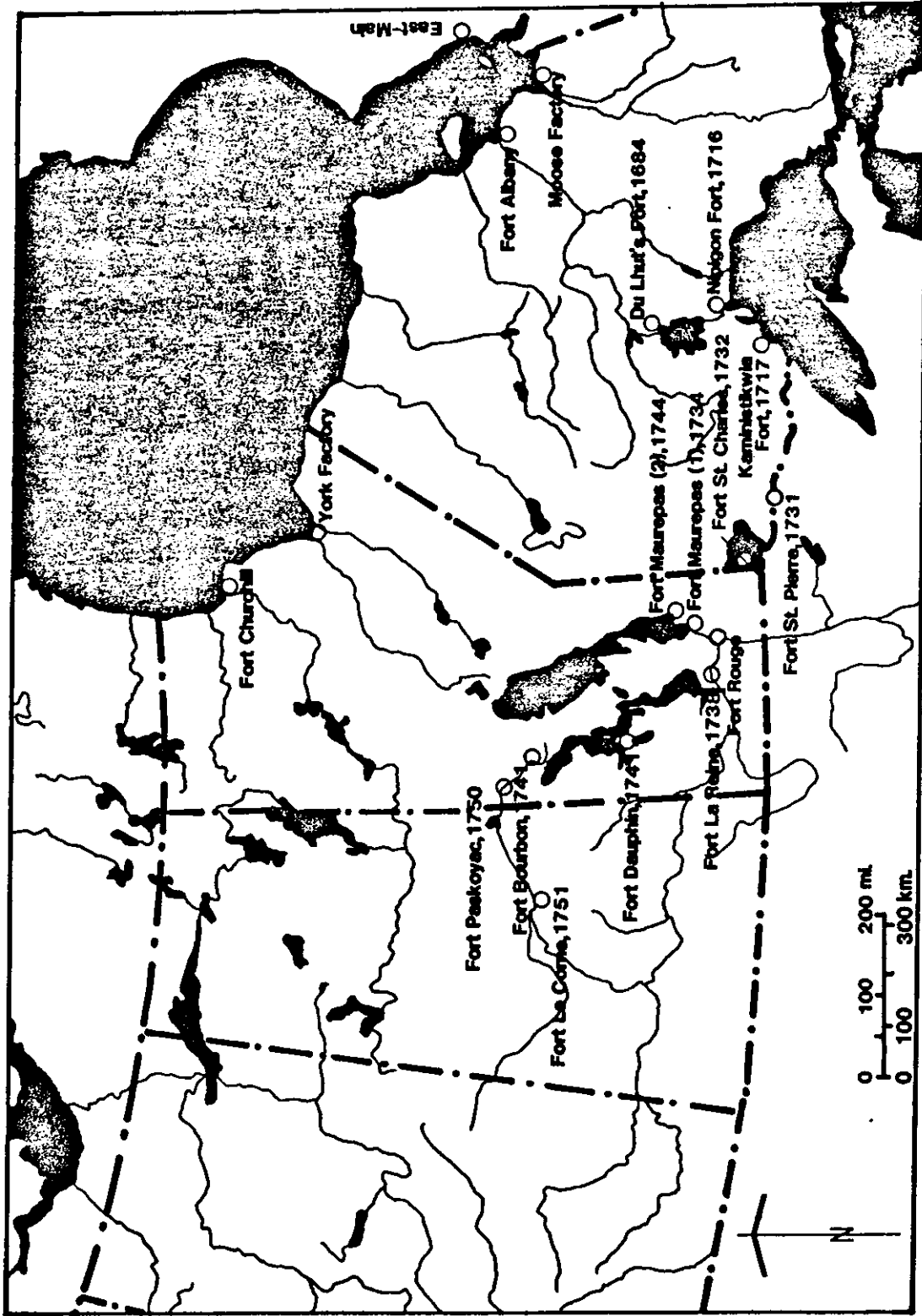


Figure 4, Fur Trade Posts in the West, ca. 1750.

promise of the year earlier and construct a post at the Forks of the Red and Assiniboine. He promised the Frenchman "all the help in their power for that purpose" and that they would establish a village at that spot in order to reside permanently near the fort.⁴⁷ The Assiniboine claimed that at the Forks it "was easy...to get a living by hunting and fishing, as buffalo and tourtes [passenger pigeons] were attracted there all the year round by a saline spring that was close by".⁴⁸ A week later LaVérendrye left Fort Maurepas and in early summer he returned to Quebec.

While in Québec, LaVérendrye met with Beauharnois to arrange further financing for his endeavours, which by now were coming under attack by Maurepas because of the long delay between the establishment of a post on Lake of the Woods and the exploration of Lake Winnipeg and a possible water route to the west.⁴⁹ LaVérendrye brought with him a map of the recently explored region. Interestingly, it locates Fort Maurepas at the Forks of the Red and Assiniboine and labels the post near the mouth of the Red as "Fort abandonné". As his journals make no reference before 1738 to the actual construction of a fort at the Forks, the 1737 map no doubt was intended to show the proposed relocation of Maurepas in accordance with LaVérendrye's promise to the Assiniboine the previous winter.⁵⁰ During LaVérendrye's stay in Canada, Beauharnois received a letter from one of the explorer's sons stating that the Indians awaited his father's return with impatience and they had "constructed a large fort at the grand forks of the Assiniboine to shelter the French".⁵¹ Exactly where this structure was located or how large it was remains a mystery as it is never referred to again in the journal.

After spending the winter of 1737-38 in New France, LaVérendrye returned to Fort Maurepas in late September of 1738. Passing by the Forks he noted the presence of

...ten Cree huts and two war chiefs, who expected me with a quantity of meat, having been notified of my coming. They begged me to stay with them for a while so that they might have the pleasure of seeing and entertaining us. I agreed to do so, being glad of a chance of talking to them.⁵²

In his meeting with the two Cree chiefs, LaVérendrye attempted to convince them to trade exclusively with the French even though he believed "they went every year to the English post [York Factory]".⁵³ After receiving various gifts from the explorer, the Cree agreed to his demands and in order to affirm their loyalty to the French they offered to make war on the Dakota to avenge the death of LaVérendrye's son in 1736. "Our heart is still sore on account of your son," his journal reports a Cree chief as saying. "[He] was the first to come and build a fort on our land; we loved him deeply. I already have been once at war to avenge him."⁵⁴ LaVérendrye, however, feared a full scale war between the Cree and Dakota would only harm his efforts to establish a viable trading network, and he attempted to convince the chief that such a move was ill-advised. Eventually the Cree acceded to LaVérendrye's request and promised to "keep quiet".⁵⁵

LaVérendrye camped for two days at the Forks, departing on September 26 to explore the country west of the Red along the Assiniboine, or the "rivièrre des assiliboilles". In his journal, he described this eastern flowing stream as one that "winds a great deal, is wide, has a strong current and many shallows. There are fine trees along the banks, and behind these a boundless stretch of prairie in which are multitudes of buffalo and deer."⁵⁶ LaVérendrye walked overland along the shore in order to "cut off several bends of the river and keep a straight road", while his men followed in the loaded canoes.⁵⁷ Near the present site of Poplar Point, he built Fort La Reine. He considered this fort to be his new headquarters for future explorations and

the ideal location for trade among the Assiniboine. Close to the traditional portage leading to Lake Manitoba ("Lac des Prairies"), the Natives assured LaVérendrye this was the best location from which to intercept those bands travelling north to trade with the HBC on the bay.

On October 9 LaVérendrye's party was joined by trader Charles Nolan de Lamarque who said he had brought Louis de Louvière to the Forks to help build a fort there for the "convenience of the people on the Red River".⁵⁸ According to Antoine Champagne,

Quand les sieur Louvière rejoint le Découvreur et lui annonce, qu'il a amené des hommes à La Fourche pour y construire un fort, celui-ci lui répond qu'il n'y voit pas d'inconvénient pourvu qu'on ait l'agrément des sauvages.⁵⁹

LaVérendrye agreed that such an arrangement was fine as long as the Natives were notified of the fort's existence. Referred to as Fort Rouge on subsequent maps, this is the first mention in the journal that a post, other than the "shelter" supposedly built by the Assiniboine the year previous, was actually constructed at the Forks.

Fort Rouge was built in haste and was undoubtedly little more than a rudely constructed palisade that enclosed one or two huts. It apparently had little importance in the overall plan to construct a network of posts across the West. Situated in close proximity to both Fort Maurepas and Fort La Reine, Fort Rouge was "merely one of those stopping places, many of which were scattered throughout the country in the fur trading days and were used in the service when convenience required them".⁶⁰ How long Fort Rouge existed at the Forks remains debatable. Champagne writes, "En 1749, selon le Mémoire abrégé de la Carte..., il était abandonné."⁶¹ But as no reference to a post at the Forks occurs after 1738 other than on maps, Fort Rouge could have been abandoned within a year or two after

its construction. In light of LaVérendrye's comments to Lamarque, it is apparent he did not consider the building of Fort Rouge to be of major importance as he had just constructed another post 50 or 60 kilometers away. While the explorer had promised the Assiniboine three years earlier to erect a post at the Forks, it did not seem to have remained a high priority. If in fact the Forks was, as many archaeologists claim, a "buffer zone" and an area of competition for resources, then it would seem unlikely that the French would construct a major depot at that location. While the commercial and navigational advantages of the Forks were recognized in the later period of fur trade competition, during LaVérendrye's time the location of a post was often dictated more by the proximity of Indian bands than by access to the "interior". No doubt the Assiniboine were anxious to have a French post at the Forks in hopes of securing their own claim to the contested area. For Europeans, the value of the Red-Assiniboine junction as a geographic focal point and the meeting place of two major interior rivers would only be fully realized in the period of intense rivalry between the Hudson's Bay and North West companies after 1800. By that time the Forks would take on the crucial role of a pemmican supply centre in the expanding interior trade.

The exact location of Fort Rouge, whether it was situated on the north bank of the Assiniboine River (as Charles Bell and William Douglas have argued), or was built on the south shore (as maintained by George Bryce, Antoine Champagne and Rodger Guinn) has been the subject of much debate over the years. Bell and Douglas' arguments for the north bank location are essentially based on three points. First, the north bank is much higher than the south, making the latter location unsuitable for construction because of the danger of flooding. Second, they cite the journal of Alexander Henry who in 1800 described the south side of the

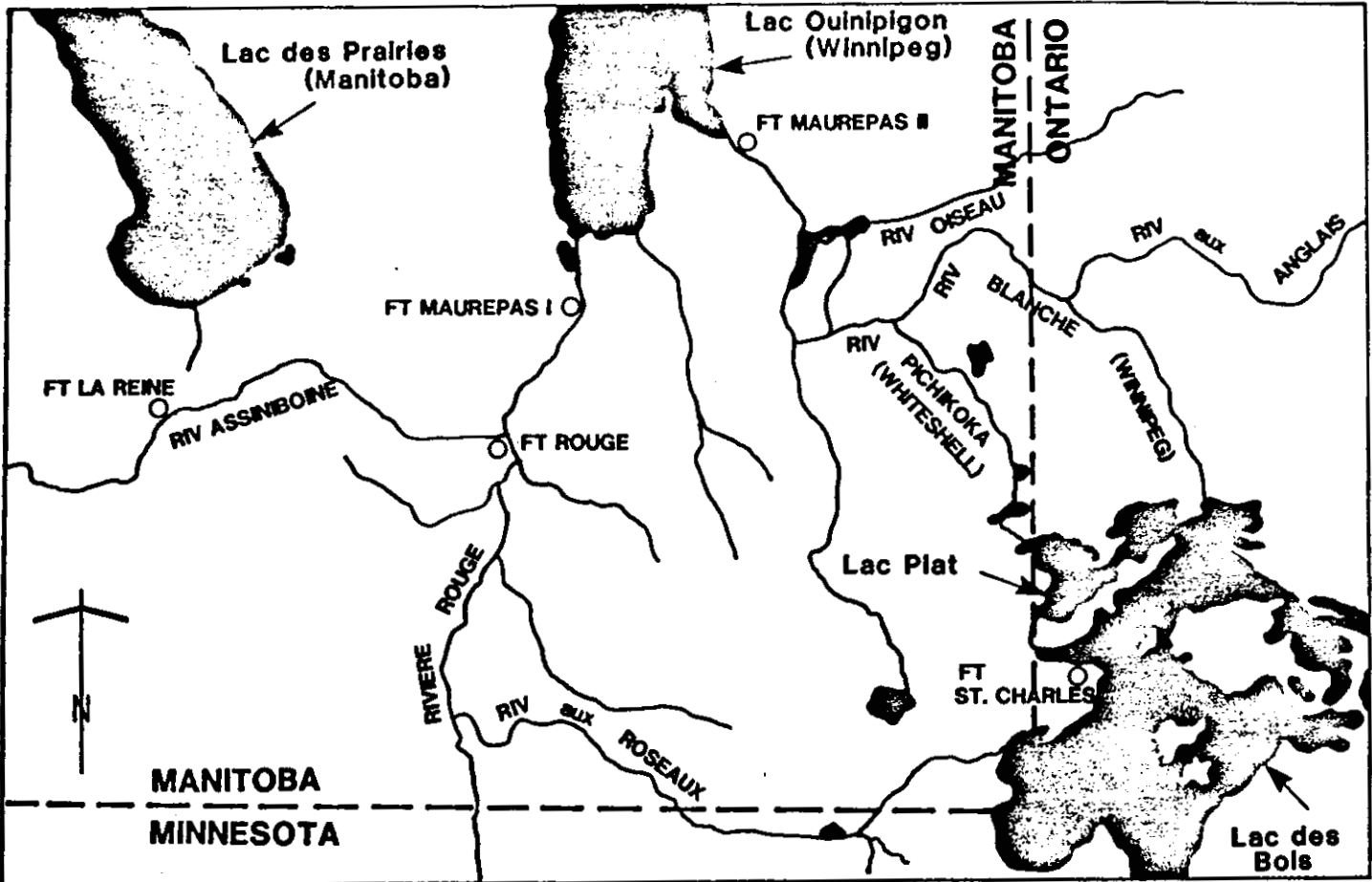


Figure 5, French posts in Ontario and Manitoba, 1732-38. (from Antoine Champagne, *Nouvelles Etudes sur les Vérendrye et la Poste de L'Ouest*).

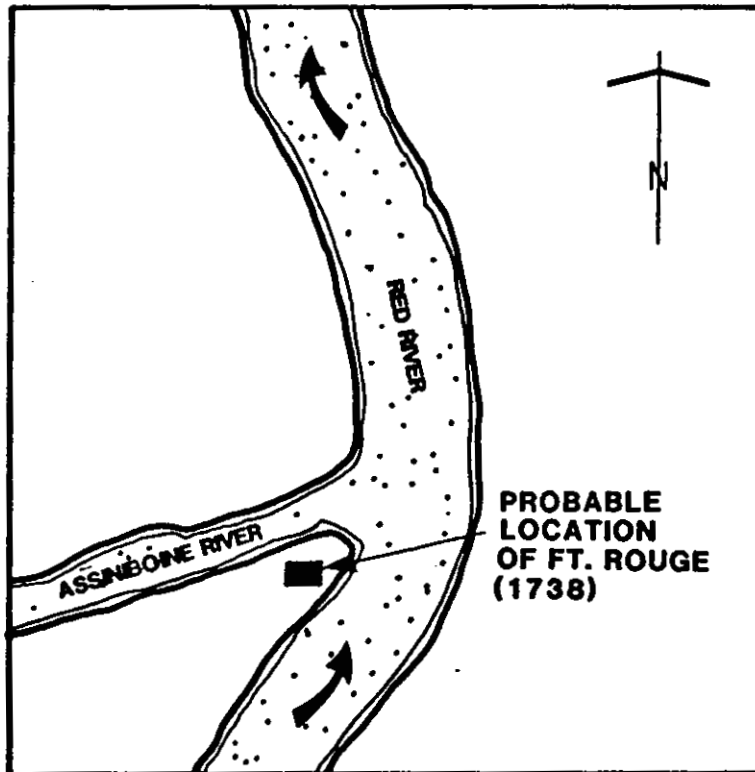


Figure 6, Probable Location of Fort Rouge.

Assiniboine as being so thickly overgrown "as scarcely to allow a man to pass on foot".⁶² Third, Henry's claim that "upon this spot, in the time of the French, there was a trading establishment, traces of which are still to be seen where their chimneys and cellars stood", Bell interprets as referring to the north bank where Henry was camped.⁶³

In his land use history of the Forks, Guinn has examined the available evidence and concludes that LaVérendrye erected Fort Rouge on the south bank of the Assiniboine River.⁶⁴ Railway plans from the 1880s indicate that originally there was little difference in elevation between the north and south sides of the river.⁶⁵ When the Northern Pacific and Manitoba Railway built a terminal at the Forks during this period, they deposited a considerable amount of cinder fill at the north bank to a depth estimated to be approximately four feet in places.⁶⁶ Moreover, the great inundations of 1826 and 1852 indicate flooding was as much a problem on the north bank as it was on the south. While Alexander Henry's statement as to the density of vegetation on the south shore of the Assiniboine is no doubt accurate, he also notes that both sides of the river were "covered...with willows which grow so thick and close as scarcely to admit going through".⁶⁷ Clearing vegetation would thus have been a problem on both sides of the river, but would also have provided the important raw materials necessary for constructing a house and palisade. Henry's claim that a fort dating from the French period once stood "upon this spot" (in reference to the north bank of the Assiniboine) could refer to a structure other than Fort Rouge. Jacques Repentigny Legardeur de Saint-Pierre wintered at the Forks in 1752-53,⁶⁸ as did two traders named Bruce and Boyer who, as independent Pedlars, apparently built a house at the Forks in 1781, the year a large number of Indians perished in a smallpox epidemic. The claim that

other structures postdated Fort Rouge (and were possibly the remains referred to by Henry) is given further credence by John Macdonell, a wintering partner of the North West Company, who in 1797 noted "the remains of several old posts" at the Forks.⁶⁹ Of the various maps credited to the LaVérendrye expedition only one, the 1737 map the explorer took with him to Canada, locates the fort on the north bank of the river. This 1737 map actually predated the construction of Fort Rouge, however, and was intended to show the proposed relocation of Fort Maurepas to the Forks.⁷⁰ As the building of Fort Rouge was carried out by Lamarque and not LaVérendrye, one might safely presume the explorer's initial placement of the Forks establishment at the north bank (on the 1737 map) to be conjectural. The other maps, which date from 1740 to 1750, show Fort Rouge on the south point. No written records from either the early period or the later decades of fur trade competition at the Forks provide definitive proof as to the location of Fort Rouge. An extensive archaeological survey might accomplish this task, but even then the extent of ground disturbance at the Forks since the 1730s reduces the likelihood of obtaining definite interpretable data.

Part of the difficulty associated with the dates and locations of LaVérendrye's posts in the Red River-Lake Winnipeg basin stem from the explorer's abandonment of various forts and their later re-establishment at new locations. This is the case with Fort Maurepas. Originally established on the Red River about 15 miles from its mouth, Fort Maurepas was abandoned around 1739 and transferred to a new site near the mouth of the Winnipeg River. As noted earlier, the 1737 map taken by LaVérendrye to Montreal which places Fort Maurepas at the Forks and shows its previous location on the lower Red as "Fort abandonné", refers to the proposed relocation of that establishment. Subsequent maps drawn by members of the expedition, however, indicate that

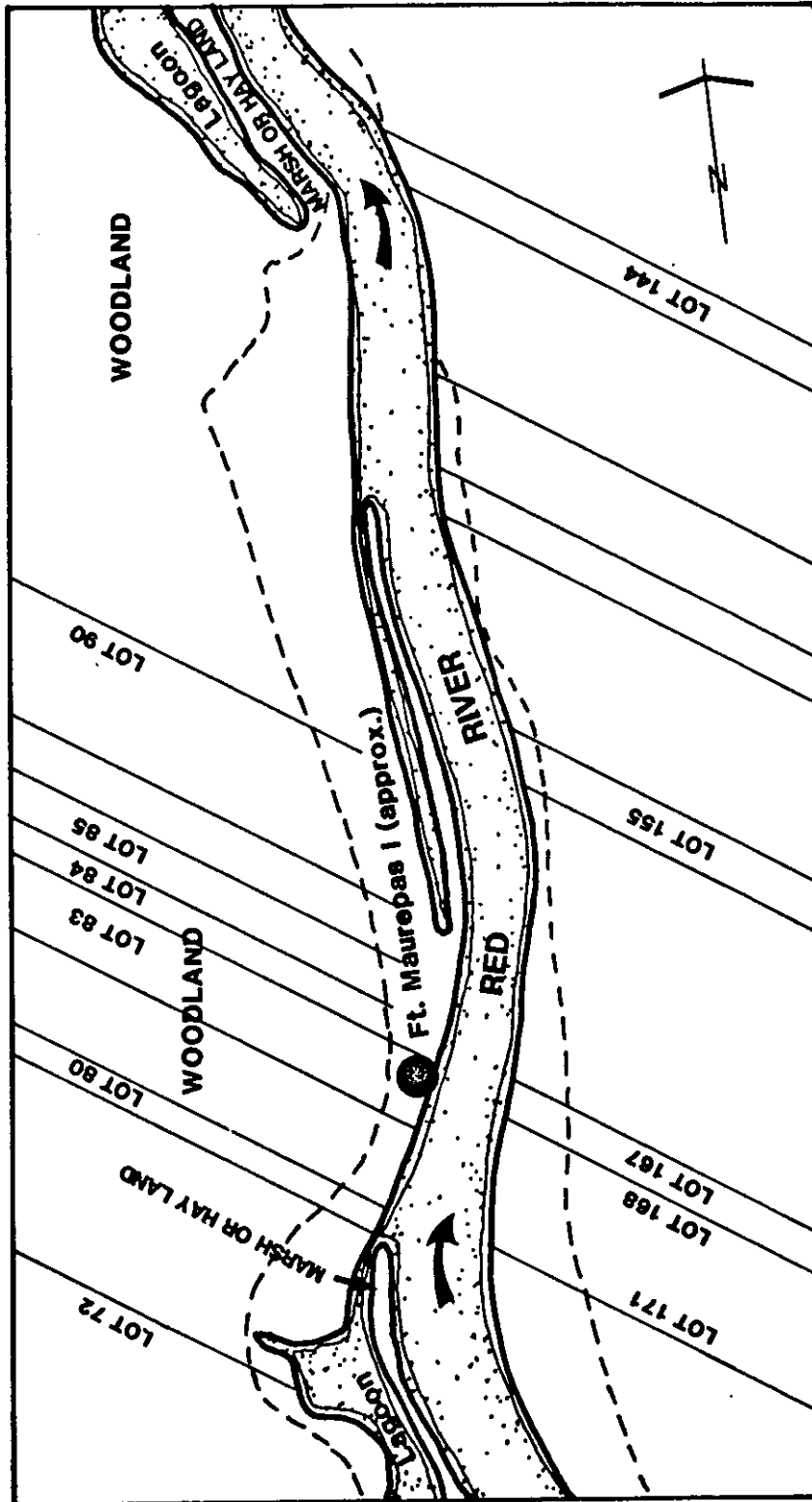


Figure 7, Approximate Site of Fort Maurepas (from Antoine Champagne, *Nouvelles Etudes...*).

at the request of the Cree Fort Maurepas was transferred to the mouth of the Winnipeg River.⁷¹ In April 1739 LaVérendrye dispatched one of his sons (either François or Louis-Joseph) "to go and explore the region near the fort on Lake Winnipeg", the site of the second Fort Maurepas.⁷² A 1749 memorandum written by LaVérendrye's son Pierre noted Fort Maurepas was "down the river of the same name [the initial designation of the Winnipeg River], near where it flows into Lake Winnipeg on the north side".⁷³ It appears, however, that Fort Maurepas lasted less than ten years at the mouth of the Winnipeg River for when Saint-Pierre, LaVérendrye's successor, paddled down the river into Lake Winnipeg in 1750 he made no mention of the earlier post.⁷⁴ While some authors have construed Saint-Pierre's omission as evidence that Fort Maurepas II never existed,⁷⁵ John Macdonell's journal for August 1793 reported that "upon a high knoll between the last rapid on the N.E. shore stood a French Fort of which there is now not a vestige remaining except the clearing".⁷⁶ This clearly refers to LaVérendrye's Fort Maurepas which served as a trading centre for the southern Lake Winnipeg basin and effectively redirected the Cree fur trade for a brief period from the HBC on Hudson Bay. Whereas Fort Rouge was likely only a minor wintering post, established either to conduct a limited local trade with the Assiniboine or as a short term provisioning post, Fort Maurepas II was designed as a more major trade and provisioning headquarters in the French push westward.

After the initial consolidation of posts in the Lake of the Woods and Red River districts between 1737 and 1740, LaVérendrye continued his explorations southwest to the Mandan country and northwest to the Saskatchewan River. In 1741 the explorer's son established Fort Dauphin on Lake Winnipegosis; that same year a number of his men from Fort Maurepas paddled north to Grand Rapids near the mouth of the

Saskatchewan where they built Fort Bourbon.⁷⁷ In 1744 LaVérendrye resigned his commission as commander of the "postes du nord" and returned to New France. He was succeeded by Nicolas-Joseph de Noyelles who maintained LaVérendrye's three sons as "seconds". De Noyelles encountered much of the same financial difficulties as had his predecessor and remained in the North-West for only a few years. In 1746 LaVérendrye resumed his old position but did not travel to the western territories. He made plans for one more attempt to discover the route to the western sea, but in December of 1748 LaVérendrye took ill and died. He was 64 years old.

His successor, Jacques Repentigny Legardeur de Saint-Pierre, remained only a few seasons in the North-West and explored little beyond those territories already surveyed by LaVérendrye and his sons. In the winter of 1751-52 Saint-Pierre became embroiled in an argument with some Assiniboine who were visiting Fort La Reine. After the Frenchman left the post in the spring for Grand Portage, the Assiniboine destroyed it. Returning from Lake Superior in the fall, Saint-Pierre was forced to winter on the banks of the Red River. Though the location of Saint-Pierre's wintering quarters is not specified in his journal record, historian C.N. Bell suggests it was most probably at the Forks of the Red and Assiniboine. Given the explorer's fear of attack from the Assiniboine after the incident at Fort La Reine, he quite possibly erected a rudimentary defensive palisade. Bell's contention that another post succeeded Fort Rouge at the Forks is supported by Macdonell's comment that there were remains of "several" old posts dating from the French period at the location. Antoine Champagne, in his account of LaVérendrye's successors in the West, maintains that "Saint-Pierre spent the winter of 1752-53 at the Forks, where he seems to have rebuilt Fort Rouge, probably on its original location South of the Assiniboine".⁷⁸ While

Champagne's version is plausible, no documentary evidence has ever surfaced to prove or disprove his claim.

Saint-Pierre's fort may not have been the only French post to succeed Fort Rouge. His successor, Louis-François Chevalier de Lacorne, apparently spent the winter of 1753-54 at the Forks. Champagne argues that North West Company fur trader Daniel Harmon made reference in 1800 to remains of stone chimneys from Lacorne's post which Champagne believes was located on the north bank of the Assiniboine River.⁷⁹ Whether Harmon was viewing Lacorne's post, Saint-Pierre's or remains of the original Fort Rouge is conjunctural.

Evidence suggests that during the period of the French fur trade in the West, between 1730 and 1760, no long term post of any real significance ever existed at the Forks. It is quite possible, however, the Forks was the site of more than one minor establishment, each of which probably lasted little more than one or two years. In his attempt to consolidate an expanding interior fur trade network and to disrupt the traditional Native trade links with Hudson Bay, LaVérendrye and his sons constructed a number of key posts which served as the basis for further operations in new territories to the west. These included Fort St. Charles, Fort Maurepas, Fort La Reine, and the later posts in the Lake Winnipegosis-Saskatchewan River district. It seems the Forks played only a minor role within this network, primarily because of the nature of Native subsistence patterns of that time.

As the Forks was an area contested by the Cree, Assiniboine, Ojibwa and Dakota, the location of a major post at that location had little strategic value. Instead, the French seemed more concerned with building their forts along major Native transportation and portaging routes, usually deep within the territory of a particular band. Fort Maurepas II, for example, was situated at the mouth of the Winnipeg River in Cree territory while Fort La Reine, near a

crucial spot where Indians portaged from the Assiniboine River system into Lake Manitoba, was located in an area controlled by the Assiniboine. The particular geographical advantages offered by the Forks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers remained largely unexploited in the period between 1734 and 1760. Only later, when the competition between the Hudson's Bay and North West companies intensified and the new settlement at Red River was established, did the area take on major significance in the control of fur trade transportation and communication and the distribution of goods and furs throughout the North-West.

Conclusion

French commercial penetration of the West in the early decades of the 18th century represented the first sustained contact between Indians and Europeans in the lands southwest of Hudson Bay. As part of a larger colonial strategy designed to establish a commercial hegemony in the West, the French under LaVérendrye constructed a network of trading posts to tap the rich fur resources of the interior and disrupt the traditional trade links that had been forged between inland Native groups and English traders on Hudson Bay.

Native alliance patterns and territorial occupations continually evolved in the period before and after contact with French traders from the St. Lawrence. Cree, Assiniboine and Ojibwa bands moved west from their traditional territories - the Cree and Assiniboine pushing through the parkland zones onto the prairies and north into the boreal forest, while the Ojibwa from the Great Lakes region occupied parts of the Red River Valley.

Prior to the arrival of HBC traders on Hudson Bay, Algonquian-speaking Cree and Ojibwa and Siouian-speaking

Assiniboine located west of the Great Lakes had been pulled eastward as fur trappers into the Ottawa trading system which operated from New France. After 1670 these bands became increasingly involved as middlemen in the bayside trade, using guns traded at posts such as York Factory to expand traditional tribal areas through the use of force.⁸⁰ So as to gain economic control over the trade hinterland southwest of Hudson Bay, the Cree effectively pushed their Athapaskan-speaking Chipewyan neighbours beyond the reach of the English traders. Later in 1717 when the company built Fort Churchill, direct commercial links were established between the HBC and the Chipewyan. Access to arms by the "Northern Indians", as they were referred to in the HBC journals, helped check Cree expansion in the North-West. Moreover, when LaVérendrye established a series of posts in the parkland zone and southern boreal forest after 1734, including Forts Maurepas I and II, Rouge, La Reine, Bourbon, Paskoyac and La Corne, the Cree and Assiniboine were able to further consolidate their role in the European trade. By not allowing their southern and northern neighbours access to European posts in the interior and by playing off rival traders, the Cree and Assiniboine exerted considerable influence among Native groups in the West prior to 1780.

For the French, the locations of trading posts constructed west of Lake of the Woods after 1732 were not arbitrarily chosen. LaVérendrye and his sons generally built their forts at sites which provided easy access to Cree, Assiniboine and Ojibwa trappers who exploited the resources of the parkland corridor. Such a strategy on the part of the French helped to undermine traditional HBC links with the interior and redirected much of the annual supply of furs eastward to New France via the Great Lakes. Although historical evidence suggests that Fort Rouge played

only a minor role within this strategy, it was nonetheless part of a network of trading establishments designed to exploit lucrative commercial links with the Native peoples of the western interior.

NATIVE SOCIETY AND ECONOMY DURING THE COMPETITIVE FUR TRADE
PERIOD, 1760-1821

Introduction

Traditionally the date 1760 has represented an important watershed in the history of the western fur trade. With the downfall of the "ancien regime", the French fur trade that was established in the West under LaVérendrye was quickly abandoned. One by one the various posts that had been constructed northwest of Lake of the Woods were vacated so that in 1761, when Joseph Waggoner of the Hudson's Bay Company passed by two of these houses on the lower Saskatchewan, he noted "there was not a Frenchman to be seen".¹ In what historians now refer to as the "trade and empire" approach, or the business history of the North American fur trade, the "milestones" of the trade - the fall of New France, the HBC move inland in 1774, the formation of the North West Company in 1784, and the union of 1821 - not only serve as crucial divisions of fur trade chronology, but are used to prefigure and define the character of the trade itself. Within this approach, originally developed by Frederick Jackson Turner and expanded upon by Harold Innis, the fur trade is viewed as an elementary colonial or frontier extractive industry that foreshadowed later European settlement. Until the last 15 years much of the writing on the fur trade cherished these perspectives, invariably viewing the nature of Indian-trader relations within the context of a diffusion of "superior" European technology and the dependence of "inferior", technologically impoverished Native societies.

Beginning in the early 1970s a number of studies dealing with the dynamics of fur trade relations challenged these traditional approaches. Authors such as Arthur Ray, Charles Bishop, Toby Morantz and Bruce Trigger have emphasized the role of the Indian in the fur trade,² while more recent works have argued (problematically) that the trade in the area southwest of Hudson Bay was actually controlled by the Western Woods Cree from the time of contact until 1840.³

This changing perception of the Indian's role in the fur trade has led many scholars to conclude that the fur trade was in fact an "Indian trade" and fur trade history must be studied as an aspect of Native history.⁴ The commercial exchange of commodities in the West did not begin with the arrival of European traders. As historians Jacqueline Peterson and John Anfinson have pointed out, the later fur trade was a process of human interaction in which the economic exchange of raw commodities for manufactured goods figured as a vehicle and symbol for a much wider set of contacts between Natives and Whites.⁵ The traditional "milestones" of the European fur trade chronology shed light only on a very limited aspect of the total trade, providing little or no information on the economic and political nature of Native-European commercial relations or how this new economy fit into traditional Native cultural patterns.

Throughout the period of contact, the formation of Indian political and trade alliances and the rhythm of their migration patterns did not remain static but continued to evolve as they had for previous generations. Other aspects of their existence, however, remained more or less constant, including the seasonal nature of resource extraction, social and family life, and elements of material culture. There is evidence that for a number of Native groups, hunting or trading for furs remained secondary to traditional patterns of subsistence food gathering right up into the 20th century. According to some authors subsistence, with all of

its attendant spiritual and cultural customs, remained largely unaffected by European influences during the early part of the fur trade era.⁶

This might have been the case at the Forks during the competitive period of the fur trade, at least until the 1790s. Before that date the Forks represented little of strategic value for European and Canadian fur traders in the West. In accordance with geographer Arthur Ray's model of a seasonal exploitation of parkland resources and his concept of the lower Red River Valley as a "buffer zone", the Forks continued as a valued and contested area for hunting by a number of competing Native groups who lived in adjacent territories. The changing status of the Cree and Assiniboine, from fur trade middlemen to provision suppliers as the trade expanded north and west after 1780, had a significant effect upon the role of the Forks in this period. An area that once represented an important hunting territory for precontact and postcontact societies of Cree, Assiniboine and western Ojibwa, the Forks soon became a critical provisioning centre and transshipment link in the expanding European trade.

Native-Trader Relations

Within a few years of the fall of New France independent traders, or Pedlars, travelling west from Montreal had reached the Red River-Lake Winnipeg basin. These new Canadian traders were funded and outfitted by British and American financiers from Quebec who, sensing the commercial advantages of the western fur trade, had relocated in Montreal and Quebec soon after the fall of the old regime. Anxious to exploit the valuable fur bearing regions of the western parkland belt and determined to undermine the HBC's inland trade, the Montreal merchants

re-established the old coureur de bois transport network, dispatching their heavily laden freight canoes (canôts du maître) over the long water route to the West. Travelling up the Ottawa and French rivers, the voyageurs crossed Georgian Bay and the Great Lakes to Grand Portage on the western shore of Lake Superior. Interior traders or "winterers" then transported the trade goods and supplies to the newly exploited areas inhabited by the Ojibwa, western Cree and Assiniboine. One of the initial trade regions re-established by the Pedlars was the lower Red River region. There is evidence a post constructed in 1766 near the mouth of the Red River was occupied by Montreal traders for about two years.⁷

The character of Indian-trader relations during the ensuing period of fur trade competition between the Hudson's Bay Company and its rivals was dramatically influenced by the significant political, economic and cultural changes that were occurring throughout the West. Prior to the move inland by the HBC in 1774, the Cree and Assiniboine had maintained their strategic role in the fur trade as independent middlemen, bartering trade goods from the HBC for the furs trapped by Indians who inhabited the regions further south and west. It was a role that fit easily into pre-existing Native trade alliances while allowing for the continuation of traditional subsistence patterns of hunting and food gathering. Where once the Cree and Assiniboine had traded such commodities as venison and fish to inland tribes such as the Mandan in return for agriculture produce, they now supplemented their commerce by gathering furs from these tribes in exchange for European manufactured items. It proved to be a lucrative trade for these Native middlemen. Prime furs that fetched a good price at the HBC and Canadian posts were exchanged for copper kettles, knives, flints and guns that had been well used by their former owners, the Cree and Assiniboine. Most of the prime pelts traded at the

HBC posts in the 1760s and 1770s were acquired in this manner and as William Tomison, an HBC trader at York Factory noted, "few of these Indians ever trap their own furs."⁸ By playing European competitors against each other the Indians were able to enhance their middleman status, frequently trading their best pelts to the Pedlars whose posts were close at hand, while bartering the lighter, more inferior furs to the English at distant York Factory. Although the Canadians' goods were generally priced higher due to the high costs associated with the long transportation route from Montreal, the Cree and Assiniboine were able to reduce their own expenditures by avoiding the long arduous trip to the bay. Where once a great number of prime furs were carried down to York, quantities declined after 1765 and only select trading groups now undertook the annual visit to the HBC's bayside factory.⁹

The competitive nature of the fur trade in this period not only helped the Indians to maximize profits, but allowed them to maintain their seasonal exploitation of the resources of the parkland and prairie as they had done for generations before European contact. During this early era of fur trade competition, the Forks maintained its role as a prime hunting and fishing site for the Cree, Assiniboine and Saulteaux. As was the case throughout the years of French incursion in the West prior to 1760, the Forks was more than likely inhabited for only brief periods by bands visiting the site on a seasonal basis. Although little documentary material on the Forks exists between 1760 and 1790, various descriptions of the site in LaVérendrye's journal written in the 1740s and in accounts of the handful of traders who visited the spot in the 1790s seem to point to this conclusion. Generally, these accounts note the existence of only "a few tents" at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers. Sometimes these belonged to the Cree, at other times to the Assiniboine, and after 1780 to the

Saulteaux. As Arthur Ray has noted, Indian bands moving into the parkland zone tended to disperse into smaller groups so as to facilitate the hunting of game. Accordingly, they visited the Forks on a periodic basis, hunting in the wooded areas along the banks, fishing in the Red and Assiniboine rivers, and trading with neighbouring bands. This appears to have been the pattern of Native activity at the Forks during much of the 18th century. Later, after 1800, the strategic value of the site as a hub in the increasingly competitive European trade network would mean a shift in traditional Indian exploitation patterns in this particular region at the edge of the parkland.

Early histories of the North American fur trade, when they have dealt with the role of Native people at all, have tended to emphasize the extent to which European trade and material culture came to dominate the economic and cultural life of the Indian.¹⁰ According to this view, the consumer demands of Indians were believed to be cumulative, the demand for European technology (primarily guns) causing dramatic and irrevocable changes in traditional modes of production. Fur trade historians such as E.E. Rich claimed European consumer goods eventually became necessities rather than luxuries for trading Indians. The use of the gun, he maintained, made traditional means of hunting obsolete, in the process creating a kind of "cultural amnesia" where the Indians soon forgot their traditional hunting skills with the bow and arrow or such devices as snares and deadfalls. For Rich, dependence occurred soon after contact and increased dramatically as trade goods became more widely diffused throughout the interior. Europeans, through the apparent irresistibility of their "superior" technology, were considered to be dominant in the trade, dictating not only the nature of the exchange process but in fact the geographical, political and social dimensions of the trade itself.

Other studies have argued the dominance within the trade of Europeans and their technology, at least in the early period, was largely myth. While the gun became an important instrument in the hunting process, it did not entirely replace traditional techniques of harvesting game, especially in the 18th century. Trade goods such as copper kettles and steel knives were viewed by the Indians as simply superior methods of accomplishing traditional tasks. They were adapted and integrated, according to this perspective, into pre-existing Indian social structures and were often transferred devoid of their European ideological content.¹¹ Certain items that could be readily adapted to Native cultures were highly valued by Indian traders while other goods less useful or practical were not.

From the Indian point of view...the changes which were manifest in their culture were not as radical nor as disruptive as they might appear on the surface. Indians invested new material goods with meanings derived from their traditional world view. The new tools were often used for traditional tasks and were distributed within traditional social frameworks.¹²

Rather than diminishing traditional Native skills and adaptations, some authors have maintained that European tools and technology, or at least the ones most valued by Indians, actually served to intensify traditional cultural patterns.¹³ Occasional comments by European traders regarding the Indians' loss of traditional skills originated from statements made by Indians during the trading process in which they often complained of a poor year of hunting, of starvation in the villages, or of the disappearance of fur bearing animals from their traditional ranges. More often than not, such statements were used by the Indians as part of a larger trade strategy, to negotiate a better deal for themselves and acquire a higher quality of European goods such as thicker kettles, heavier blankets and guns that would not freeze up during the winter months. While there

were, of course, starving Indians visiting the posts looking for food, such periodic shortages had been a regular feature of Native life in the North-West long before contact with Europeans.

In adapting to new technological strategies brought by Whites in the 18th century, Indians resisted dependence upon European tools and trade goods. It has been argued that in their role as economic middlemen, the Cree and Assiniboine exercised significant control over the fur trade. According to a growing consensus of opinion among trade scholars, Indians formulated much of the terms of the trade, influencing if not dictating conditions to Europeans and their Native trading partners alike and, as Arthur Ray suggests, helped regulate the rate and direction of material culture change in Rupert's Land.¹⁴ European traders relied upon the homeguard Natives for country provisions, canoes, snowshoes and other items critical to life in the North-West. The Cree and Assiniboine also served as guides, interpreters and diplomatic agents for the Europeans. Often these roles were filled by Native women who served as marriage partners for British and Canadian traders, helping to negotiate social and political alliances between Europeans and various Native bands. According to this perspective, the thorny problem of "dependence" and loss of autonomy among Indians is dealt with through the concepts of "interdependence" and "partnership". It is suggested that because Indians were sometimes able to negotiate favourable terms of trade, make their own choices about where and with whom they traded, or possessed certain material culture and survival skills that were valued by European traders, they were not exploited. It remains to be defined, however, what is implied by the term "exploitation". Do we conclude Indians were not exploited because it can be shown they were far from "dependent dupes" and could often be shrewd negotiators when trading with Europeans? Or do we take a

broader perspective which might suggest that the vastly unequal nature of the commercial exchange and the tremendous accumulation of capital by the fur companies constituted not mutual dependence but exploitation? The notion of partnership misrepresents the true nature of the fur trade. It was not a commercial partnership of Indians and Europeans, but a traditional resource extractive, colonialist industry. Moreover, the central theme of the fur trade should not be the creation and character of "fur trade society" (the theme of so many studies in recent years), but rather the imperialist exploitive nature of the trade process itself. As historian Doug Sprague writes,

Once we admit that the fur traders were usually transients not settlers, and that the objectives of their boards of directors in London or Montreal were not dissimilar from those of other successful overseas trading corporations, we can appreciate that the central problem for the fur trade companies involved with Canada was that they usually lacked an apparatus of formal imperialism in the sense of being able to control native peoples by force.¹⁵

If the fur trade represented some type of partnership between Europeans and Native people, then historians would be hard pressed to explain the development of racial subdivisions and ultimately racism within the trade, or the economic deprivation and destitution of many Indians after 1850.¹⁶ The fur trade in the West was part of a European mercantile and colonial economic system, which sought resources and ways to exploit those resources, not "partners".

Economic studies of the early fur trade have focused to a large degree upon Indian motivations for trade. According to what has been called the "substantivist" point of view, Indians engaged in trade for essentially non-economic reasons. From a tribal perspective the fur trade was considered subordinate to the politics of security. The notion of economy was intertwined with political

institutions, traditional alliance patterns, diplomatic priorities and native ritual, and was rooted in "treaty trade" where collective goals took priority over individual acquisition.¹⁷

The non-materialist perspective of the substantivists was subsequently challenged by the "formalists" who argued there is an underlying economic rationality which can explain the commercial actions of the Indians, as well as the Europeans, who participated in the fur trade. According to this perspective, Native trappers and middlemen operated according to traditional economic and market forces, seeking the most advantageous exchange rates and the realization of a maximum profit.¹⁸ The formalists contend that such features of the trade as gift-giving, the extension of credit, and the ceremonial recognition of the primacy of the trading captain and chief factor were intended as a means to manipulate the exchange and to increase the volume of trade and the margin of profit.

Research has demonstrated that the Native demand for goods was essentially inelastic in nature. A higher price for furs offered by traders often resulted in Indians handing over fewer pelts in trade.¹⁹ This lack of adherence to what are considered the standard laws of supply and demand supports the notion that they valued only those goods that could be easily integrated into traditional cultural patterns and material existence. Other than a few luxuries, the Indians demanded little beyond weaponry, cloth and a wide range of household items which might facilitate hunting and subsistence strategies.

This does not mean the Indians did not act according to their own economic interests, bargaining effectively to increase the quality and quantity of goods they received in trade. Skilled at playing off rival European traders, they sought to maximize their profit while minimizing their effort by trading at nearby establishments instead of

journeying to more distant posts. While professing loyalty to traders from both concerns, Native people were able to influence the exchange process in order to receive the best value for their furs. Paul Thistle argues the strategic advantage enjoyed by the inland Cree was enhanced through the "long-standing strategy of playing the rival trading interests against one another in order to maximize the benefits of competition".²⁰

By the late 18th century the role of Native people in the fur trade was altered by changing economic initiatives on the part of the Hudson's Bay Company. At that time the company decided to move inland in response to Cree desires for a more convenient trading centre and in 1774 built Cumberland House on the lower Saskatchewan River. Diminishing returns at such posts as York Factory and Severn convinced London that the growing domination of the trade by the Pedlars had to be met within the home territories of its inland trapping Indians. The construction of Cumberland House initiated the HBC's establishment of an inland post network. A new era of competition began which saw the company attempt to match its opposition in the establishment of fur trade posts along key inland waterways, deep within the territories of the Cree and Assiniboine. The traditional role of these Indians as middlemen became obsolete as the trading post moved closer to its Native trappers and fur suppliers. Rather than be forced to bargain through Cree and Assiniboine middlemen of the parkland and boreal forest areas (and pay the requisite mark-up), interior tribes were now able to deal directly with European traders. But just as the lucrative role of middlemen was taken from these Indians, new economic opportunities presented themselves. Arthur Ray describes how these opportunities

...appeared at a critical moment in the economic history of these groups. The fur resources of the adjacent forests were giving out and the English

traders were bypassing the Cree and the Assiniboine middlemen.²¹

With the proliferation of competitive posts throughout the interior, the demand for provisions for those who manned these posts as well as the canoe brigades rose dramatically.²² The Cree and Assiniboine assumed this particular role supplying plains provisions, primarily pemmican, to the fur trade as it expanded north and west in search of new sources for beaver pelts and skins of other prime fur bearing animals. This expanding trade favoured a greater exploitation of the grassland-parkland environment by many Native groups living in southern Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Increasingly, specific areas in and around the parkland became important centres in the new provision trade. By the end of the 18th century the Forks was playing an increasingly crucial role in the movement of food and "country produce" to the interior.

As the economic role of the Cree and Assiniboine shifted after 1780, so did their migration patterns. From approximately 1760 until late in the 18th century, Cree and Assiniboine territory expanded in a northwesterly direction, essentially following the direction of fur trade expansion. The most striking change during this period was the almost complete abandonment of the Red River Valley and Manitoba interlake district. As these groups withdrew they were replaced by the Ojibwa who penetrated as far west as the Souris River.²³ While traditional tribal population concentrations remained largely unaltered during the period of French exploitation and the early period of competition, the changing nature of the fur trade after 1780 began to put pressure on the Indians' traditional subsistence economy. The French fur trade, limited as it was, had done little to effect the seasonal patterns of Native resource exploitation. In their role as middlemen during the next phase of

trade between 1760 and 1774, the Cree and Assiniboine did not have to substantially redirect their patterns of hunting and gathering. With the expanse of the inland trade, however, they were now forced to compete with other Indian groups for the fur resources from which they could obtain European commodities. As those areas of the parkland in the vicinity of the Forks were increasingly trapped out, the Plains Cree and Assiniboine moved in a northwesterly direction roughly following the contours of the parkland belt. With the shift to a role as plains provisioners, these bands had by the 1780s begun to move south in search of the bison.

At the same time that the Indians had been forced to alter traditional hunting patterns so as to provide the fur trade with pemmican, fresh meat, fish and fowl, the European traders had to make adaptations in order to exist in their new environment. The extent of this adaptation was the result of their demand for furs, country provisions and Native technology. In the larger sense, of course, the form and direction of the fur trade in western Canada was determined by the transient trading companies. While Europeans adapted certain aspects of Native material cultural or formed trade alliances through marital unions according to the "custom of the country", they were free to withdraw at any time from the trade. In this respect colonialism, imperialism and underdevelopment emerge as the dominant themes of the fur trade economy.

Euro-Canadian Competition Before 1800

The competitive fur trade era - the traditional story of the Hudson's Bay Company and its rivals - changed the course of development in the West and affected the nature and direction of the Native fur trade. The void created by the withdrawal of the French fur traders after 1760 was quickly

filled by independent Pedlars from Montreal. With the company's decision to remain at its bayside factories, almost the whole of Rupert's Land lay open to potential exploitation from the East by traders willing to undertake the long, difficult journey to the tribal territories of the Saulteaux, Cree, Assiniboine, Gros Ventre and Blackfoot. Veterans of trade excursions to the West were rehired by the Anglo-American interests who operated out of Montreal after the conclusion of the Seven Years War.

The reorganization of the Montreal trade - the reliance upon an extensive transportation and provisioning network - was largely based upon the system that had been first established during the days of the French régime. Voyageurs familiar with the old river routes as well as with the various Indian nations of the West were outfitted by the new Montreal merchants and instructed to carry on a direct, face-to-face trade within the Indians' traditional tribal homelands. But as was the case during LaVérendrye's time, the first wave of Pedlars to penetrate beyond the Rainy Lake district experienced logistical problems in their initial attempt to establish a cross-continental trade network. Pushing beyond Lake Superior, these traders found it impossible to carry in a year's supply of trade goods, meet and trade with their Indian customers, then transport their cargo of furs to Montreal, all in one season. The western traders soon discovered it was to their advantage to enter into partnerships with merchants in Montreal whose voyageurs could carry supplies and trade goods as far west as the depot at Grand Portage on Lake Superior, and then transport the pelts back to Montreal. This system of "wintering partners" and Montreal agents facilitated Pedlar commerce in the West and eventually formed the organizational basis of the later North West Company partnership.

One of the first regions to be re-established by the Pedlars was the lower Red River district. In 1766 a post

was constructed on the Red River approximately 20 kilometers above Lake Winnipeg by either Forrest Oakes or Thomas Corry, two independent traders operating out of Montreal.²⁴ Four years later, in 1770, Joseph Frobisher established a post at or near the same location between Netley Creek (Riviere aux Morts) and Selkirk, close to the present site of St. Peter's church. According to John Macdonell of the North West Company who travelled through the area in 1793, Frobisher's Fort, or "Lake Fort" as it is called by historian A.S. Morton, was situated six leagues from the mouth of the river.²⁵ Frobisher's post, claimed Macdonell, was the "first that was ever made in the interior of the Northwest. This place is now overgrown with brush so as to be known only from the traditions of the ancients [sic]."²⁶ Macdonell also noted the remains of the fort were below the rapids at St. Andrew's, which he called the "Sault à la Biche".²⁷ These early forts were initially established as fur posts but quickly took on the role of provisioning stations, procuring and processing the pemmican needed to feed the brigades travelling from Lake Superior to the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan districts.

While Frobisher's (and before him Corry and Oakes') post on the lower Red River had an important, if short-lived, role in the new provisioning trade, the Forks itself was largely ignored during this early period. As independent traders pushed further north and west, they established new fur and pemmican posts such as Pine Fort and Finley's Post closer to the more lucrative trapping areas of the upper Assiniboine and Saskatchewan River districts. Although no permanent establishment appears to have existed at the Forks during these years, a number of traders, including Pedlar Louis Noland and William Tomison of the Hudson's Bay Company, passed by the site on their journeys to the interior. Tomison was sent by Humphrey Martin, chief at Severn House, to winter among the interior Indians

and entice them to trade at that bayside factory. After wintering near Lake Winnipeg in the vicinity of the Winnipeg River, Tomison paddled up the Red River in the spring of 1768, and at the Forks noted the ruins of two old French houses, presumably Fort Maurepas I and Fort Rouge.

Tomison was more than likely the first HBC trader to pass by the Forks. Meanwhile, Canadian "winterers" were travelling past the site on their way from the Rainy River region to the Saskatchewan district, encamping briefly as they hunted game in the wooded areas along the riverbank. Pushing west up the Assiniboine they continued onto the prime trapping and provisioning areas beyond the Red River district.

The expansion of the Montreal trade was to a large extent determined by the seasonal movements of the Cree and Assiniboine who moved between the parkland and prairie. Though a number of new posts were established, they were often temporary in nature in response to either seasonal band movements or the depletion of fur resources within a given territory. This was also true of the more recent pemmican posts where the location and persistence of various establishments were dependent upon the proximity of the buffalo herds. Posts were constructed and abandoned with considerable regularity during this period. Few were permanently occupied; most were merely rough temporary houses intended to see the Pedlars through the winter months. In the spring they would depart with their supply of furs, bound for Grand Portage, Michilimackinac or Montreal. In this way the Pedlars were able to cover a good deal of territory in a relatively short period of time.

Not surprisingly, the trade at the Hudson's Bay Company's bayside factories began to drop off noticeably. Directly supplied within their home territories by the St. Lawrence traders, the number of Indians travelling to York and Severn declined after 1770. In terms of economic gain the Cree, Saulteaux and Assiniboine were able to receive

fair value for their furs from the Canadians while minimizing effort and travel time by declining to visit York Factory. The initial response of the company was to fault the Indians for ingratitude and disloyalty. Chief factors writing home to the London Committee bitterly described the Native traders as "lazy", "improvident" and "ungrateful" for what they considered the generosity and fair treatment they had been shown. Unfortunately, these stereotypes have been uncritically adopted by later fur trade historians and ethnologists. Marcel Giraud, for instance, describes how the Cree waited "placidly" for the arrival of the Pedlars and were guilty of "lethargy" because they did not travel to the bay.

Importuned by competing groups, the Indians became more and more mercenary in their attitude. They only respected the European when they could exact considerable benefits from him.²⁸

For Giraud attempts on the part of the Indians to maximize economic gain represented disloyalty to the European traders. According to his analysis, the Canadians and HBC men were free to exact the best possible trade terms, while the Indians were seemingly hamstrung by an imposed system of loyalties and dependencies. Such as perspective no doubt evolved from the notion of Indian dependency on European trade goods and, consequently, the Natives' dependence upon the traders' generosity. But in the context of a "Native fur trade", the minimization of travel time facilitated traditional economic or subsistence pursuits. Posts close at hand allowed Indians access to certain European goods while leaving considerable time for subsistence hunting and food gathering within their home territories.

Alarmed at the expansion of the Montreal-based fur trade, the HBC decided to carry its own trade inland and meet the competition head-on. Trade and profits at York, Severn, Albany and Moose were in decline due to the

redirection of Indian commerce that had traditionally been oriented north to the bay. (Prince of Wales' Fort at Churchill did not experience a similar decline primarily because its trade hinterland extended north and west as far as the Athabaska district, which before 1782, remained largely out of the reach of the Canadians.) In response to this increased pressure upon their traditional trading areas, the Hudson's Bay Company's London Committee decided to begin construction of a network of inland posts and in 1774 built Cumberland House on the Saskatchewan River. The company's move inland resulted in changes within the organization of the Pedlar trade. With competition intensifying for the prime fur areas of the Saskatchewan and English River district, as well as new initiatives in the Athabaska territory, the Canadians began to form partnerships that might put their trade on a more financially secure basis. As the lines of transportation and communication were lengthened with each passing year, the need for a more solid financial backing out of Montreal became imperative. In 1783-84 a partnership of Montreal entrepreneurs headed by Simon McTavish, William McGillvray and the Frobisher brothers formed the North West Company, a 16-share corporation that would eventually dominate the western fur trade.

Whereas the Canadian Pedlars had engaged in stiff competition with one another, the North West Company was now able to pool the resources of the independents and establish a supply system which supported the expansion of the fur trade into the lucrative Athabaska district. For the Nor'Westers expansion was critical if they hoped to bypass the Cree and Assiniboine middlemen of the English River and Cumberland districts who were tied into the HBC trade system.²⁹ Expansion, however, not only led to commercial changes in the fur trade but to ecological ones as well. The increase in the number of posts in the West due to the

heightened competition between the HBC and NWC meant the fur trade could no longer depend solely upon the resources of the parkland zone. Lengthening transportation routes necessitated the refinement of a food supply network that was dependent upon the bison of the parkland and southern prairie.³⁰ Various key locations became crucial to this expanding network. The junction of major river routes to the interior, such as the Forks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, became increasingly important after 1790 as supply and provisioning centres in this complex transportation and communication system that stretched from Montreal to Lake Athabaska.

The Assiniboine and Qu'Appelle districts were viewed by both trading companies as important links within the provision trade. The Assiniboine and Plains Cree, no longer in the role of fur trade middlemen, took on the task of supplying the new posts and canoe brigades with pemmican. Initially the Forks played no significant role in this new supply network. By 1793, however, traders from both the Hudson's Bay and North West companies were regularly visiting the area, camping for brief periods while trading for provisions with local Indians. John Macdonell of the North West Company arrived at the Forks in September 1793. He noted in his journal that he had

Arrived at the Forks after coming five leagues from the head of sault à la Biche [St. Andrew's Rapids]...at the Forks we found two lodges of Indians who have a moose deer killed not far off, sent six men for the meat of it which they are to bring on their backs.³¹

The next year Donald McKay of the Hudson's Bay Company remarked that at the Forks he had "deposited 200 pounds meat and fat on the south side of the [Assiniboine] river".³²

The growing importance of the Forks is most evident in the journal of Charles Baptiste Chaboillez who journeyed up the Red River in 1797. Chaboillez, a fur trader and

merchant, was originally from Michilimackinac. He concentrated most of his trading activities in the Great Lakes and Upper Mississippi region, dividing his time between that area and Montreal. In 1797 he travelled with a group of Métis on behalf of the North West Company from Lake Superior to the Red River. Entering from Lake Winnipeg Chaboillez arrived at the Forks in mid-September. There he found one tent belonging to "Old Frantes and Two Sons, gave them each $\frac{1}{2}$ foot Tobc. and a Dram - the former made a present of Twenty Pieces Dryed Meat and 8 Sturgeon - for which I paid him Twenty Eight Pints Rum".³³ After wintering near Pembina (where the HBC had established Fort Daer), Chaboillez returned to the Forks the following spring. He wrote in his journal,

Arrived about Ten O'Clock at the Forks - found Messrs. Richards and Desjardins and a large Band of Indians - say forty men and gave them each $\frac{1}{2}$ Foot Tobacco, the trade was over when they arrived last month at this place they found all the Indians camped, so they made but a very poor Hunt ... the English people came Down from the River la Sourie with Rum - but made only Twenty skins...³⁴

Chaboillez's journal suggests that after 1790 the Forks played an ever-increasing role in the provision trade. Though no permanent European post was built there during this period, it is evident that dried meat and fish, as well as some furs, were being exchanged by the Assiniboine for a variety of European manufactured goods, tobacco and rum. Plains provisions were often cached at the site awaiting pick-up by canoe brigades heading to the Saskatchewan and English River districts. As competition between the rival fur trade companies increased in the years after 1800, the Forks would play a major role in the provisioning of the Athabaska trade and as a transshipment centre in the complex network of interior posts.

Cree and Saulteaux Settlement in the Red River Region,
1790-1821

Native habitation of the Red River Valley, and specifically the area of the Forks at the Red and Assiniboine, has been traced back thousands of years. By the early 18th century bands of Assiniboine had populated the plains and parkland region southwest of Lake Winnipeg. The Cree and Saulteaux arrived in south-central Manitoba in the latter part of the 18th century - the Cree probably from the northern Lake Winnipeg region and the Saulteaux from the shield country west of Lake Superior. The Saulteaux, or Lake Winnipeg Saulteaux as they have been called by ethnologists, were originally part of the Ojibwa nation which inhabited present-day northern Ontario.³⁵ Territorial shifts by these woodland dwelling peoples probably occurred for a variety of reasons, not the least of which might have been the result of the fur trade which helped to create new political alliances, trade networks, hunting and trapping territories, and transportation routes. As the Cree took on the role of fur trade provisioners, moving from the parkland to the prairie in order to hunt bison, the Ojibwa moved in behind them, encouraged by the European traders to trap and hunt for the fur companies. The smallpox epidemic of the late 18th century also facilitated the westward movement of the Ojibwa. The Cree and Assiniboine of the parkland and prairie were decimated by the outbreak of the 1780s and the Ojibwa, less effected by the disease, were able to expand their territories beyond the Lake of the Woods region. It should be noted the western expansion of the Ojibwa did not represent a wholesale or systematic migration of peoples from northwestern Ontario to central Manitoba, but rather a process of kinship interaction and small band movements between the two territories.

The Cree and Saulteaux, both Algonquian-speaking peoples, formed a natural alliance against the Siouian-speaking bands (primarily Dakota) who inhabited the lands immediately south of the Lake Winnipeg-Red River basin. In his journal of occurrences recorded at Red River between July 1814 and July 1815, HBC surveyor Peter Fidler provided an estimate of the Native population of the Red River district (including Brandon House.) The largest group were the Assiniboine which Fidler estimated at 3,300 men, women and children. There were also 1,250 Saulteaux in the region, along with 750 Cree. Each of these populations was broken down by age and sex: old men, old women, warriors, married women, boys and girls.³⁶

One early Native settlement, populated chiefly by Saulteaux, grew up along the Assiniboine about 30 miles west of the Forks. In 1832-33 Father George-Antoine Belcourt established a Catholic mission (Wabassong) in the area west of St. François Xavier. This Native mission settlement eventually became the parish of Baie-Saint Paul.

The other Native settlement in Red River was on the lower Red River just south of Lake Winnipeg. Between 1790 and 1795 a Saulteaux band under the great chief Be-gou-ais (Peguis) moved into the Red River district from the east, settling along a creek the Indians called Ne-poo-win (later referred to as Rivière au Mort and now Netley Creek) about 50 kilometers north of the Forks. The area had recently been occupied by a band of Cree who evidently had been decimated by smallpox.

The smallpox epidemic had swept the prairies and the northern parkland and forest in 1781, causing a large number of deaths among the Indian nations in the West. The explorer and cartographer David Thompson, who travelled throughout the West in the latter part of the 18th century, estimated that almost one-half of the plains tribes perished

from the disease.³⁷ The Forks of the Red and Assiniboine became a major burial site for the Cree and Assiniboine of the region who died during the epidemic. One of the first references to the mass grave sites can be found in the journal of Alexander Henry, a NWC trader who camped at the Forks in 1800. Henry noted the presence of "the old graves, of which there are many, this spot having been a place of great resort for the natives in 1781-82; and at the time the small pox made such havoc many hundreds of men, women, and children were buried here".³⁸ The exact location of these grave sites has never been firmly established. Documentary reference and archaeological data (from building excavations carried out between 1875 and 1922) suggest that more than one Native burial site existed at the Forks.³⁹ In 1808 Peter Fidler commented in his journal there were "graves on E. side by river at mouth".⁴⁰ Fifty years later Edwin Denig noted the existence of "a mound near the mouth of the Assiniboine River embracing an area of several hundred yards in circumference and ten to twenty feet high, being the cemetery of nearly an entire camp of 230 lodges who died of the infection".⁴¹ The historian Charles Bell claimed an "extensive Indian grave yard" was situated on what is now the east side of Main Street between Graham and York,⁴² while an 1871 plan of the HBC reserve at Upper Fort Garry by J.S. Dennis noted an "Indian burying ground" near the southeast corner of Main and Water streets. An 1873-74 plan by surveyor G. McPhillips showed a cemetery on the south point on lot 39.⁴³ Much of the physical evidence relating to burial sites near the Forks was the result of early building excavations in the area, as well as rail line construction in the east yards. While generalized maps depicting Native burial sites have been developed for the area, more comprehensive information as to the exact

location and extent of the burial sites is presently unavailable.

Like other Ojibwa bands in the West, the Peguis band that moved into the lower Red River region after 1790 exploited the resources of the parkland zone: hunting the fur-bearing animals of the wooded areas along the riverbank and wild fowl from the neighbouring marshland, and taking fish from the Red River. They also gathered wild rice and cultivated small plots of corn. Because the bison hunt was not the mainstay of their economy, they did not generally compete for the same food resources as the Cree and Assiniboine and therefore became allies of these plains tribes.

When Selkirk's settlers arrived in Red River in 1812 they were welcomed by Peguis. He and his people provided food supplies to the ill-prepared colonists, showed the Scots farmers how to hunt, and helped transport the settlers' families to Fort Daer near Pembina where they wintered for the first two years of the colony's existence. During the conflict between the HBC, Selkirk settlers and Nor'Westers, Peguis sided with the former and served as a peace emissary to the NWC in the failed negotiations between the rival concerns. When hostilities broke out at Seven Oaks in 1816 Peguis remained neutral, although he did help to provision the settlers who left the colony for Norway House in the summer of 1816.⁴⁴

In July 1817 Peguis, along with four other Cree and Saukteaux chiefs, signed a treaty with Selkirk granting the Europeans access to:

that tract of land, adjacent to Red River and Assiniboine River, beginning at the mouth of the Red River, and extending along the same as far as the Great Forks at the mouth of Red Lake River, and along Assiniboine River as far as Musk-rat River, otherwise called Rivière des Champignons, and extending to the distance of six miles from Fort Douglas on every side, and likewise from Fort

Daer and also from the Great Forks, and in other parts extending in breadth to the distance of two English statute miles back from the banks of the said rivers, on each side, together with all the appurtenances whatsoever of the said tract of land.⁴⁵

In return, the Indians were to receive an annual payment of 100 pounds of tobacco and retain a tract of land from Sugar Point on the lower Red north to Lake Winnipeg.

For Peguis' band the Red River colony represented a sizeable market for furs and country provisions. The payment of treaty annuities, along with the exchange of presents and pleasantries between the band and the colony leaders, provided a source of prestige for the Red River Saulteaux. Balancing off these attractions, however, was the generally poor treatment the Indians received from the colonists. For a time they were allowed no credit by the HBC and had to wait to barter for the yearly supply of trade goods until all others in the colony had picked over the goods in the company store.⁴⁶

Prior to 1821, however, Peguis' Saulteaux generally enjoyed good relations with the settlement. After trading at Fort Douglas in the fall, the band would trap near Netley Creek for a time and then travel in the early winter to the "Buffalo plains", returning to the colony for Christmas and New Years. Hunting and trapping were carried out for the balance of the winter and in spring the band made maple sugar. After trading their meat, furs and sugar at Red River, the Saulteaux frequently set off on war parties against the neighbouring Dakota, returning for the summer to plant corn and squash.⁴⁷ This seasonal round of activities was a productive one for them, as was their unique relationship with the European colony at Red River. After 1821, however, declining fur returns in the Red River region coupled with a series of harsh winters and crop failures served to bring about the decline of the band, making them more economically dependent upon the HBC.

Commerce and Settlement: The Role of the Métis

The emergence of a new and indigenous Native population, the offspring of marriages between European traders and Indian women, played a critical role in the expansion of the fur trade in the latter half of the 18th century. A Métis tradition in western Canada, rooted in the intermarriage of early French traders and Native women, had first evolved in the Great Lakes region prior to 1760. Forced west by American expansion, the Métis became frontier traders on the prairies and served as voyageurs, guides and interpreters for the newly formed North West Company. A less identifiable culture emerged from the unions of English and Scottish HBC traders with Cree women, forming what Marcel Giraud has called the "northern nucleus" of an emerging mixed-blood identity.⁴⁸ For the greater part of a century this group remained within the territories that adjoined Hudson Bay. Linked to the company's bayside factories, the children of HBC traders and Indian women formed the nucleus of the "Homeguard Cree", and supplied the British traders with small furs, labour and country provisions. Later, with the expansion of the HBC to new territories within the interior, the English-speaking "Halfbreeds" assumed a more important role in the economic and social consolidation of the fur trade. Never achieving the more distinctive cultural identity of their French-speaking brethren, the Halfbreeds were more likely to be drawn into either the Native culture of their mothers or the European worldview of their British-born fathers. As a result, they did not develop a separate social status and sense of shared community to the same extent as their French-speaking counterparts. If a British-born HBC employee decided to become involved in the upbringing of his Native children, he expected them to become "English" by sending them off to

school in London or Canada. By the early part of the 19th century, "there was as yet no separately classified intermediate social, racial or co-residential group of [HBC] traders' families or descendants."⁴⁹ With the establishment of Red River, however, and the "retirement" to the young colony of a large number of these Halfbreeds, a more distinctive Native community took shape within the parishes of the "lower settlement" after 1821.

Traditional organizational differences between the Hudson's Bay and North West companies had a significant effect upon family formation in the West. Intermarriage occurred initially with the daughters of Indian band leaders and was intended, in part at least, to secure their trade loyalties. Later, the mixed-blood daughters of older employees became available for marriage to junior European servants. In both companies such a system of intermarriage provided the basis for a widespread and influential kinship network. With the NWC, however, there existed a stronger tendency for the individual European trader to remain with his Native wife and family for a longer period than did the British-born HBC employee who often returned to England or Scotland in search of a marriage partner.⁵⁰

The long lines of supply and transportation between Montreal and the prime fur regions of the Saskatchewan and Athabaska districts, plus the establishment of a secondary pemmican and country provision industry in the western interior, created dozens of new Métis communities by the early part of the 19th century. For the North West Company, the role of the Métis as plains provisioners meant that trading Indians were now free to engage primarily in hunting and trapping for the company.

At the same time, the encroachment of American settlement in the Great Lakes region pushed a number of Métis families associated with the Michilimackinac trade to

migrate west to the Pembina Hills and Red River districts.⁵¹ The great herds of buffalo that roamed the plains were hunted by the Métis who helped fuel the expansion of the fur trade to new territories beyond the parkland belt. The Forks of the Red and Assiniboine took on an increasingly important role in this expansion. Fort Gibraltar, established by the Nor'Westers in 1810, became a key provisioning point, supplying pemmican from the surrounding territories to the brigades that pushed west from Fort William and Grand Portage.

The establishment of the Selkirk colony by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1811 did not represent the first permanent settlement at the Forks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers. Beginning in 1804-05 a number of gens libres, or Métis traders who had retired from the NWC fur trade, journeyed with their families to Red River where they settled on lands near the Forks, at White Horse Plain and south near Pembina. Here they pursued a variety of economic activities such as limited farming, the seasonal hunting of bison and processing of pemmican for the interior trade, or hiring themselves out to the NWC for small freighting contracts. By 1814, according to a memorandum from Miles Macdonell to Lord Selkirk, there were almost 200 "free Canadians" living in the Red River area.⁵² This included separate settlements at the Forks, Pembina and a new colony at White Horse Plain on the Assiniboine.

The HBC intended Selkirk's colony to supply country produce to the fur trade, while at the same time disrupt the pemmican supply line of the rival North West Company. The Selkirk settlers endured formidable problems in their attempt to colonize the Forks, but were provided for by the Nor'Westers and Métis who, over the winters of 1812 and 1813, shared their provisions with the starving Scots.⁵³ Distrustful of the Métis and short of food, the leader of the settlers, Miles Macdonell, imposed a ban in 1814 on the

export of pemmican from Assiniboia. A short while later he forbade the running of buffalo near the settlement by the Métis, hoping to disrupt the Nor'Westers' critical provisioning base in Red River. In 1814 Macdonell confiscated NWC pemmican that had been stored at Fort La Souris. The Métis in Red River saw Macdonell's actions as an attempt to restrict their trade with the company and a direct challenge to their freedom and economic livelihood. After initially providing aid to the Selkirk settlers, the Métis became suspicious of the Scottish farmers. They were determined to protect their claims in the Red River area, encouraged by the North West Company to oppose their rival's colonization schemes in Assiniboia.

Although allied to the NWC partners, the Métis have been portrayed as unsuspected dupes in that company's campaign against the HBC. According to Marcel Giraud's rather fanciful "racial" theories, it was the "uncertain moral development" and "weakness of will" of the Métis that made them "accessible to the manoeuvres and propaganda of the [NWC.] partners".⁵⁴ Concepts such as "will" or "moral development" had, of course, nothing to do with the issue. The Métis opposed the colony and supported the position of the Nor'Westers because it was in their best economic interests to do so. Their role in the trade of the Red River district was being threatened by the actions of Macdonell and his settlers, and they considered an alliance with the NWC as the best way to promote their own economic interests within the territory.

The culmination of the growing hostility between the Métis/NWC alliance and the HBC-sponsored Selkirk settlers occurred at the battle of Seven Oaks in June 1816. In their reports of the event, the Métis have been vilified by a number of Anglo-historians of Red River who considered the conflict a cold-blooded massacre. The Métis, on the other hand, viewed the confrontation as a heroic moment of

self-defence and self-affirmation.⁵⁵ While some have argued that the Seven Oaks affair provided the impetus for a viable Métis nationalism in the west,⁵⁶ others have maintained a distinct cultural and social identity actually emerged among the Métis during the early days of the competitive trade period in Rupert's Land. Jacqueline Peterson, for example, argues that just because the first Métis movement was largely made up of NWC employees does not mean Métis nationalism was an invention of the Montreal company.

The debate over the role of the NWC and the connection between métis political consciousness and the HBC and NWC war for control of the interior fur trade begs the question of métis group identity. The Métis nation may have been un idée nouvelle. Nonetheless, its wide and persistent appeal throughout the nineteenth century suggests that it stood for a type of social cohesion which was much older. Rather than imputing métis nationalism to the designs of outsiders, it may be more fruitful to treat it as a paradigmatic reformulation of a set of symbols, however inchoate and unarticulated, which had formerly joined those who, after 1815, wore the new identity.⁵⁷

Regardless of this debate over the genesis of an articulated Métis identity in the West, they had established a presence at the Forks of the Red and Assiniboine years before the founding of the Selkirk colony, supplying pemmican and agricultural produce to the fur trade. Consequently, Métis claims to the Forks were based upon the notion of first occupancy as well as the rights associated with their Native heritage. These rights implicitly challenged the Hudson's Bay Company's claim to undisputed sovereignty in the Northwest.

Commercial Competition, 1800-21

The fur trade entered upon a particularly competitive period in the early years of the 19th century. Canadian traders mounted an aggressive and successful challenge to the Hudson's Bay Company monopoly and by the turn of the century, were enjoying a relatively healthy trade profit. The HBC, on the other hand, fell upon increasingly hard times. North West Company furs sent to London in 1800 were valued at £144,000 while the Hudson's Bay Company's return that same year amounted to a mere £38,000.⁵⁸ The reasons for this decline were many and included problems of inadequate resources, ill-defined objectives and a lack of purposeful leadership. The London Committee, which had attempted to steer the HBC's course for 130 years, was experiencing difficulties in comprehension and communication after the move inland. Problems of supply were exacerbated by leadership that was out of touch with the realities of an evolving fur trade. Unaware of changing conditions within the vast interior beyond the bay, the committee proved ill-equipped to face competition and unable to extend its corporate influence in the North-West.

In the early years of the new century, the North West Company held a distinct upper hand in the exploitation of the interior fur trade. Its union in 1804 with the "New North West Company" or "XY Company" helped to further consolidate its position and could exert pressure on the weakened resources of the rival HBC. During this period the London-based company attempted to overcome a number of its difficulties by developing new and more flexible techniques of trade and transportation. By embarking upon an aggressive campaign of expansion through the establishment of new trade ties with more distant Native groups, the HBC sought to meet and overcome the Canadians' challenge.

This scramble for increased trade led ultimately to the development of a particularly predatory period of

competition that eventually proved unprofitable for both companies. Historian Ann Carlos argues that, contrary to popular perception, fur trade competition can be best described as passive rather than aggressive in the years before 1810.⁵⁹ Citing various HBC and NWC journals, as well as the private papers of such traders as Daniel Harmon and Alexander Henry, Carlos claims that what little aggressive behaviour occurred between the two fur trade companies before this date was more the result of local conditions and personalities than it was general company policy. Only after the enactment of the Colville retrenchment system in 1810 did competition become more predatory, systemized and aggressive.⁶⁰

Competition tended to destabilize the interior fur trade.⁶¹ Losses suffered in competitive areas were compensated by operations in areas of monopoly. In the continuing quest for new resources, the value of trade goods declined which in turn helped to inflate operational costs. Native groups such as the Cree and Assiniboine lost their status as middlemen and took up new roles as provisioners in adjacent territories. The number of gifts presented to Indian trading captains increased as the number of bands grew. Alcohol became a trade standard and was used by traders to secure favoured status among Indian bands. In competitive areas both companies were forced to maintain an overly large contingent of traders, partly for commercial reasons and partly for defence. As costs increased, profits declined. In 1809 the Hudson's Bay Company failed to pay a dividend to its shareholders and piled up an overdraft with its bankers totalling £50,000.⁶²

In 1810 the HBC enacted a number of changes within its organizational and administrative structure. Governor Andrew Colville proposed a fiscal retrenchment system that was designed to revitalize company fortunes. New leadership was brought into the London Committee and the trade in

Rupert's Land was split with the creation of a Northern and Southern department. Most importantly, standards of trade were no longer dictated by London but were left to the discretion of individual chief factors.

While the North West Company maintained its competitive edge throughout much of this period, it was increasingly obvious to the Montreal partners that the maintenance of the extensive Laurentian trade route was becoming prohibitively expensive. As the fur trade expanded beyond the Athabaska district to the MacKenzie, its long supply system became overextended. For the North West Company, some type of agreement with the HBC appeared desirable if only to gain access to the western interior via the shorter route through Hudson Bay. Early in the century the two companies entered into negotiations with a view toward a possible union. Although in an inferior economic position, the HBC realized their trade access to the North-West via Hudson Bay was a route much coveted by the Nor'Westers. In the meeting of winterers and agents at Fort William in July 1805, it was noted, however, that the Hudson's Bay Company was "not disposed to grant such a transit without Compensation, or as they themselves express it, 'without sufficient indemnity and security' to be given on the part of the North West Company".⁶³ The previous year Edward Ellice, the London agent of the NWC had made an attempt to buy out the English company. When this failed, the NWC offered to "purchase" the northern route for a total of two thousand pounds a year. The HBC, apparently willing to negotiate access rights, demanded a fee that proved to be beyond the resources of the Canadian company, and negotiations eventually broke off.

During this period the Forks assumed an increasingly critical role as a provisioning centre, rendezvous point, and an eventual transshipment depot in an expanding interior trade. During the years between 1809 and 1821 a total of

six establishments were erected there, as each company endeavored to gain the strategic advantage offered by control of these important inland waterways.

The extension of the fur trade into Athabaska had resulted in the Forks' increasing importance as a provisioning centre in the last decade of the 18th century. As fur trade supply routes were established within a tightly controlled transportation network, the Forks also became an important meeting place and rendezvous for the fur trade boat brigades. Canoes travelling from Lake Superior or James Bay halted at the Forks in the late summer and sorted and repacked the trade goods destined for posts located along interior river routes. Early the next summer the brigades returned with the season's harvest of furs. The Assiniboine brigade of the North West Company, travelling the Qu'Appelle, Swan and Assiniboine rivers, met twice yearly at the Forks with the company's Red River brigade from Pembina. At the same time, Hudson's Bay Company traders from Brandon House and Pembina stopped at the Forks on their journey to and from Fort Albany.⁶⁴

Alexander Henry the Younger, a North West Company wintering partner, regularly visited the Forks between 1800 and 1808 and left a relatively detailed diary of his activities in the Red River district. In August 1800 Henry gave an account of his visit to the Forks.

I found about 40 Saulteurs awaiting my arrival [at the Forks]; they were provided with a plentiful supply of dried buffalo meat, and anxious for a dram...We began early this morning to unpack, assort and divide the goods, one-half being intended for Portage la Prairie on the Assiniboine, and the remainder for Red River...At twelve o'clock five H.B.Co boats, from Albany factory, or rather Martin's falls, arrived, Robert Goodwin, master, assisted by Mr. Brown; they put ashore, and remained with us until four o'clock, when they proceeded up the Assiniboine. Their boats carry about 45 packages, of unequal weights, but averaging 80 pounds each, and are conducted by

four oarsmen and a steersman. They are neatly built and painted, and sharp at both ends. Our people found amusement in fishing with hook and line, and were well recompensed for their trouble, as they took a great many of different kinds. Pigeons were in great numbers; the trees were every moment covered with them, and the continual firing of our people did not appear to diminish their number.⁶⁵

Henry also remarked upon the great number of water snakes found at the Forks. "They come into our tents at midday; every morning some are sure to be found in our beds; but they are harmless."⁶⁶ These snakes apparently came from the large number of nearby Indian graves, discussed above.

Henry visited the Forks on numerous occasions over the next eight years. In September 1803, he records a stay of one week at the junction. During the interval the men busied themselves repairing the canoes, fishing, buffalo hunting and repackaging the brigade loadings for the Portage La Prairie and Lake Manitoba posts.⁶⁷ When he departed on September 27, Henry left Louis Dorion behind to make up packs of furs. Returning the following year, however, he found "Mr. Dorion was starving and making no packs".⁶⁸ Although Dorion endured a severe winter while stationed at the Forks, fur returns from the lower Red River Department, as listed by Henry, suggest Dorion's assignment was generally a success. Three hundred and fifty-six beaver pelts were taken in at the Forks along with 76 wolves and almost 200 pelts from a wide assortment of animals including foxes, raccoons, otters, wolverines and moose.⁶⁹ In all, 14 packs of 90 pounds each were assembled in 1803-04.

Besides Louis Dorion at the Forks, the North West Company stationed traders at seven other key locations in the lower Red River district. These included posts at Portage La Prairie, Lake Manitoba, Prairie en Longue, Dead River (Rivière au Morts or Netley Creek), Hair Hills, Park River and Pembina.⁷⁰ According to the minutes of a council

meeting held at Fort William in 1805, the North West Company had a total of 52 men in the lower Red River Department. This included three officers, ten clerks (three of whom were also classified as interpreters), six steersmen, six (canoe) foremen, 24 midmen, two guides and one "hunter". One of the steersmen was also classified by Henry as a "hunter", while another doubled as a cooper. As a tradesman the cooper was payed a higher wage than his colleagues in the canoes.⁷¹ Two years seems to have been the average length of service for NWC employees in the district.

The number of visits to the Forks made by Henry, along with the fact that company trader Louis Dorion appeared to be stationed there on a more permanent basis (at least until 1804), and the large quantity of furs and pemmican collected at that location, suggests the possibility that some type of house or structure was in existence at the Forks very early in the 19th century. Although the quantity of business being carried on at the Forks might necessitate a wintering accommodation, no mention of a post is ever made by Henry or by NWC trader Daniel Harmon, whose journal records a visit to the Forks in June 1805.⁷² On the other hand, C.N. Bell, in his 1927 paper "The Old Forts of Winnipeg", maintains Henry constructed a house at the junction which Bell calls the "Forks Fort". While the existence of such a post is plausible, there is still no firm evidence that a "Forks Fort" ever existed.⁷³

At about the same time that the Forks was emerging as an important transshipment point, there is evidence which indicates that after 1804 Canadian gens libres were cultivating small plots of land along the banks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers close to the Forks. Jean Baptiste Roi, a former NWC servant who testified at the 1820 trials relating to the Seven Oaks affair, stated, "For Twelve years past I have cultivated a piece of ground of my own...My house was about forty paces distant from the opposite shore

and the North West fort...I used to sell the produce to the gentlemen of the North West Company or of the Hudson's Bay Company."74 In a letter to Lord Selkirk in 1813 Miles Macdonell noted "Mr. Henry had bought 100 bushels of potatoes from free Canadian at the Forks".75 Evidently a small M tis community, based upon a variety of economic activities including agriculture, fishing, voyaging and the supply of plains provisions to the fur trade, was in existence at or near the Forks a number of years prior to the founding of the Selkirk settlement in 1812.

The exact date of the establishment of the first Fort Gibraltar at the Forks by the North West Company remains somewhat sketchy. One source claims that John McDonald of Garth, a North West partner, constructed Gibraltar in 1807. In his "autobiographical notes", published in L.R. Masson's Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, McDonald states in 1807, "I established a fort at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, and called it 'Gibraltar', though there was not a rock or stone within three miles."76 Other more reliable sources, however, claim it was John Willis, a bourgeois with the NWC, who first constructed Fort Gibraltar in 1810. Daniel McKenzie, who was in charge at Fort Alexander, cautioned Willis in 1809 that he was in danger of a Dakota attack at Pembina and should abandon the location and "remove the fort to some other quarter".77 It appears Willis began construction at the Forks in the summer of 1810, finishing the new establishment the following winter. Jean Baptiste Roi helped to build the fort and has left a description.

It was a wooden picketing, made of oak trees split in two, which formed its enclose. Within the said enclosure were built the house of the partner, 2 houses for the men, a store, two hangards or stores, a blacksmith's shop and a stable; there was also an ice-house with a watch-house (guerite) over it; these houses were good log houses, large and inhabited. In the house of the partner were

his clerks and interpreters, and in the other house his engage (servants) to the number of eight or ten men; each of the houses could have contained twenty men.⁷⁸

Another worker, Jean Baptiste Mennie, described it this way:

We were employed a whole year building [Fort Gibraltar]. In the winter there were twenty men there who were all employed. The fort was built by one Mr. Willis, who died there and was succeeded by Mr. Duncan Cameron. [A NWC partner in charge of the Red River district between 1814 and 1816 when he was taken prisoner by officers of the HBC.] There were in the fort one house, sixty-four feet long, one of thirty, a kitchen of fifteen feet, another house twenty-eight feet, a store twenty-two feet and other buildings. I lived on the other side of river...it was customary to winter at Pembina and come down to the Forks in the Spring.⁷⁹

According to Roi, Fort Gibraltar was approximately "fifteen paces from the adjacent shore".⁸⁰ In 1887 Robert Christy visited "Assiniboine Point" where "traces of cellars are still visible as slight depressions in the Ground".⁸¹ Though the site had "largely disappeared into the river", according to Christy, just below the soil at the top of the riverbank he noticed "a most distinct section of a stratum composed of burned wood chips, calcined mortar, stones, fragments of old iron and tinware and other rubbish - in all probability the debris of the burnt fort".⁸² (Fort Gibraltar was destroyed in 1816.) George Bryce, in an 1885 paper delivered to the Royal Society of Canada, determined that the original Fort Gibraltar was "situated below the site of the recently removed emigrant sheds".⁸³ A comparison of Christy's rough sketch and Bryce's map shows that Christy has depicted Fort Rouge at about the same location Bryce shows the first Fort Gibraltar (see Figure 31). No doubt Christy either conjectured about the location of Rouge, or mistook some remains from a later period as evidence for LaVérendrye's early occupation of the Forks. Regardless, Christy provides no further elaboration

for his depiction of the various posts. In his land use history of the Forks, Rodger Guinn determined that Fort Gibraltar I was located slightly north of Christy's depicted location and faced towards the Red River. Christy plots Fort Gibraltar at the same spot Guinn shows as the location for Fort Gibraltar II, or Fort Garry I.⁸⁴ In this respect, Guinn's map conforms more closely to Bryce's map of 1885.

A further description of Fort Gibraltar I was provided in 1816 by Colin Robertson, a Hudson's Bay Company trader who led the attack on the fort in 1816.

Gibraltar...is certainly in an excellent state of defence; it has two good bastions at the two angles of the Square and the Square is formed with Oak Palisades, eighteen feet in height and these are proof against Musketry. This is not only a strong place but very comfortable lodgings, such as I have not been accustomed to for some time past.⁸⁵

With the establishment of Fort Gibraltar at the Forks, the North West Company under bourgeois John Willis enjoyed a significant advantage over their rivals in the control of the Red River and Assiniboine pemmican trade. Cognizant of this, the HBC determined a presence at the Forks was required. Selkirk's ambitious settlement scheme for Red River was viewed by the company as having a number of advantages. It could serve as a means to combat Nor'Wester influence in the lower Red River district, disrupt the Canadians' critical provisioning supply line to the interior districts, provide a home for retiring company servants, and ultimately fulfill the role as supplier of agricultural foodstuffs to the fur trade.

The first contingent of Scottish settlers arrived in Red River in the late summer of 1812 but were forced to winter at the HBC post at Pembina. In May 1813 the HBC chief trader at Pembina, Hugh Heney, reported in his journal, "Messrs. Bartenois and McLeod with a party went off this day for the purpose of building a house at the Forks of

Red River."⁸⁶ Heney himself arrived at the Forks a week later and helped in the construction of the new post which Guinn argues was located on the east side of the Red River. As described by Guinn, HBC trader and surveyor Peter Fidler noted in his journal in 1814 that McLeod's post was opposite the Canadian house at the Forks.⁸⁷

For their part, the Selkirk settlers under Miles Macdonell began construction of Fort Douglas in the spring of 1813. It was named in honour of their patron, on the west bank of the river, about one mile below the site of Fort Gibraltar. This new post lay at the southern extremity of the riverlots surveyed for the settlers by Peter Fidler, and according to George Bryce was located near the end of what is now George Street in Winnipeg.⁸⁸ In a letter to Selkirk in June, Macdonell noted he had engaged three Canadians - Basil Belanger, Andre Troquet and Antoine Azure - to build, along with the settlers, a house as well as "pickets for the garden".⁸⁹ Macdonell left for York Factory in July to welcome the second group of settlers, but was forced to return to Red River without them when he learned their ship had stayed at Churchill for the winter. When in the fall of 1813 the main body of settlers was forced to leave Red River because of inadequate shelter and had to winter again at Pembina, a few workers were left behind to continue building Fort Douglas. When Macdonell returned to the Forks in February 1814, he was able to take up residence in the recently finished "New House".

Macdonell left the Forks in the spring of 1814 and Peter Fidler and Archibald McDonald, both HBC employees, were left in charge of the fledgling settlement. Over the summer work continued on the new post at the Forks. In August Fidler reported he had "got in all the roofing sticks and part of the chimney up in the small house called the Chatteau".⁹⁰ Later in the month he,

Sent 6 men to cut down Wood and 2 to drag it to the waters edge for building the out houses about the Farm Yard, hauling out roofing sticks here, 3 Canadians squaring 50 logs, $14\frac{1}{2}$ feet long for Boards for the flooring of new Building, began to put up the stockades around the farmyard.⁹¹

Fidler managed to accomplish a great deal in Macdonell's absence. According to Thomas Thomas, formerly the superintendent of the HBC Northern Department and a councillor of Assiniboia, Fidler constructed a number of farm buildings at Fort Douglas including a house, barn, stable, sheep house and hog sty, all enclosed within a stockade $3\frac{1}{2}$ chains, or just over 70 metres, square.⁹² He also built a large, two storey structure 64 by 22 feet, referred to as "Government House", as well as a summer kitchen and another smaller dwelling house. According to Fidler's journal, a good crop of hay was harvested that first year, while a total of 2.5 acres of land was cultivated with wheat and a few vegetables.⁹³

Meanwhile, the Selkirk colonists were in the process of establishing themselves and their families on the long narrow riverlots which had been surveyed the previous year by Fidler. The lots extended along the west side of the Red River from Fort Douglas through what was then called "Frog Plain", which eventually became St. John's and Kildonan parishes. Evidently Fidler's lots must have been only roughly laid out as his biographer J.G. MacGregor claimed he surveyed over 100 lots in less than two days.⁹⁴ No doubt Fidler did little more than measure the frontage of each lot along the river. No map was made of his initial survey in 1813; the lots appeared for the first time on his 1817 map which depicts the site of the Battle of Seven Oaks.

Ostensibly, Fort Douglas, or the "Colony Fort" as it was sometimes called, was not directly connected with the fur trade. The fact that the HBC post at the Forks was located on the opposite shore from the settlers' lands

indicates that initially, at least, company operations at the Forks were independent of Fort Douglas. But as the relationship between the settlers and Nor'Westers at Fort Gibraltar gradually worsened over the winter of 1814-15, the alliance between the colony and HBC was strengthened. Writing to Selkirk in August 1815, John McLeod of the HBC related how "without orders from any of my superiors...I am now building [on the west side of the Red] a house of 40 feet long, 20 feet wide, 16 feet high".⁹⁵ Two months earlier a large number of colonists had left Red River after the NWC promised them free passage to Canada. When Peter Fidler and the rest of the settlers departed for York Factory two weeks later, the Nor'Westers destroyed Fort Douglas. When the settlers returned with Colin Robertson in the middle of August, they decided to rebuild their fort at the same location. In his diary Robertson, a Hudson's Bay Company officer, noted that at Douglas Point "Mr. McLeod has got up the shell of a house, and I have sent off men to square logs for other buildings".⁹⁶ Throughout the fall of 1816 work continued on the new Fort Douglas. By January 1816 a central house, store, barn and stables had been erected by Robertson and construction was underway on a bastion which, according to Lord Selkirk's sketch of 1817, was located at the southeast corner of the stockaded post.

In the spring of 1816 Robertson, along with the new colony governor Robert Semple, led an attack on Fort Gibraltar and seized the NWC post under the command of bourgeois Duncan Cameron. In June "the greater part of the NWCo. House and buildings and stockades were pulled down and conveyed to Fort Douglas".⁹⁷ A week after the destruction of Gibraltar, a party of Métis freighters under Cuthbert Grant were seen crossing the plain on their way from Portage La Prairie to meet with NWC canoe brigades on Lake Winnipeg. Governor Semple unwisely challenged the Métis. The ensuing battle - the battle of Seven Oaks - resulted in the

destruction of the colony and the dispersal of the Selkirk settlers.

The battle of Seven Oaks has remained a focal point for much of the Selkirk mythology recounted in many western Canadian, English language history texts since that period. More recent historiography has seen the Seven Oaks incident evolve from a "massacre" to a "battle", though accounts of war painted Métis and mutilated corpses persist. Twenty-one settlers, including Governor Semple, died in the conflict while three Métis were killed. On 19 June 1816 Cuthbert Grant and his men, riding some distance from the Forks, were intercepted by a party of armed settlers led by Semple. A verbal exchange between one Métis, named Boucher, and Semple ended when the governor attempted to grab Boucher's gun. When Boucher, after having dismounted to retrieve his musket, ran back to the group of Métis, he was fired upon by Semple's forces. In the return fire Semple was wounded and later died. The settlers, confused and disorganized, presented convenient targets for the Métis and 20 men died in the ensuing fight. Their bodies were retrieved by Peguis who had been encamped on the east side of the Red, and later buried near Fort Douglas. Grant seized the colony fort and the surviving colonists embarked for York Factory.

A year prior to this second destruction of the colony Lord Selkirk had arrived in Montreal, intent on raising a private army to counteract Nor'Wester influence in Red River. With a ragtag force of disbanded Demeuron soldiers, Selkirk set out for the West in the summer of 1816. After hearing about the defeat at Seven Oaks, Selkirk proceeded to Fort William where he captured the Montreal company's western headquarters and imprisoned the leading traders. In the winter of 1817 a small force under Macdonell was dispatched from Fort William to recapture Fort Douglas. On 9 January 1817 the Nor'Westers, under the bourgeois McLellan, surrendered the post to Macdonell.

After the recapture of Fort Douglas the Selkirk colonists, who were encamped near Lake Winnipeg, returned to Red River. The HBC also re-established a presence at the Forks, although it seems the company was now conducting its operations from within the walls of Fort Douglas. Peter Fidler noted in 1819 the HBC required a separate establishment at the Forks, and there is speculation that "Fidler's Fort" was erected between Fort Douglas and the Forks in the vicinity of present-day Pioneer Avenue. In 1887 Donald Murray, an original Selkirk settler, was interviewed by C.N. Bell and described Fidler's Fort as such:

It was about square, the principal entrance facing exactly to the point between the two rivers. At the farther end, opposite to this gate, stood the master's house, which was larger than the others, which ranged down each side of the palisaded enclosure, about four on each side, but I do not remember exactly how many there were. There was a walk between them and the palisades, and an open court and in the centre...It was quite distinct from the later Fort Garry, and stood at the same time at Forts Douglas and Gibraltar.⁹⁸

Shortly after his arrival in Red River in July 1818, Father J.N. Provencher wrote to Bishop Plessis in Quebec describing the location of his new chapel as "situated across [the Red River] from the Forts of the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company, which are eight or ten arpents apart and just about fifteen arpents from Fort Douglas".⁹⁹

In August 1817 the North West Company began the reconstruction of Fort Gibraltar at the Forks. The report of William B. Coltman, a Quebec merchant appointed to investigate the situation at Red River, recommended the restitution of all property at the Forks, and the Canadians were determined to re-establish a presence at this key transshipment location. In 1819 Peter Fidler described how they had "enclosed the whole with excellent sawn oak piquets

14 feet above ground set very close together like a continued wall about 100 feet square".¹⁰⁰ The only known representation of Fort Gibraltar II is a sketch by Peter Rindisbacher made in 1820, one year before amalgamation. It depicts a fairly large comfortable establishment situated immediately adjacent to the junction of the Red and Assiniboine. A number of substantial buildings are shown in the drawing and two large houses have mansard roofs, stone or brick chimneys, and dormer windows. A bastion appears to be located in the southwest corner of the fort. After the union of the two competing fur trade companies in 1821, Fort Gibraltar II became Fort Garry I and the new headquarters for the HBC's operations in the Red River district.

The increased competition between the Hudson's Bay and North West companies at the Forks in the last decade prior to union was indicative of the fur trade throughout the rest of Rupert's Land. Where once the Nor'Westers had held a distinct upper hand over their rivals, by 1820 the HBC had made deep inroads in the Canadians' trade. The reorganization of the London-based company, coupled with its new initiatives in the Athabaska country, were the factors most responsible for its resurgence. For the Montreal partners maintenance of the long trade route via the Great Lakes, Winnipeg, Assiniboine and Saskatchewan rivers had become prohibitively expensive. The financial structure of the North West Company, which specified that all profits were to be distributed annually, did not allow for the build-up of a reserve fund which could see the company through the financial losses. The shorter, more streamlined transportation system operated by the HBC between York Factory and the Athabaska district via Portage La Loche gave the English company a decided advantage in the intense competition for the valuable pelts of the heavily wooded subarctic zone. Moreover, the expensive legal disputes between Selkirk and the North West Company over the Seven

Oaks affair were draining the company's coffer and pushed it to the edge of bankruptcy.

The death of Lord Selkirk in 1820 and the diminishing interest in the various court cases regarding the destruction of the Red River colony three years earlier facilitated the reopening of coalition negotiations between the two companies. In London separate delegations representing the wintering partners and Montreal agents of the North West Company met with members of the HBC's London Committee. In March 1821 a deal was struck whereby the new company's shares were to be divided amongst the winterers, McTavish and Company, Selkirk's heirs, the London-based agents of the NWC and the HBC. The Deed Poll of 1821 specified the 25 chief factors and 28 chief traders who were to share in the new company's trade profits. (Thirty-two of the 53 commissioned officers were members of the North West Company.) Monopolistic control by the new Hudson's Bay Company was guaranteed by a new charter which was to last for 21 years. The old Laurentian route was abandoned and control of the trade in the North-West was handed over to the London Committee. This coalition had a dramatic effect upon the future of the fur trade in Rupert's Land. "The geographic advantages of the Hudson's Bay Company were merged with the advantages of the type of organization which had developed in the French régime and which had been elaborated with such effectiveness in the North West Company."101

Coalition was to play a major role in the future of the Forks. The vast number of servants required to man fur trade posts during the heated years of competition were no longer needed and two-thirds of these tripmen, voyageurs, interpreters, artisans and labourers were considered redundant by the new company and so "retired" to Red River. Over the next ten years these settlers, largely Métis and English-speaking Halfbreeds, made their way to the young

colony and settled on riverlots along the banks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers. Eventually, they were to significantly alter the character of the settlement, forging a unique social, political and economic community that was to play a major role in the conduct of the western fur trade over the next 50 years.



NATIVE SETTLEMENT AND THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY, 1821-50

Introduction

The Red River colony was created by the Hudson's Bay Company for essentially three reasons: first, to help defeat its commercial competitors in the fur trade, the North West Company; second, to provide a home for the small group of impoverished tenant farmers brought from Scotland to North America by Lord Selkirk (a major shareholder in the HBC); and third, to establish an agricultural provisioning base for the expanding inland fur trade. By locating its settlement at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, a critical pemmican provisioning depot in the Nor'Wester supply line, the London-based company hoped to block attempts by its Montreal rivals to fuel expansion into the fur-rich Athabaska district.

With the merger of the two competing companies in 1821, two-thirds of the fur trade labour force lost their jobs.¹ About 15 per cent of this group, just under 200 Métis and English-speaking Halfbreed families, arrived in the colony between 1821 and 1826.² The French-speaking Catholic Métis, the most numerous group in the colony after 1826, occupied land in the upper settlement south and east of the Forks, as well as at White Horse Plain on the Assiniboine. Protestant mixed-blood families headed by Orkney Scots or Halfbreed former HBC employees settled in the lower part of the colony north of the Forks. These Native groups joined the small population of Scottish settlers, the remnants of Selkirk's private army of German-speaking Demeurons, a group of Cree and Saulteaux settlers led by Chief Peguis, a handful of

French-Canadian farmers who had settled near the Forks after 1818, and about 200 Swiss settlers recruited from the Upper Rhine by Selkirk in 1821. By the 1820s Red River had become a largely Native settlement, especially after the departure of the Swiss in 1826. By 1849 the total population of the colony stood at 5,391, with Indians, M tis and Halfbreeds accounting for over three-fourths of this figure.³ While the Scottish settlers were mostly agriculturalists, the Native population pursued a mixed-economy based principally upon agriculture, fishing, pemmican provisioning, trade and wage labour with the HBC.

Prior to 1850 the pemmican industry played a key role in the resource-based economy of Red River. The annual spring and fall buffalo hunts provided much of the colony's food supply and provisions for company posts throughout Rupert's Land. Native labour was also used to man the boat brigades which travelled annually between Red River, York Factory and Portage La Loche, as well as on the cart brigades that transported plains provisions overland to the Saskatchewan and Swan River districts. Aside from pemmican, agricultural produce from Red River farms was also freighted to northern posts.

From Upper Fort Garry located at the Forks, the Hudson's Bay Company attempted to manage the affairs of the settlement. Through the administrative apparatus of the Council of Assiniboia, a small elite of company officers, favoured settlers and church leaders, the HBC hoped to create and maintain a community of farmers and part-time wage labourers who owed allegiance to the official fur trade. But the type of colony envisioned by the HBC, and to a large extent reflected in much of the traditional historical literature of the settlement, never existed in Red River. Company appointed leaders had little influence on the majority of M tis and Halfbreed settlers whose commercial activities represented a significant part of the

Red River economy before 1850. The anomaly of Red River was that for the most part these settlers were never allowed to share in any political power. Attempts by the company to control and approve all aspects of commercial life and to prop up an outdated monopoly proved unrealistic after 1840. As the fur trade declined, and with it employment opportunities for mixed-bloods with the company, alternative economic activities were pursued. By 1850 the company's trade monopoly in Rupert's Land had been successfully challenged and its hold over the settlement was in a process of disintegration.

Company and Church, 1821-26

With commercial coalition in 1821 came an expansion of Hudson's Bay Company building operations at the Forks. Prior to this the only evidence to suggest an HBC trading profile there was a few descriptions of a "house", measuring 40 x 20 feet and built in the summer of 1815 by John McLeod. In a letter from Alexander McDonnell to Andrew Colvile, dated 13 September 1821, he mentions that though the colonists used this particular house for storing goods and supplies it did not belong to them.⁴ Fort Douglas, on the other hand, was built originally at the site by the Hudson's Bay Company and was inhabited by the Selkirk colonists up until 1822. Early that year the company decided to occupy Fort Gibraltar. Accordingly, Simpson decided to put the "New North West Fort in order so as to remove into it next fall".⁵ He noted the new fort had the advantage of being located immediately adjacent to the Forks, as well as containing the recently erected frame for a sizeable dwelling house. Simpson called the new establishment Fort Garry in honour of Nicholas Garry, the London Committee member who oversaw the transition from the

period of competition in Rupert's Land to the new era of monopoly. Work continued on the new fort over the next nine months. On 14 September 1822 the post journal notes repairs to the saleshop had been initiated, and 11 days later the company's stock of trade goods was moved from the old warehouse (Fort Douglas or McLeod's house) to the new structure at Fort Garry.⁶ By early January of 1823 Chief Factor John Clarke and Chief Trader Thomas McMurray had moved into the new dwelling.

Clarke and McMurray presided over 28 officers and servants (labourers) located at Red River, Pembina and Netley Creek.⁷ Andrew McDermot, eventually to become the leading free trader and private entrepreneur in the colony, was in charge of the small outpost at Netley Creek, while John Bourke headed up the establishment at Pembina.

James Hargrave, later the chief factor at York Factory, served as accountant at Fort Garry between 1822 and 1827. Hargrave came initially to Rupert's Land in 1820 in the service of the North West Company and was posted at Sault Ste. Marie and Fort William. After the union of the two companies, he served one year as clerk at York Factory under Chief Factor John George McTavish and was transferred to the Red River district the following year.⁸

Aside from a contingent of six officers or "commissioned gentlemen" (including Clarke and McMurray), the HBC maintained a total of 24 servants in the district, 13 of whom were classified as "European" and 11 as "Canadians".⁹ As well, four Canadian servants, or "supernumeraries", were employed on a part-time basis for specific seasonal or short term contracts.

The organizational dynamics operating within the labour system at the Forks reflected the particularly hierarchical nature of the HBC's larger labour policy. The recognized divisions between officers and servants affected such things as work assignments, chances for promotion, recrea-

tion, food and wages. Company officers were generally well educated and very often related to a top ranked chief factor, chief trader, or even a member of the London Committee. Entry to this class was usually at the level of apprentice clerk, with about a dozen years of competent service needed to reach the level of chief trader.¹⁰ Employees usually served on three or five year contracts, while commissioned officers might enjoy tenure as a reward for outstanding service. Many of the officers and servants resigned with the HBC upon the expiration of their first contract.

Since the 18th century the HBC recruited its European servants from the Orkney Islands. Guiding an Orkney servant's entry and chances for promotion within the service was what historian Philip Goldring has called "a web of patronage centred on London".¹¹ Members of the London Committee dispensed apprentice clerkships as favours to the sons of political or corporate allies, and senior officers in North American lobbied hard for appointments for their Orkney relations. The rank of apprentice clerk served as the lowest level of entry into the officer class and was inevitably filled by Orkney Scots, at least before the middle decades of the 19th century. Consequently, it became difficult for mixed-bloods to reach a level beyond that of labourer or perhaps tradesman. Later, the rank of postmaster was created to help alleviate this problem. Generally placed in charge of some outpost or specialized duties at a large depot such as York Factory, postmasters were often, in Simpson's words, "the half-breed sons or Relatives of Gentlemen in the Country who could not obtain admission to the service as Apprentice Clerks...They have no prospect for further advancement."¹²

Below these ranks was the larger population of permanent servants, mixed-bloods and Orkneymen who did the day-to-day labour of manning the boat brigades, stocking

warehouses, practicing various skilled trades, serving as minor traders and interpreters, or acting as food provisioners. The ranks were numerous and included such occupations as blacksmiths, tinsmiths, apprentice tradesmen, labourers, boatmen, guides, hunters and farmers. Transshipment points such as the Forks maintained many of these positions from chief factors all the way down to unskilled labourers.

The servants at Fort Garry were kept busy with a variety of tasks in keeping with the fort's role after 1822 as a provisioning and transshipment centre. It is evident the HBC helped maintain a small farm which is referred to in the early journals as the "Hayfield" farm, originally established by Selkirk about four miles west of the Forks.¹³ Numerous entries can be found which refer to men ploughing the ground in preparation for planting, digging potatoes or thrashing the harvested wheat.¹⁴ On 27 September 1822 Clarke notes that 47 bushels of wheat were thrashed, while 102 kegs of potatoes were harvested in one day.¹⁵ Although the chief factor described the harvest that year as a "fairly good one", he charged that many of the brigade members who resided in the colony in the summer were stealing crops from the fields.¹⁶

Other activities assigned to company servants included the building and repairing of rail fences, the construction of new buildings within the fort, fishing and overhauling the nets, cutting and hauling firewood, and loading and unloading the brigade boats. The blacksmith in residence at the post is noted in the journals as repairing hatchets and making nails.¹⁷ James Hargrave worked as a clerk in the small saleshop, keeping the detailed daily accounts of the value of furs traded, stocking inventory and entering into the ledger the purchases on credit by the local Red River colonists.

Father J.M. Provencher, a member of the Roman Catholic Oblate order, arrived in Red River in 1818 and by 1820 had

begun construction of a Catholic church and manse on the east side of the Red River near the Forks. When John West, the first Anglican missionary in Red River, arrived in 1820, he took up residence at Fort Douglas where he performed services for the population of Scottish settlers and local HBC employees. According to George Simpson, West established his first church in 1820 just north of the Forks. "A temporary building", he wrote to Andrew Colvile in 1822, "has been knocked up about a mile below Fort Douglas which will for the present answer the purpose of Church and School House."¹⁸ In December 1820 the Anglican minister moved his quarters to the Hayfield farm. West wrote in his journal that his new abode, "though more comfortable...than at the Fort, the distance puts me to much inconvenience in my professional duties."¹⁹ In a letter to Andrew Colvile, George Simpson indicated West had spent an unpleasant winter that year. "As like other Parsons," the governor wrote, "[he is] fond of good living, and altho' not actually starving did not experience much comfort."²⁰ West grew dispondent over not having a church and manse in the colony in these first years. Eventually a proper church was constructed at Image Plain, a few miles north of Fort Douglas.

From the very beginning John West managed to alienate most of the powerful residents of Protestant Red River, including the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Scottish Presbyterians. West considered the fur trade an obstacle to the realization of "civilization" in Rupert's Land. In his vehement exhortations against the practices of marriage à la façon du pays and his efforts to expand the mission outside of the colony, West viewed himself as the harbinger of a new order which would remove the Indians from trapping and ultimately destroy the fur trade. Moreover, the Scottish Presbyterian settlers resented West's inflexibility in adapting the Anglican liturgy to the

Presbyterian rite. In the summer of 1823 John West left Red River and was replaced by the Rev. David Jones who proved far more "open-minded" in his dealings with the Hudson's Bay Company, and a skilled negotiator when it came to reconciling the aims of the Church Missionary Society with the goals and traditions of the fur trade.

The Roman Catholic mission in Red River appeared to be less of a challenge to fur trade culture. While the Catholic clergy in the settlement desired that the Métis adopt a sedentary life of agriculture, they were far less adamant than their Anglican colleagues in promoting the benefits of settlement and the image of a rural pastoral society on the edge of the wilderness. Differences of language and culture meant the Catholic clergy were not part of the Protestant company elite in Red River and did not present the same threat, as did the Anglican clerics, to the particular social standing of these active and retired officers.

Native Settlement and Economy, 1821-26

With the union of the two competing companies, the HBC decided to drastically reduce the size of its workforce. As many as 1,300 employees lost their jobs as the new monopoly had little need for a large and expensive workforce. Under the company's scheme, redundant servants were to be retired to the new colony at Red River where it was hoped a religious and administrative structure could be established. In a letter to George Simpson in February 1822, the London Committee gave instructions on how the retirement policy was to be pursued and resettlement achieved.

It has become a matter of serious importance to determine on the most proper measures to be adopted with regard to the men who have large families and who must be discharged, and with the numerous

Halfbreed Children whose parents have died or deserted them. These people form a burden which cannot be got rid of without expense; and if allowed to remain in their present condition, they will become dangerous to the Peace of the Country and the safety of the Trading Posts. It will therefore be both prudent and economical to incur some Expense in placing these people where they may maintain themselves and be civilized and instructed in Religion. We consider that these people ought all to be removed to Red River where the Catholics will naturally fall under the Roman Catholic Mission which is established there, and the Protestants and such Orphan Children as fail to be maintained and clothed by the Company, may be placed under the Protestant Establishment, and Schools under the Revd. Mr. West.²¹

The HBC's intention was to expand Red River as a potential supply source of agricultural products useful in provisioning the fur trade. As well, the colony's Métis and English-speaking Halfbreeds would serve as the company's pemmican suppliers and an available pool of seasonal work on the York boat brigades which regularly travelled between Red River, York Factory and Portage La Loche. Prior to the arrival of these Native-born families, Red River had remained, in the ten years since its founding, a small and struggling community precariously perched on the fringes of the fur trade. The Scottish crofters who settled just below the Forks near Fort Douglas joined a handful of Métis gens libres who were living there sometime after 1800. The settlement was augmented by Demeuron colonists who were originally recruited as soldiers by Selkirk to protect his interests in the country against the aspirations of the North West Company. Predominantly German-speaking (though made up of a number of European nationalities), the Demeuron settlers occupied riverlots on the east side of the Red along the Seine River.²² As these reluctant farmers were for the most part Catholic, they naturally gravitated to Provencher's mission at St. Boniface. This area on the east side of the river also contained a small number of French

Canadian families who had arrived in the colony in 1818. In 1821 a little less than 200 Swiss settlers arrived in the settlement. For the most part members of the poor and disenfranchised classes in Switzerland, these new settlers were described by Red River historian Alexander Ross as "watch and clock makers, pastrycooks and musicians...little fit for the hardy employments of the husbandman, and especially in a new settlement, with the disadvantages of a cold climate, such as Hudson's Bay". Ross was nevertheless impressed with the character of the Swiss whom he called a "quiet, orderly and moral people" in contrast to the Demeurons whom he felt were ignorant and "dispirited" farmers.²³ The settlement at Red River was also home to a few retired English-born HBC officers and their mixed-blood families who built their houses near the company's operations at the Forks.

As discussed in Chapter III, the economy of the Saulteaux living in Red River revolved around a seasonal round of hunting, trapping, sugaring, trading and agriculture. During the initial decade of the Red River colony the Peguis band remained on good terms with the Scottish settlers and their leaders. By the 1820s, however, the growing mistreatment of the band by the colonists, along with the HBC's refusal to extend credit to band members, effectively soured the relationship between the two groups. Although Peguis maintained an official relationship with the leaders of the colony, the band itself was poorly received in Red River and spent little time in the settlement.²⁴

After 1820 the success of the traditional Saulteaux economy in the Red River district was threatened. The decline of fur-bearing animals in the region was exacerbated by the failure of both the buffalo hunt and agricultural production in 1825 and the devastating flood of 1826. A series of severe winters later in the decade combined to severely undermine the ability of the local Saulteaux to

follow traditional subsistence patterns and they became increasingly reliant upon the HBC, missionaries and the settlement for provisions.

Since the arrival in 1820 of John West, the first Protestant minister in Red River, the Anglican church had endeavoured to convince the Peguis band to give up their traditional spiritual and economic way of life and adopt Christianity and sedentary agriculture. The colony's Protestant missionaries, the product of the growing Evangelical and Revivalist movements that had taken hold in Britain in the early part of the 19th century, hoped to Christianize the Indians through the promotion of education and agriculture. While at one time British imperial strategy had remained unconcerned about the spiritual "well-being" of aboriginal populations within its territories, after 1810 a new liberal, "humanitarian" and ultimately paternalistic mentality governed European attitudes toward Native people. At St. Peter's Rev. Cockran built an Anglican church, school and mission farm in an attempt to turn the Indians away from traditional economic activities. For the Church Missionary Society, agriculture-based settlement and Christianity went hand in hand, forming the cornerstone of the Anglican vision of a new "civilized" Native society in Red River.

The Protestant missionaries in Red River not only refused to accept Native customs, they insisted the Indians adopt European ones. Peguis consistently refused to give in to the missionaries' entreaties, sceptical of their efforts to "reform" Indian customs and behaviour. Moreover, the tremendous difficulties incurred by Red River farmers in these early years - crop failure, locusts, floods and near starvation - did little to convince the Saulteaux chief that agriculture held any future for his people. But after the success at farming of a number of Swampy Cree who had moved to Red River from the northern Lake Winnipeg region, and

after two hard winters in 1828 and 1830 resulted in a severe depletion in game and forced the Indians to take increased debt from the company fort at the Forks, Peguis reluctantly allowed Cockran to establish an agricultural settlement among his people. Realizing concessions to the missionaries were necessary in order to maintain the supply of goods from the settlement, Peguis agreed to take up farming and was one of the first to plant.

As historian Laura Peers has argued, the Saulteaux under Peguis engaged in agriculture primarily to create yet another diplomatic relationship for which they could expect material benefits and renewed prestige.²⁵ The acceptance by the Saulteaux of new subsistence techniques was part of their pursuit of a diversified economy made necessary by the decline of fur trapping and the paucity of game in the Red River area after 1820. For Peguis this new relationship was more than simply allowing Anglican missionaries into his community in return for material benefits. Instead, he viewed these benefits as part of a reciprocal alliance process wherein the Saulteaux might maintain their favoured position in Red River as a reward for their earlier protection and assistance during the years when the settlement had battled the Nor'Westers. For such band societies, the exchange of goods implied the creation of certain social obligations between traders. When such obligations did not exist (a situation known as "negative reciprocity"), participants in the exchange process attempted to maximize economic gain by any means possible up to and including warfare. Therefore, for non-kin relationships the morality of the exchange process was determined by the degree to which one lived up to or respected the social obligations inherent within this process. The settlers at Red River who had thankfully accepted aid and protection from Peguis' band during the years of hardship and unrest were morally bound, under the

terms of reciprocity, to help provide for the Indians when game was in short supply. For the Indians at Netley Creek, therefore, the acceptance of material aid from the CMS did not necessarily imply the acceptance of Christianity. The missionaries, in the eyes of the Indians, were fulfilling the settlement's social obligations, or the terms of reciprocity.²⁶ Their "message", rather than accepted, was simply tolerated.

Missionary efforts at the Indian settlement enjoyed initial limited success. In the early years Peguis' followers, like many others in Red River, realized the plains frequently offered a more dependable livelihood than riverlot farms. Farming in Red River before 1850 was an extremely risky business subject to such factors as the lack of markets, poor climate and a limited agricultural technology. As time passed, however, it became more difficult for the Indians of the Red River Valley to make a living by hunting or as trappers, provisioners, tripmen or cart drivers. Increasingly, they came to rely upon agriculture, as either part-time farmers or farm labourers working on company experimental farms or those of the "principal" settlers in Red River. By 1840 the Peguis band had grown wary of the HBC administration and the encroaching agricultural settlement from the lower parishes. With the threat of Canadian annexation of Red River after 1857, the band protested the lack of adequate compensation for the lands they had originally owned. Peguis' position underscored the fact that the 1817 treaty with Selkirk included only riverbank property and the HBC had no right to sell lots along the Dawson Trail (the route between Canada and Red River). In 1863 Peguis, now in his nineties, published a statement in the Nor'Wester which argued the 1817 treaty did not constitute surrender of traditional Saulteaux lands. He maintained the tobacco was never intended as payment for the cession of lands in Red River.

The things we got...were not in payment for our lands. We never sold them. We only proposed to do so; but the proposal was never carried out, as Lord Selkirk never came back. At the time we held council with him there was no mention of the Hudson's Bay Company. They were not spoken of or taken into account at all. All of a sudden some years afterwards it turned out they were claiming to be masters here.²⁷

Peguis' persuasive arguments for a re-evaluation of the original terms of the treaty went unheeded and he died on 25 September 1864. In 1909, in order to appropriate the reserve land at St. Peter's, which officials considered valuable for White settlement, the federal government negotiated the controversial transfer of the band onto its present reserve along the Fisher River in the Interlake district.

One year after the 1821 union of the North West and Hudson's Bay companies the initial wave of retired Orkney, Métis and English-speaking Halfbreed servants arrived in Red River. Orkney traders and their mixed-blood families, along with Halfbreed heads of families, proceeded to settle below the Forks in the area that stretched from Image Plain to the Grand Rapids. The Métis who emigrated to Red River in this period settled on riverlot farms that were located for the most part in St. Boniface. In 1823 the ranks of the Métis were increased when the HBC convinced Métis settlers at Pembina to relocate in the colony. The company was worried that the Pembina Métis posed a threat to their trade monopoly and attempted to entice Cuthbert Grant and his followers to resettle in the colony where they might come under the closer scrutiny of the HBC. Of these 100 new families some settled in St. Boniface while most took up land at the White Horse Plain, or Grantown.

Red River was, after 1821, essentially a mixed-blood settlement with deep roots in the traditions of the fur trade. The English-speaking Halfbreeds were the children of Scottish, Orkney and English fathers and Native women, while

the Métis were the offspring of Natives and the French-speaking fur traders of the old North West Company tradition. The gens libres, as they were known, along with former company servants and their families, were "retired" to the Red River settlement after the union. The young colony reflected the particular heritage of its diverse mixed-blood tradition. At various levels of social interaction, from intermarriage to co-operative political activities (such as the free trade protests of the 1840s), a commonality of interests was evident in the evolution of a Native society at Red River. While some have argued that a deep, sectarian racial conflict existed within the community (erupting in the events of 1869-70),²⁸ other historians point to the influence of the company, the church and later the Canadians as helping to explain the economic and political "crisis" that characterized Red River after 1850. Where the two mixed-blood traditions differed was in the degree to which they assimilated into the respective worlds of their European fathers. For the Métis the maternal influence of their Native mothers played a strong role in the development of a distinctive non-European tradition. With the English-speaking Halfbreeds, a European influence remained strong and predisposed most to attempt to assimilate into the Anglo-Protestant world of their fathers. The reasons behind this differing evolution remain complex but are at least partly the result of the influences of the respective churches and the nature of Red River's economic class structure in the early decades of the 19th century.

The allotment of riverfront acreage to incoming settlers was regulated according to the Hudson's Bay Company's new land grant policy. Land grants ranged from as little as 25 acres up to 200, depending on the rank of the former employee. The depth of each lot remained constant at two miles but could vary in width from 1.5 chains for

retiring tripmen to 12 chains for former chief factors. As the settlement grew, the practice of subdividing riverlots amongst male offspring made productive agriculture increasingly difficult and led ultimately to a land use crisis in Red River. In the settlement's initial decades, however, the subdivision of riverlots proved an effective method of maintaining kinship unity within the parishes and facilitated the development of strong social and communal ties amongst the varied populations of the young colony.

Red River's greatest problem in the years following the Selkirk period was the nature of the colony's functional relationship with the fur trade. Incoming settlers who had been retired from active service frequently mistrusted the HBC, resentful of its attempts to prohibit the private trade in furs and to restrict the limited competition which operated out of the colony. For many the transition from what historian John Foster has labeled "The Bay tradition" to a life of agriculture did not come easily.²⁹ The legacy of violence left over from the Selkirk years helped perpetuate the notion, especially among the Métis, that the company was a vested interest effectively prohibiting the attainment of the colony's just aspirations. While the HBC provided a market for provisions and an outlet for surplus labour, it placed restrictions upon the independence of the settlers and dictated the particular form and direction the colony was ultimately to take.

Civil Government

It was after the union of 1821 that the HBC began to play a more direct role in the government of Red River. At the outset the colony had been administered according to the wishes of Lord Selkirk through his personally appointed delegates.³⁰ After his death in 1820 Selkirk's estate,

including his proprietary rights to Red River, reverted to his heirs, and in 1821 the responsibility devolved in practice (although not in theory until 1836) upon the reorganized Hudson's Bay Company.

When Nicholas Garry, a member of the HBC's committee and future deputy-governor, passed through Red River soon after union, he observed the colony was in a very weak state and potentially represented "a most dangerous thorn in the side of the HBC". Shortly thereafter the British government approved a system of administration and law courts for Red River which Selkirk had first submitted in 1815.

A governor was appointed under a commission from the company, giving him a mandate to establish an appointed council and rudimentary law courts. John Halkett, brother-in-law of Lord Selkirk and a member of the committee of the HBC, spent seven weeks in the colony preparing the ground for the first long term governor, Andrew Bulger. Bulger came originally from Newfoundland and had served under Major-General Isaac Brock during the War of 1812. Retiring from active service with the military in 1816, Bulger was appointed to a three year term at Red River and was instructed by Colvile to co-operate with John Clarke, the chief factor at Fort Garry, in arranging land grants in the colony and to help in the construction of homes for incoming settlers. Clarke, an uncompromising opponent of private trade, proceeded to antagonize Bulger and the settlers by asserting the company's complete control over the affairs of the settlement and accusing the colonists of engaging in an "illicit" trade in furs. In October 1822 Bulger wrote to Clarke that he was "lamentably disappointed" in Clarke's attitude. Denounced as a "contraband trader" by the chief factor, Bulger replied, "It is not to be expected that any cordiality can subsist between us."³¹

Ultimately, the ill-defined nature of the colony's relationship with the fur trade was further obfuscated by

the dispute between Clarke and Bulger. Whereas the latter viewed the settlement to be an essentially independent colony with its own civil administration, the former considered Red River to be wholly under company control. In a letter dated December 1822, Bulger suggested to Colvile that a number of administrative and organizational changes be enacted within the colony. He recommended an independent judicial system of courts and magistrates be established, that a body of troops be sent to the colony to keep order, that settlers be allowed to purchase provisions and pelts from the Indians, and most importantly that the company find a market for the settlers' surplus produce.³² Although Bulger managed to establish an administrative body of approximately half-a-dozen councillors, it did not meet regularly nor hold much power. Disgruntled and annoyed at both the magnitude of his job and the attitude of the Hudson's Bay Company representatives, Bulger requested and received permission to return to Britain. In August 1823 he left Red River, describing the settlement as "one of the most miserable countries on the face of the earth".³³

He was replaced by Robert Parker Pelly, a young man with little experience in government. George Simpson was asked by the governor and committee to spend the winter of 1823-24 in the settlement in hopes of stabilizing and regularizing the government of the colony. He arrived after the harvest of 1823 to find the settlement in reasonable economic order but without a functioning civil administration. Working closely with Pelly and his council, Simpson regularized and formalized council sessions and to give it added credibility, provided for making both its proceedings and ordinances publicly available. At the same time, however, he privately expressed contempt for most of its members. In a letter to Andrew Colvile Simpson wrote,

Our council are really worse than nothing.
McDonnell [ex-Governor Alexander McDonnell] is

disaffected and the bitterest Enemy to the Executors in this place; Thomas [retired officer Thomas Thomas] is timid and weak as a child, Cook [retired officer William Hemmings Cook] is like Thomas but Drunken and without either body or mind, Pritchard [retired officer John Pritchard] is froth, Matthey [Captain Frederick Matthey] is discontented and designing, wishes to be popular among the Countrymen and hostile to the Company and Executors, Logan [retired officer Robert Logan] has been associated with McDonnell in his speculations while in power, indeed they are nothing more or less in my opinion than a pair of thieves and stick to each other like Wax and Mr. Jones [Rev. David Jones] Altho' well disposed wants experience, in short there is not one Man among them who has any pretension to the title he bears, they have no public spirit nor general view towards the Welfare and Good Government of the place but are entirely influenced and actuated by Self in every thought word and action.³⁴

At the same time Simpson established weekly sessions of the law courts and set up a police force with Chief Factor Donald McKenzie as High Constable who would take charge of about 50 special constables, 20 regular or petty constables, and two bailiffs.³⁵

The government, which had its real beginnings while Simpson was at the helm, was basically in the hands of an appointed elite with definite company loyalties. Until 1834, while the HBC had proprietary rights to the government of Red River, the council never exceeded seven members. During the initial period of government there were no Métis representatives in council even though the French-speaking portion of the population probably exceeded that of the English-speaking. (In 1839 Cuthbert Grant, the "Warden of the Plains", was appointed to the council by Simpson.) Members were chosen from the settlement's European constituencies so as to promote the company's aims in Red River. The council legislated for the region known as the "Municipal" District of Assiniboia, an area within a radius of 50 miles around the Forks. This area differed from the original District of Assiniboia, which was a much larger

area that covered all of southern Manitoba and part of the north-central U.S. This more restricted area was established by regulation in June 1841.

In 1834-35, Simpson addressed himself to revamping the Council of Assiniboia. He enlarged its membership from seven to 15, making it somewhat more representative, although only marginally so, since just the upper classes were represented, and had it sit more often and more regularly. It also became less judicial and more legislative in its functions. A new court system was begun, with a reorganized police force now consisting of 60 paid constables, some of whom were from the French-speaking community in Red River. Simpson did make himself president of the new council. Whenever he attended meetings of council he assumed the presidency, otherwise the role was held by the governor of Assiniboia.

In the new court system several Métis were appointed to serve as magistrates. While the French-speaking population was able to gain some increased participation in the affairs of the colony, there were very few who were allowed to take part in the decision-making process at any real level of authority.

In the colony's first political crisis, the Métis-led free trade movement which surfaced in the 1840s, the government sided wholeheartedly and not unexpectedly with the Hudson's Bay Company. In response to the company's charges, the Métis began to agitate for a more equitable portion of the seats on the Council of Assiniboia. Largely unsuccessful at that time, it was not until a decade later that the Métis were able to increase their participation on the council.

After 1835 Simpson seldom spent much time in the settlement but the increased role of the Council of Assiniboia left it reasonably able to govern the community - though of course not the company - in his absence. Over the years the composition of the council became somewhat more

representative of the entire community, but by the 1860s it had become as anachronistic as the rest of Red River, and could only "administer the Colony as efficiently as possible and...await developments". Minutes from council meetings indicate it was concerned with relatively minor matters such as petty crime, domestic animals roaming at large, liquor traffic and agricultural problems.

The government of the colony, although by no means haphazard, reflected, as in most conservative societies of the time, the point of view of an exclusive and recognizable governing class. At Red River this class was largely synonymous with the leaders of the Hudson's Bay Company. Though nominally independent, the Council of Assiniboia effectively served the interests of the HBC. The groundwork that Simpson laid in the winter of 1833-34 established a system of government that functioned reasonably well for over a generation. However, general frustration with the fact that Red River's lower classes - the Métis and Halfbreed hunters and farmers - were not adequately represented on the council caused considerable unrest within the community. The Métis never held more than one-third of the council seats although they represented about half the population. As the governing elite in Red River, the company and "principal settlers" proved to be largely out of touch with the colony's lower classes, the growing population of Métis and Halfbreeds who had forged a unique economy based upon agriculture, hunting, freighting and trading.

While a governing structure of some form or another had been in place in the colony from its inception, the judicial system operated for a generation on a largely informal basis and without the benefit of a trained lawyer. Prior to 1835 the governor of Assiniboia and any two of his council were empowered to administer law within the district. General courts, in reality assemblies of the governor and his

council, were established with administrative and judicial functions. When Selkirk's heirs resold their land to the Hudson's Bay Company in 1836 a more efficient system of law enforcement was set up. Assiniboia was divided into four (later three) judicial districts, each with its own court presided over by a magistrate or justice of the peace. The local courts were to deal only with minor cases, while more serious matters were to be heard by a general quarterly court which consisted of the governor-in-council. In 1839 the company's London Committee made further improvements in the judicial system by establishing the office of Recorder of Rupert's Land. His duties were to direct the proceedings of the general quarterly court and to serve as a member of the Council of Assiniboia. In any criminal case a jury was to sit with him to determine questions of fact. Capital cases were to be sent to Upper Canada for trial, and the court's jurisdiction in civil matters was limited to £200.³⁶ In practice, however, the court often overstepped its own jurisdictional limits.

The first appointee to the important position of Recorder of Rupert's Land was Adam Thom. Born in Scotland in 1802 and graduating from the University of Aberdeen in 1824 with an M.A., he emigrated to Canada in 1832. After an introductory period as a writer and editor, he began to study law in Montreal with James Charles Grant, and was admitted to the bar in 1837. He had by this time established his reputation as a Francophobe by publishing his "Anti-Gallic Letters" addressed to the Earl of Gosford, Governor-in-Chief of Canada. When Lord Durham arrived in Canada in 1838, he sought the support of the vociferous and fairly influential writer. Indeed Thom has since been understood (perhaps wrongly) to have been the author of the famous 1839 Durham Report dealing with the troubles in Lower Canada. While Thom was in London working for Lord Durham, he met and impressed George Simpson. Immediately upon

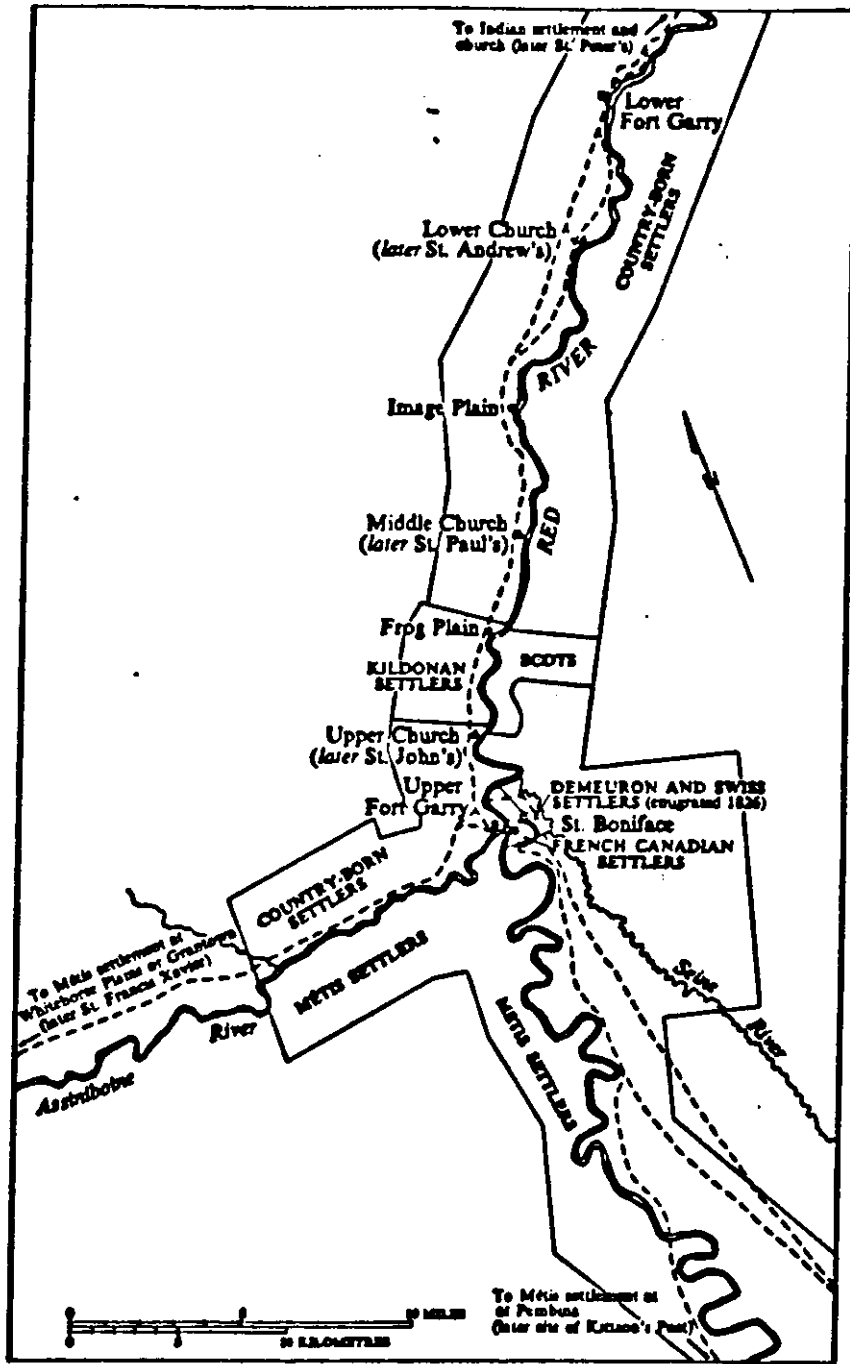


Figure 8, The Red River Settlement, ca. 1835 (from L.G. Thomas, The Prairie West to 1905)

completion of his assignment for Durham, Thom accepted Simpson's invitation to become Recorder of Rupert's Land at a salary of £700 per annum (£500 sterling plus a £200 living allowance). Thom arrived in the spring of 1839. His much deserved anti-French reputation preceded him to Red River and while he apparently did nothing directly against the Métis at the outset, his strong pro-Hudson's Bay Company bias proved difficult to hide.

One of Thom's first major tasks after his arrival in Red River was to codify the laws of the settlement, which he accomplished in 1841. According to the early Red River historian Alexander Ross, Thom used the laws to fit his own particular interpretation of a proper judicial administration. There has also been some question among very recent scholars as to whether his laws were ever brought into official use. On more than one occasion Thom exceeded the bounds of his authority. On 6 September 1845 a Saulteaux Indian, Capinesewet, was hanged for allegedly killing another Saulteaux on 31 August 1845. Thom's authority did not extend to murder cases, and the accused should never have been tried in Red River. Again in 1848 Thom adjudicated a murder case. This time the offence was committed in the Peace River District. On this occasion Thom argued effectively against sending the accused to Canada for trial, and in practice if not in law vindicated his earlier actions. Murder cases in the colony were always something of a spectacle, and tended to gain publicity not only for the participants but for the presiding judge as well. Thom's two best known cases - free trade and the Foss/Pelly cases - involved somewhat less serious crimes.

After their victory in the free trade issue in 1849 the Métis continue their agitation for the removal of Thom, notorious for his anti-French, anti-Métis bias. When Simpson visited the colony a month after the trial he was presented with a petition asking for his removal. Simpson

advised Thom not to take his seat on the bench for a year, in the hope that by then the hostility would have been forgotten. When Thom returned to the bench a year later his treatment of the Foss-Pelly slander case only added to the animosity against his administration of a significant portion of the English-speaking population of the colony. In April 1851 Thom was demoted by the company to the position of Clerk of the Court, although he kept his £700 salary.

Thom's last important work was a report on the state of the laws of Assiniboia submitted to the Council of Assiniboia in May 1851. This report was another attempt to codify the laws of Red River along practical lines, and among other topics covered the control of fires, the distillation of liquor without a license, customs duties, marriage licenses and the administration of justice.³⁷

Thom was a peculiar choice for recorder in the first place, if only because of his experience as a lawyer and his well-known prejudice against French Canadians. Although he appears not to have caused irreconcilable differences within the Red River colony until several years after his arrival and installation on the bench, Thom's personality and attitudes eventually earned him the enmity of the Métis, along with many others in the settlement. Only when the Métis were in a stronger position in the affairs of the community, some ten years after he arrived, did they oppose the recorder openly. Simpson wanted Thom for his own purposes, hoping the courts might check the growing demand for free trade in the colony. Thom's value to Simpson is evident which was more than that generally earned by chief factors. (The governor of Assiniboia earned only £200.) In fact, only Simpson himself could be assured of a higher salary.

The recorders who succeeded Thom had less open prejudices and fewer enemies. Their cases were often

similar, but the example of racial prejudice and legal bias set by Thom was not repeated and the legal climate of Red River soon became conventional. Perhaps the Hudson's Bay Company itself had grown weary of the battle with its real and imaginary foes. Certainly the decade of the 1850s saw an increased political relaxation. By this time the company seemed more concerned with retaining as much as possible of its slipping prestige and trade than imposing for new controls.

Overall, the company's role in the government of Red River was often dictatorial, at times subtle, and frequently unhappy. Although reluctant to govern the colony the HBC attempted to assert the same authority over the general community as it exercised over its own employees. The result, predictably, was to create tension and distrust among the settlers.

In 1823 George Simpson decided to move the "colony" fort, Fort Douglas, closer to the operations at Fort Garry. In a letter to the London Committee Simpson argued that the fort in its present location of upwards of one mile from Fort Garry posed problems of communication and mutual defense between the two establishments.³⁸ "In its [Fort Douglas'] present situation," Simpson argued, "it would not be safe either from troublesome Indians or Settlers."³⁹ Apparently the "settlers" referred to were the Demeurons soldiers who, because of a growing discontent with life in Red River, were contemplative, according to Simpson, of seizing the fort. As well, the deteriorating nature of the colony fort which "could not have stood another year" made it unprofitable to repair the old structure at its original location. Simpson determined that erecting a new structure adjacent to Fort Garry (and, in fact, sharing that fort's east wall) would prove cheaper than repairing the old establishment. Such a move would also enable the company to consolidate its saleshop operations at the Forks by

centralizing this function within the walls of Fort Garry. Ultimately, the move served to further extend company control over the colonial administrative function in Red River by establishing an even more direct link between the colony and the Hudson's Bay Company operations.

In November 1823 Simpson outlined to Colville how the relocation of Fort Douglas was to be effected.

[Fort Douglas] should be removed close to Fort Garry, the East side of our Fort to form the West side of Fort Douglas, so as merely to be separated by the Stockades with a private entrance between them and thus situated they will always be a protection to each other.⁴⁰

The two forts, according to Simpson, would then be under the protection of bastions which were to be erected at the fort's north and east angles as well as a common range of picketing. Aside from reasons of defence and increased control over the civil administration of Governor Robert Pelly, Simpson believed his consolidation strategy would provide a long term benefit for company operations at the Forks. He explained to the London Committee how Fort Garry would, within a year or two, need expensive alterations and repairs, "whereas the new Fort Douglas is built of such good materials and so well put together that it will, barring accidents, last Twenty or Thirty Years."⁴¹ Once the fort had outlived its usefulness, he reasoned, the HBC could simply remove its operations to the adjacent Fort Douglas. When the executors of the Selkirk estate (who still maintained nominal authority over Assiniboia) eventually returned the administration of the region to the HBC, its operations at the Forks would experience little disruption. Moreover, control over the affairs of the colony by the company would then be more or less complete. Eventually, in 1825 the buildings that remained at the old location of Fort Douglas, along with a grist mill and 100 acres of land, were

sold for \$400 to Robert Logan, a member of the Council of Assiniboia.⁴²

Early Agriculture in the Colony

When Lord Selkirk first established his colony at Red River in 1811 he envisaged an agricultural economy that would fulfill the needs of the settlers while providing a crop surplus that would help to provision the fur trade. George Simpson and the London Committee saw the potential of the colony in this regard and hoped to purchase locally produced agricultural foodstuffs in order to supplement the more costly English provisions. Red River, as a supply centre for produce and manpower, also provided the company with a competitive advantage in its ongoing struggle with the North West Company. With the merger of 1821 the HBC hoped to maintain the colony's role in the fur trade not only as a potential provisioning centre, but a home for its surplus employees.

Agriculture provided only a portion of Red River's food source, however. The colony was also supplied by the buffalo hunt and fisheries, two economic pursuits traditionally associated with the fur trade. This mixed or "hybrid" economy, as it was called by historian W.L. Morton, formed the basis of the Red River economy and effectively tied the settlement to the fur trade for the next 50 years.⁴³ Although Métis gens libres had cultivated small plots of land near the Forks as early as 1805, the Scottish-born Selkirk settlers were the first to practice an almost exclusively agricultural economy in the area. After 1821 the migration to Red River of Métis and English-speaking Halfbreed company servants served to broaden the settlement's economic base through involvement in the hunt and later their participation in the private trade in furs.

Although Selkirk's colonial economy was based upon farming, early crop failures forced even the Kildonan Scots to turn to the resources of the rivers and plains for survival.⁴⁴ Others in the colony who were primarily agriculturalists, including retired Orkney servants and a handful of French Canadians, also exploited these "wild" resources in the early years of the settlement. It was not until 1827 that farming emerged as a legitimate economic activity. Prior to that date many settlers in Red River was forced to winter at Pembina, living off the hunt and company handouts.⁴⁵

The failure to establish any kind of sound agricultural economy in the years prior to 1827 was due to a number of factors. First, the demands of the fur trade dictated that such non-agricultural activities as hunting, fishing and freighting remain crucial to the colony's survival. Second, harsh climatic conditions, natural disasters, primitive agricultural technology, and an unfamiliarity with farming techniques and skills served to retard Red River's agricultural growth. The existence of a mixed economy was absolutely critical in the colony's early years as the buffalo hunt provided the major source of food during those seasons when the crops failed. And when the buffalo hunt failed, as it did in 1822, 1825, 1826 and 1827, the colony went through a period of famine. Between 1821 and 1827 Red River experienced a devastating flood, an infestation of grasshoppers, drought, crop disease, grubs, hail, severe winters and heavy rains. These factors combined to cause a number of complete or partial crop failures that severely restricted the settlers' ability to grow enough to feed their own families, much less provide a surplus for sale to the company.

The basic pattern of land use at Red River, primarily in terms of types and quantities of various crops, emerged during this period and characterized agricultural production till 1870.⁴⁶ Three basic field crops were grown: wheat,

barley and potatoes. Kitchen gardens provided a few vegetables including corn, turnips, parsnips, carrots, beans and radishes.

Wheat in Red River in this period was generally sown during the spring months and could take up to 137 days to mature.⁴⁷ In 1826, however, because of the severe flood, wheat was planted as late as June 22 but still managed to come to maturity by the fall.⁴⁸ W.L. Morton has argued that earlier maturing wheat was not developed in the colony until after 1850. This strain, he claims, ripened in 107 to 112 days.⁴⁹ The first seed wheat sown at Red River was known as Prairie du Chien, a soft spring variety. Black Sea wheat was not introduced to the colony until 1847.

Barley was the second most common grain sown in Red River. Badly damaged by grasshoppers, it failed a number of times before 1827, most notably in the year 1821. Barley was rarely used in breadmaking, and was either used as livestock feed or made into a broth that served as a staple item in the diet of the Highland Scots, Orkneymen and a number of English-speaking Halfbreeds.

Potatoes proved the most successful crop in the settlement in these early years. The alluvial loam soil of the riverbanks suited this particular root crop, which managed to survive minor floods, early frosts and insects. William Cockran, the CMS missionary in Red River, noted in his journal that potatoes often grew on the riverbank, even after significant flooding.⁵⁰

Other crops were experimented with on a limited scale. Indian corn, oats and peas were tried on a sporadic basis, with only minor success, as was rye and buckwheat. In 1815 Miles Macdonell attempted to grow fruit trees (apple, pear, plum and cherry), though again with very little success.⁵¹ After this date no fruit cultivation was attempted on any systematic basis as most colonists were content to gather the wild berries that grew along the riverbanks. Flax and

hemp were attempted as commercial crops but failed because, in the early period at least, farmers had little interest in such non-subsistence endeavours. Available arable acreage in Red River was, for the most part, used to cultivate food producing grains.

When Selkirk's colonists arrived in Red River the settlement had originally been conceived of as a commercial agricultural economy based partly upon grain and vegetable farming and partly upon animal husbandry. In the early years, however, the rearing of livestock played a secondary role to cultivation. Between 1812 and 1820 the colony's source of livestock was HBC fur trade posts which often maintained a small herd of cattle or pigs, or what few animals could be shipped from England via York Factory. The number of animals domesticated at these posts were, however, insufficient to establish a viable herd in the colony, while few animals survived the rigorous ocean passage to Hudson's Bay or the tough boat trip from York Factory.⁵²

In 1817 Selkirk realized an opportunity existed to import cattle to Red River from the American frontier. Initial attempts to mount major cattle drives out of St. Louis failed because of harsh weather conditions, deep snow and hostile Indians. While a few smaller drives succeeded in bringing a number of head to the colony by 1819, the first major drive did not occur till late 1822. A total of 170 head of cattle were auctioned off or sold to the colonists for a total price of over \$10,000.⁵³ The next year another 210 head arrived, and in 1824 a further 90 head were brought into the settlement. In 1825 Samuel Gibson drove 165 cattle to Red River which, according to Alexander Ross, "gladdened the settlers' hearts and gave fresh impetus to their exertions."⁵⁴ Most of the cattle brought during this period were purchased by wealthy company officers who had retired to the settlement. Milch cows sold for £6 a head while the cost of a pair of oxen ranged between £14 and

£20.⁵⁵ While many cattle were lost in the disastrous flood of 1826 and a number perished because of the long, cold winters and inadequate feed, the cattle population grew steadily, numbering over 2,000 by 1831.

Another element in Selkirk's plan to establish Red River as a commercial economy was the introduction of sheep in the hope of creating a viable wool exporting enterprise. Early attempts to bring sheep from England proved unsuccessful. In 1824 Colin Robertson, an HBC trader, suggested the creation of a joint stock company called the Assiniboine Wool Company which would export Red River wool to textile mills in England. The attempt by Samuel Gibson to drive a flock of 200 sheep to the settlement from Missouri in 1828 failed when the greater part of the herd was killed by Dakota Indians in July. It was not until 1833 that a sizeable flock of sheep were introduced into the colony.⁵⁶

Pigs and horses also formed a portion of the livestock population in Red River prior to 1827. A small number of swine had been brought out by the Selkirk settlers who arrived in 1815. These seemed to do well and increased to 69 by 1819. Following years, however, witnessed a decline as settlers were frequently unable to provide enough feed for their pigs. Only 12 pigs were listed in the census of 1822, the number not increasing until the latter part of the decade. But by 1831, according to the census, there were over 2,000 pigs in Red River. Horses played only a minor role in Red River agriculture. While some were used as draught animals, most were used for riding, buffalo hunting, or pulling sleighs and carriages. The small stock of horses came primarily through trade with the Plains Indians.

The failure of animal husbandry to play a significant role in the economy of Red River prior to 1827 was due to the colony's isolation, the great distances over which livestock had to be transported, the harsh climate and the

lack of adequate feed. Wild hay from the prairies provided the greater part of livestock feed. Each settler, besides having access to the wild hay on his own two mile lot, was also entitled to cut on a further two miles behind his property. Beyond this hay privilege, as it was known, farmers could harvest the wild grasses of the unrestricted "common". In later years the harvesting of hay for feed became an activity highly regulated by the Council of Assiniboia. Before 1827, however, haymaking was a casual affair and settlers were often forced to endure a shortage of winter feed.⁵⁷ With the inadequate shelter provided for the colony's few domestic animals, the livestock population in the early years was maintained at a comparatively substandard level.

Between 1821 and 1827 Red River agriculture experienced a number of difficulties. Poor harvests characterized the period, the result of climatic conditions and various natural disasters. As well, farmers lacked knowledge of modern agricultural techniques, while inadequate farm implements further restricted crop yields. During this period Red River developed a mixed, or hybrid, economy. Buffalo hunting, fishing, working on company boat brigades, and for some the private trade in furs along with agriculture, made up the seasonal cycle and provided Red River's basic means of subsistence. While the Kildonan Scots and retired HBC chief factors and chief traders in the settlement were primarily involved in agriculture, poor harvests forced even these groups to rely upon the results of the hunt and fisheries for survival. Pemmican was a staple part of the diet of both European and Native settlers, and was supplied to the colony by Métis hunters.

The struggling agricultural economy, beset by drought and locusts, was almost crushed completely by the record flood of 1826. That year the swollen Red and Assiniboine rivers overflowed their banks, inundating the company's

establishment at the Forks along with the whole of the settlement, temporarily driving away the inhabitants and causing a massive destruction of property. The sudden rise of the Red River in the spring of that year was due to a number of causes: heavy rains the previous fall, a large quantity of snow over the course of the winter, a late spring, a sudden thaw and the slow breakup of river ice.

In early May of 1826, according to Alexander Ross, the river rose nine feet in one day.⁵⁸ On May 5 the ice on the river broke up "with an awful rush" carrying trees, houses and livestock along in the current.⁵⁹ In his post journal HBC clerk Francis Heron recorded the scene:

Forty-seven dwelling houses were thus carried off by the first rush in the short space of half an hour, and many others afterwards from which the wretched inhabitants barely escaped with their lives. The waters at the same time rushed into the forts, but the banks being fortunately high, the water only rubbed against the corner of our front bastion. The forts were also guarded by the trees on the Assiniboine Point. Apprehending an inundation we had previously taken the precaution to raise all the perishable goods and property in the stores some distance from the ground.⁶⁰

The frightened settlers and their families were forced to leave their homes and farms as the river continued to rise. About 60 families and almost 200 head of cattle sought refuge in the fort, but were forced to flee again for their lives a few days later when the ice on the Assiniboine River broke up. The whole region now resembled one large lake as great chunks of ice, remains of homes, fencing, furniture and implements were swept along by the current. Chief Factor Donald McKenzie ordered HBC personnel to rescue those settlers who had not yet reached safety. Their boats plied the inundated colony, plucking terrified colonists from the roofs of their homes. As the water rose the inhabitants were forced to remove their camps to dry ground even further up the Assiniboine. Heron described the scene

at the Forks as one of desolation and distress. "The forts", he wrote on May 13, "stand like a castle of romance in the midst of an ocean of deep contending currents, the water extending for at least a mile behind them."⁶¹

The next day McKenzie ordered the evacuation from Fort Garry of the remaining company personnel, along with as many trade goods, furs and supplies that could be transported to the encampment near Sturgeon Creek. That same day the recently completed Block House, along with a part of the front (east) palisade, was carried off by the flood. Buildings inside the fort also began to give way as walls and chimneys collapsed.⁶²

The HBC managed to conduct a brisk trade with settlers at the Sturgeon Creek encampment. According to Ross the price of wheat rose from two shillings to 15 shillings per bushel, while the cost of beef increased six-fold.⁶³ Famine became a potential problem as many were without flour and other basic necessities. McKenzie suspected a plot among the settlers to plunder Fort Garry and seize the supplies and provisions that had been carried to high ground.⁶⁴ A short while later Heron noted,

Authentic information has this day been communicated to the gentlemen at the head of affairs by well disposed persons that there are now actually three conspiracies on foot in the Settlement, whose objects are to plunder the forts and wind mill - one of these conspiracies consists of Canadians, another of DeMeurons, and the third of half-breeds.⁶⁵

McKenzie decided to defuse the suspected plot by removing company provisions from the Sturgeon Creek encampment to a new spot in the lower part of the settlement, somewhere near the present site of Lower Fort Garry. This he did on May 25, three days after floodwaters had crested and started to recede. It was not till June 15, however, that HBC property could be transported back to the Forks and settlers began wandering back into the colony.

Many decided to leave Red River for good, in particular the Demeurons and Swiss who had grown weary of the isolation and extreme weather conditions. Two hundred and forty-three Swiss and Demeurons left Red River in June, bound for the U.S.⁶⁶ Heron remarked that people were attempting to unload farms, livestock and implements in their wish to leave the young colony. "Farms that would have six months ago sold for £200 sterling each would not this day bring as many pence."⁶⁷ Those who remained, the Métis, French Canadians, English-speaking Halfbreeds and Scots, returned to their riverlots in time to plant a small crop of barley, potatoes and wheat. Homes were rebuilt, new fencing was thrown up, and barns and stables were constructed. On July 4 the HBC reopened its saleshop at Fort Garry to a brisk and steady business. John Pritchard noted in a letter dated August 21, "Our crops continue to look well; both wheat and barley are in full ear and the potatoes sufficiently large for table."⁶⁸ Although grub worms damaged crops that summer, the farms managed to grow enough to survive the following winter.

The flood of 1826 severely tested the resources of the Red River settlers at a pivotal point in the colony's development. It resulted in the departure of a significant portion of its inhabitants and demonstrated the extent to which the nascent colony was dependent upon the Hudson's Bay Company for survival.

Company Operations, 1825-50

When Alexander Ross first visited Red River in 1825, he provided a rather unflattering description of the HBC's establishment at the Forks. In his book The Fur Hunters of the Far West, published in 1855, Ross confessed disappointment with this "first groundwork of civilisation", describing the fort as "nothing but a few wooden houses

huddled together without palisades, or any regard to taste or even comfort". To this "cluster of huts," he continued, "were, however, appended two long bastions in the same style as the other buildings."⁶⁹

In 1825 the buildings within Fort Garry included a retail shop, warehouse, kitchen, dwelling house and two bastions. Work on the retail shop had begun in September 1822,⁷⁰ and a month later trade goods and supplies were removed from old Fort Douglas and transferred to the new building.⁷¹ A new dwelling house was also completed in January 1823 and housed Chief Factor Clarke and Chief Trader McMurray.⁷² In June 1824 carpenters at the Forks began construction of a new store or warehouse, and a month later built an icehouse for the storage of fresh meat and other provisions.⁷³ Commencing in the fall and continuing until the summer of 1825, the company also erected new picketing as well as two bastions located along the fort's north and east walls. These wooden bastions were approximately two storeys high.⁷⁴ Other buildings situated in and around Fort Garry included a powder magazine and roothouse.

As previously noted, the disastrous flood of 1826 caused considerable damage to the newly renovated fort. When company servants finally returned to the post in June of that year, they found a "complete pile of ruins... there being no homes yet habitable for [their] reception".⁷⁵ Chief Factor McKenzie ordered reconstruction of the damaged and destroyed buildings and in summer reported to the London Committee that HBC personnel "were busily employed... repairing houses for the winter".⁷⁶

Despite McKenzie's efforts to repair the damaged structures, the condition of Fort Garry deteriorated and was described by George Simpson in 1831 as being "in a very dilapidated state, so much so as to be scarcely habitable".⁷⁷ Simpson argued the Forks location was a poor site for the company's district headquarters. The low

ground was prone to flooding, and the fort's location above the St. Andrew's rapids presented considerable transport problems for the brigades travelling north to York Factory. In July 1830, prior to official approval from London, the company's Northern Council passed a resolution which effectively abandoned its operations at the old fort and ordered the construction of a new establishment just north of the rapids, approximately 20 miles from the Forks. The resolution read,

The Establishment of Fort Garry being in a very dilapidated state, its situation not sufficiently central, much exposed to the spring floods, and very inconvenient in regard to the navigation of the River and in other points of view, it is that a new establishment to bear the same name be formed on a site to be selected near the lower end of the Rapids for which purpose Tradesmen be employed or the work done by contract as may be found most expedient, and as stones and lime are on the spot those materials be used instead of timber being cheaper and more durable.⁷⁸

In his annual London report of 1831 Simpson remarked he had "selected [for the new fort] the most eligible Spot in the Settlement ... below the present Establish., [Fort Garry] laid the plan and commenced operations without loss of time".⁷⁹ When he returned to the settlement in late 1832, Simpson and his young wife Frances moved into the newly constructed Big House at Lower Fort Garry. This lower fort quickly assumed the role of district headquarters from which Simpson administered the company's vast Northern Department. While abandoning the Forks as an administrative and warehousing centre, the HBC continued to maintain a saleshop at the location. Only a clerk and storesman were stationed there, and in December 1832 Chief James McMillan reported the Forks to be "very dull, as the usual stir of Fort Garry is now down at the new establishment".⁸⁰

Within a few years it became apparent Simpson had erred in believing he could effectively transfer the economic

centre of the settlement to the lower fort. Red River settlers were unhappy with having to travel the extra distance to sell their produce and purchase much needed manufactured goods. When Alexander Christie took control of the district after Simpson's departure in the spring of 1833, he argued the HBC should re-establish a major presence at the Forks in order to better serve the needs of the local settlers and reinforce company authority in the heart of the settlement.⁸¹ The London Committee supported Christie's argument and eventually Simpson agreed to build a new stone establishment at the Forks. Preparations began in the winter of 1834-35 and in 1836 Simpson urged Christie to "get on with the Buildings, walls and bastions, likewise the jail, as expeditiously as possible".⁸² By 1838 James Hargrave reported, "The new Fort is completely and securely walled in, with two excellent Bastions which completely sweep every side and render it the securest as well as the best finished Fort the Company has in Rupert's Land."⁸³

Upper Fort Garry measured 290 feet by 245 feet.⁸⁴ The limestone walls varied in height from 13 feet to 15 feet and were constructed from riverbank cobbles. A wooden gallery 8½ feet high ran the length of the interior of the walls while bastions, each 24 feet in diameter, were located at the four corners. Between 1851 and 1854 the walls were extended, the remodeled fort measuring 574 feet in length on a roughly north/south axis. The walls of the new extension were not built with stone, but were of oak construction, three feet thick, with a rammed-earth core.⁸⁵ According to Brad Loewen and Greg Monks, the stone walls served a number of purposes. Militarily, the walls were not suited for defense against artillery, but rather against a lightlyarmed and mounted enemy.⁸⁶ As a frontier stockade, the Upper Fort Garry walls were constructed of limestone partially because stone lasted longer than wood and was far more available in Red River, as well as serving as protection against prairie

fires. Architecturally, the fort was a symbol, a statement of the company's power and control within the settlement. Limestone walls, rather than wooden palisades, added to this image of control.

During the first phase of construction between 1835 and 1840 the HBC erected a number of warehouses, stores and dwelling houses at Upper Fort Garry. A row of buildings along the fort's western wall stored furs, trade goods and plains provisions, as well as the supplies for Red River that had been imported from England via York Factory. These buildings included the inland depot, a fur store and pemmican warehouse. Two-and-one-half storeys high and constructed of wood (post-on-sill), these structures were roughly the size and style of the stone warehouse buildings which still stand at Lower Fort Garry. On the east side of the UFG compound were a number of structures, including the saleshop. Access to this store by fort personnel and local inhabitants accounted for a number of structural changes to the fort over the years: side entrances or "postern" gates were added, interior fences were constructed around the building, and later the southeast portion of the wall was demolished to allow direct access to the shop from outside the fort. Also along the east wall were the Recorder's house and the Men's House, both built in 1839. The Main House or officers' quarters was constructed between 1835 and 1837 and was located roughly at the centre of the fort quadrangle.

The layout of the buildings within the fort followed a basic "H" configuration. This particular pattern can be found at many HBC posts throughout the West and is traced to the feudal British "great hall" model of the early Middle Ages. The flanking buildings that made up the parallel axes of the "H" often declined in importance the greater the distance from the centre residence. Moreover, later construction at the upper fort, including those buildings

erected outside the walls, followed this basic configuration. Warehouses, storehouses and minor residences were located along the east and west parallel axes, while main residences (the Main House, and later the clerks' quarters and Government House) were all situated along the centre axis.

In 1846 the upper fort was occupied by the Sixth Regiment of Foot, a contingent of regular troops sent to Red River to support British colonialist control in the West. The HBC provided material support to the troops in the hopes they would help curtail the growing free trade in furs that was threatening its monopoly in Rupert's Land. During their two-year stay in the colony, the Sixth Regiment took over much of the upper fort, necessitating radical changes to building functions within its walls. The Main House was converted to quarters for the regimental officers, while the three storehouses along the western perimeter were made into barracks. An interior palisade constructed around the fort's east side buildings segregated company activities to that quarter and a gate was opened along the east wall for company access. Forced to expand its operation outside the fort perimeter, the HBC built two new warehouses in 1846 and 1848 beyond the north wall. When they left Red River in 1848 the Sixth Regiment was replaced by the Chelsea Pensioners who remained for two years at the upper fort before being given riverlot acreage along the Assiniboine in the area known today as "Armstrong's Point". The occupation of Upper Fort Garry by British troops between 1846 and 1850 forced the HBC to extend its operations outside the fort walls and eventually led to the extension of the north wall in 1853.⁸⁷

R.M. Ballantyne, who served as a clerk at Upper Fort Garry in the 1840s, described his counting room as containing "two large desks and several very tall stools, besides sundry ink-bottles, rulers, books, and sheets of

blotting paper".⁸⁸ The fort office also served as a residence for company clerks and apprentice clerks stationed at the Forks. It consisted of a central office and fireplace which opened onto three small bedrooms.

Prior to Simpson's decision to rebuild Fort Garry in 1835, the company planned the development of an experimental farm near the Forks. In July 1830 George Simpson instructed James McMillan, formerly chief factor in charge of Fort Langely, to establish the new farm at a suitable site.⁸⁹ According to Alexander Ross, Simpson hoped to initiate "the settlers, and particularly the natives of the country, into an improved system of husbandry and dairy management, the cultivation of hemp, flax, and whatever else might interest the farmer, and ensure a steady market for the fruits of his industry".⁹⁰ A fertile spot on the Assiniboine River about four miles above the Forks was chosen and beginning in 1831 fields were ploughed, barns and stables were constructed, and livestock and agricultural implements were imported into the colony at great expense. Robert Campbell, an Orkneyman who arrived in Rupert's Land the year before, was put in charge of day-to-day operations at the farm. During spring seeding and the fall harvest, 40 or more men "were employed all over the farm".⁹¹ Two dwelling houses were erected that first year, along with barns, stables, cattle byres and stores.

The experimental farm proved to be a failure. While McMillan was no doubt a capable chief factor, he lacked a practical knowledge of agricultural techniques. Campbell, on the other hand, was an experienced farmer but unabashed in his desire to get involved in the more lucrative fur trade business. (In 1832 he left the farm and was eventually posted to the MacKenzie district.) Moreover, the company servants who laboured at the farm had spent all their life in the fur trade and knew little of farming. Grain harvested from the farm, according to Ross, was

inferior to that raised by the "humblest Scotch settler in the colony", while flax and hemp were allowed to rot in the fields. The experiment lasted six years and cost the HBC approximately £3,500.

In 1836 the London Committee decided to re-establish the farm, this time on a "large scale". In their instructions to Simpson, the committee noted "the country appears to be well adapted for rearing sheep and Black Cattle, and for the growth of Flax and Hemp".⁹² Captain George Cary, along with a number of HBC employees and a good supply of seed and farm implements were sent to Red River the following year and housed in the buildings of the old fort. Cary established the farm at the Forks, immediately adjacent to the old wooden fort. He also constructed a few barns and stables immediately north of the river junction. These buildings are noted on an 1848 general survey of Red River by Captain H. Moody of the Royal Engineers and on another 1848 map drawn by Edward Hopkins.

Again, however, the experiment proved a failure. Cary grew many of the same crops as did the local settlers and thus antagonized many farmers who felt the HBC was attempting to extinguish the only market for their produce. By 1838, a full two years after the farm's establishment, Cary had only 20 acres under the plough. Yields were poor and there was little excess produce to turn over to the company. In 1841 the farm was abandoned and Cary was allowed to manage a portion of it as a private concern.⁹³ From 1837 to 1847 he served on the Council of Assiniboia and in 1837 was appointed justice of the peace for the upper district.

The work cycle for HBC servants at Upper Fort Garry was essentially seasonal in nature. For labourers, clerks, apprentice clerks and skilled tradesmen, tasks were organized around the arrival and departure of the boat and cart brigades, the spring and fall buffalo hunts, the

planting and harvesting of crops, and other jobs dictated by the individual seasons. Specific tasks, however, were dependent upon rank and experience. Labourers at the upper fort were assigned the rough physical jobs associated with work at a 19th century fur trade post. One of the most common tasks involved the construction and repair of post buildings. There was almost a constant need to repair structures that had been either damaged or destroyed by floods, storms, fire or age. Moreover, labourers also helped repair such things as palisades, fences, fish racks, boat landings, walls and mud chimneys. They also helped to maintain post property and equipment, cleaning barns and stables, whitewashing walls, or raking up rubbish from around the fort.

A labourer's duties involved a number of other tasks as well. Cutting and hauling firewood was a major preoccupation of company personnel. Obtaining sufficient heating fuel was an important part of the seasonal round of duties in the settlement. Where wood was once readily available from along the riverbank, by the 1840s timber stands had been largely depleted and firewood supplies had to be secured from relatively far afield. Ethnobotanical analysis of plant remains from Upper Fort Garry indicate the predominant type of wood burned at the post was conifer.⁹⁴ More than likely this wood came from the mixed and boreal forests north and east of the settlement, upwards of 60 km away. Numerous references can be found in post journals, as well as in the diary of Samuel Taylor, a farmer in the lower settlement, to men travelling for firewood to the "Pines", a wooding spot north and east of Red River.⁹⁵ Once the logs were cut and hauled on sleds to the fort the men sawed, split and stacked the firewood near the various buildings. At Upper Fort Garry a considerable quantity of wood was needed to heat the various buildings through the long winter months.⁹⁶

The busiest time of the year for post labourers was in the spring when the upper fort played a major role in the pemmican trade as well as the transportation of supplies, trade goods and country produce to inland posts. When the brigades left Red River in the spring bound for York Factory, they carried such country provisions as pemmican flour, corn, biscuit and vegetables. On their return journey to the settlement the boats brought trade goods from the York Factory depot warehouse, English provisions, agricultural equipment and mail. Red River carts brought pemmican and plains provisions to the post from Pembina and beyond, and Métis cart brigades travelled overland as far west as Fort Edmonton.

Labourers had many other duties. Using a fur press, they packed furs into 90 pound bundles, helped the carpenters and coopers prepare the many kegs and cassettes needed for transport, and made the canvas sacks used to ship agricultural produce. As well, post labourers worked on the experimental farm, building fences, repairing barns and stables, ploughing, weeding and harvesting. It was a relatively hard life, highly regulated and only modestly remunerated. Labourers in this period usually earned about £16 or £17 a year on a first contract.⁹⁷ A posting to the Winnipeg district was considered a favourable one, however, as life in the settlement usually allowed the company employee greater access to the English provisions as well as fresh meat and vegetables from the local farms.

Tradesmen at the fort enjoyed a slightly higher status than the labourers, earning an average of £30 per year depending upon a servant's particular skill and experience. Carpenters, coopers and blacksmiths were the most prominent tradesmen at the fort during this period. Post carpenters did most of the construction of new buildings as well as the repairing of old. During the winter months they spent a

good deal of their time making the kegs and cassettes used to transport trade goods and supplies to interior posts.

Duties at a major administrative and transshipment post such as Upper Fort Garry involved a great deal of clerical work, the "dull and insipid calculations" which inevitably accompanied the movement of goods and furs. Not only were detailed inventories recorded of the outfits going to each post, but exact lists were kept of what was in each piece or bundle. One copy of this list, called a packing account, was sent to the receiving post in order to confirm orders and indents.⁹⁸ Clerks and their apprentices spent many hours entering the type and amount of various commodities into the post ledger, requisitioning items for the northern posts, purchasing country produce, engaging tripmen, outfitting the plains hunters, maintaining inventories of furs and saleshop goods, and keeping the accounts of local settlers up to date. While Clerk R.M. Ballantyne complained of "sitting hour after hour on a long-legged stool" he did manage to find time to enjoy the favourite recreational pastime of company officers in Red River: hunting, "shouldering our guns and sallying forth to shoot the partridges, or rather grouse, which abound in the woods of Red River".⁹⁹ Robert Clouston, a clerk at Upper Fort Garry, described his activities in a letter to his family dated 1 August 1844.

I have, I think, already informed you that my work lies in the shop of which I have charge, and in which I must attend from $\frac{1}{2}$ past 8 a.m. till dark, in Winter, and to 7 p.m. in Summer. The Fur Trade is included in this department of duties - but, having a smart Assistant, who attends to Customers while I write, or enter the Sales & C, the work is not labourous: to be sure there is a good deal of annoyance and vexations experienced, but one must suffer these quietly ... When shop work is done for the day I generally write until 10 or 11 o'clock - Saturdays we have to ourselves - & either go out on Snowshoes to hunt pheasants or take a drive in our Carioles according to whim -

Sometimes we visit Mr. Black at the Lower Fort - pass the night there, accompanying him to Church in the forenoon and drive home in the evening.100

Company operations at the Forks were dependent upon the efforts of the clerks, tradesmen and labourers in its employ. As well, the HBC hired local Métis and English-speaking Halfbreeds on a contract basis to man its boat and cart brigades and provide the fort with much needed country provisions; the fresh and dried meat to help supply the interior posts.

Social and Economic Life

In the period prior to 1850 the fortunes of Red River were to a large extent dependent upon the economy of the fur trade. Community activities such as agriculture, buffalo hunting and freighting provided the HBC with food for its northern posts and labour for its complex system of transportation. In turn, the colony relied upon the company for goods and supplies, as a market for produce and a contract employer. The HBC controlled political life within the settlement through the Council of Assiniboia (or more accurately through the company's Northern Council) and administered the laws of its own quasi-judicial legal apparatus. Merchants, "principal settlers" and clergy generally maintained strong ties with the HBC squirearchy at the Forks. Their perceived political power was more often than not a function of this alliance, the creation of a ruling elite in a settlement of farmers, hunters and those who were both.

Agriculture, the hunt, private trade, a limited commercial activity, and the operations of the HBC were the basis of Red River economy. While the years before 1827 had been ones of crop failure and disaster, the next decade witnessed improved techniques of cultivation and animal

husbandry. Cultivated acreage in Red River increased from 2,152 acres in 1831 to over 4,000 by 1840, while the number of domestic animals rose from over 5,600 to approximately 11,000 during the same period. In the 1830s Red River experienced a number of successful crop yields and farmers were actually able to sell produce to the HBC.

Although agriculture expanded after 1827, the settlement remained an essentially riverine community dependent upon the Red and Assiniboine for transportation, fish and fuel. All cultivated land was located near the river with not a single farmstead situated beyond the two mile boundary. Wheat continued to be the most important crop grown on the riverlots. Barley, potatoes and to a lesser extent, oats and peas were also grown as field crops while carrots, cabbages, cauliflower, celery, onions, melons, radishes, cucumbers, asparagus, beets, beans, broccoli, Indian corn and squash were planted in small river edge gardens. The "haying privilege" was firmly established in this period as a growing population of farmers competed for the limited feed resources located on the open land beyond their own privilege. The cutting of hay generally occurred in late July and was strictly regulated by the Council of Assiniboia. Farmers who cut early were often penalized by having their hay confiscated and their privileges revoked.

The agricultural implements used by Red River farmers were generally simple in design, limited in quantity and made largely within the colony from local timber.¹⁰¹ For the restricted cultivation that was carried out a plough, harrow, spade, scythe or sickle, hand rake and cart were the essential tools of the farmer who still did most tasks by hand. As W.L. Morton has pointed out, the shortage of timber necessitated that farmers fence only the smaller infields in order to keep livestock from wandering into cultivated areas. Fields were thus restricted in size; a

field of five acres was considered large.¹⁰² As a consequence it was not necessary to import from England the latest in implement technology.

Before the first mills were constructed in Red River, farmers were forced to grind their grain in simple handmills or querns. A quern consisted of two large flat stones, the upper stone secured to a handle which was used to turn the stone over the wheat, producing a coarse yet edible flour.¹⁰³ The first windmill in the settlement, built in 1825, was owned by Robert Logan and located at the site of the original Fort Douglas. Twenty-nine years later there were 18 windmills and nine watermills, most located in the lower parishes.¹⁰⁴

After 1827 animal husbandry improved in the colony. Cattle herds increased as more feed was made available and barns and stables were erected. In 1833, 250 sheep were brought into the settlement from the United States. A modest sheep boom occurred over the next 15 years, the mean number of sheep increasing from less than one per landowner in 1838 to four in 1847. By 1849, however, flocks were on the decline as severe winter cold, primitive breeding techniques and wolves had taken their toll on the sheep population.¹⁰⁵ Pigs and poultry were seldom mentioned in the records or private journals of settlers and were generally taken for granted. The total number of pigs ranged from 1,500 in 1832 to 2,500 in 1849.¹⁰⁶ Oxen were used as draught animals, pulling the farmers' ploughs, sleds and carts, or the carts of freighters and buffalo hunters. Some raised oxen for sale to the company to work as draught animals or to pull the Red River carts of the HBC's overland brigades. Most settlers owned at least a pair of oxen, while more successful freighters and traders kept up to ten or more.¹⁰⁷ Horses were more evenly distributed throughout the colony. The average settler generally owned one horse which was used primarily for hunting, riding, racing, and

the pulling of sleighs and carriages. According to Alexander Ross, horses were in high demand in Red River and usually fetched a good price on the open market. Full grown animals, he stated, could go as high as £25 while "country nags" sold for about £12 or £13 each.¹⁰⁸

Most historians, from Alexander Ross to the present day, have characterized agriculture in Red River as being primitive, underdeveloped and primarily subsistence in nature.¹⁰⁹ W.L. Morton argued the "hybrid" nature of Red River's economy, the reliance upon the buffalo hunt and the farm among the majority of the settlement's residents, effectively blocked the emergence of a healthy and expanding agricultural community before 1870.¹¹⁰ In essence, he claimed, the two economies acted as a "fatal check" upon the other, depressing each other's return in a limited local market.¹¹¹

More recently, however, historians and geographers have viewed agriculture and the buffalo hunt as more complementary than competitive.¹¹² When crops failed or were damaged by frost or hail, the hunt and fisheries went a long way toward feeding much of the settlement's population. In 1845 Rev. Belcourt estimated that fully one-third of the settlement subsisted on the buffalo hunt.¹¹³ When the hunt failed the Métis and English-speaking Halfbreeds lived off the agricultural produce of their riverlots and vegetable gardens. This mixed economy was the result not so much of the failure of agriculture to gain supremacy as it was a deliberate and practical solution to the problem of scarcity. With limited markets, a harsh climate and primitive agricultural technology, the Orkney and Kildonan Scots were ill-equipped to establish a dynamic agricultural society in Rupert's Land. A hybrid economy, on the other hand, effectively exploited available resources and helped the Métis and Halfbreed settlers overcome the

fragility of a farming economy situated on an isolated frontier.

Especially in the early years of the settlement, most Métis and English-speaking Halfbreeds who were not of the merchant class participated in the spring and fall buffalo hunts. The production of pemmican, the first large scale secondary industry in western Canada, proved essential to the Hudson's Bay Company's elaborate transportation and supply network. Compact, highly nutritious and capable of being preserved over long periods of time, pemmican remained the staple diet of tripmen, company labourers, Métis and Halfbreeds. Only those who formed the ruling elite within the colony, the HBC officer class, clergy and principal settlers, did not rely upon pemmican for food. Instead their tables were usually filled with produce from local farms, wild game and English provisions brought to Red River via York Factory.

The hunt itself was a highly organized affair, regulated by an elected chief and 12 councillors.¹¹⁴ Captains were chosen to lead the various contingents and a set of provisions were adopted which regulated the hunt while providing for sanctions against those who charged ahead of the captain's signal or claimed another hunter's kill. Women and children along with hundreds of carts moved out with the hunters onto the plains. Scouts rode ahead looking for the herds, a search that might take many days. In some cases the hunt ended in failure when the buffalo grazed at such a distance from the settlement as to put them beyond the range of the Métis and their limited food resources. When a herd was sighted and the signal given the Métis riders charged the now stampeding bison, firing on the gallop. Rev. Georges Belcourt, a Roman Catholic priest in Red River, has left one of the more detailed descriptions of the hunt.

The speed at which the guns [of the Métis hunters] are discharged is truly astonishing. It is not at all rare to see three buffalo knocked over by a single hunter within the space of one arpent. Some of them manage to discharge their pieces as many as five times during the course of a chase ... The first shot only is wadded down. The other balls are carried in the mouth so they can prime their guns, pour in a charge of powder, and then spit the shot into the barrel. Saliva causes it to adhere to the powder at the bottom. In the meantime, the steed is abandoned to its own devices, but so well is it trained that the rider has but to lean to one side of the saddle or the other to make it understand his wishes which are obeyed immediately.¹¹⁵

Hundreds of bison might be killed in this manner with each hunter marking his kill. The women with the carts then moved up and began the butchering and processing of the carcasses. Strips of meat were hung to dry upon racks and then pounded into a powdery meal, mixed with melted fat and placed in a bag made from buffalo hide. Bags of pemmican, weighing approximately 90 pounds, were loaded along with dried meat and buffalo robes onto the carts for transport back to the settlement. Upon their return to Red River, the company purchased much of the plains provisions brought in by the hunters for use on its boat brigades or as food for its northern posts.

The buffalo hunt was an integral part of the fur trade, placing the Métis and Halfbreeds in the role of commodity producers in what was effectively a ranching economy. To portray the participation of the Métis in the hunt in romantic terms is misleading. They did not participate in an exclusively agricultural economy because of their love for what W.L. Morton has called the "barbarous life of the plains".¹¹⁶ It was not the "love of the chase" that motivated the hunters but a need for survival. The buffalo hunt was a rational and adaptive response to life in a restricted economy and helped the Métis exploit the most abundant resource of the plains, at least before 1860. For

the Métis development of a mixed economy - the cultivation of garden plots and small patches of grain, along with hunting, fishing and freighting - suited the geographic, climatic and political realities of Red River, especially in the years before the decline of the buffalo.

The fisheries also played a key part in the local economy. Although many fished from the banks of the Red and Assiniboine, a major fishery was located at Grand Marais on Lake Winnipeg. Taken by net the catch yielded pickerel, catfish, pike, goldeye and sturgeon, and formed an important part of the settlers' diet.

Thus the most notable aspect of life in the settlement was the primacy of the seasonal cycle. After the completion of the major spring buffalo hunt, the Métis and Halfbreeds returned to their riverlot farms. Over the course of the summer months they planted and raised their crops. In the fall a second hunt was undertaken, while around the same time whitefish were taken from the rivers and lakes. In winter the people hunted wild game, cut firewood and participated in the many social events which characterized that season in Red River. Guided by the rhythm of the seasons, the economic cycle centred upon the exploitation of available resources, resources which were often in short supply.

In his book The Birth of Western Canada, G.F.G. Stanley maintains the "primitive" nature of society throughout Rupert's Land before 1870 ultimately doomed it to assimilation by what he contends was a "stronger", more "complex" expanding Canadian culture.¹¹⁷ In recent decades Stanley's traditional "clash of cultures" view has been discounted, specifically in regard to the evolution of Red River society and the events of 1869-70. Frits Pannekoek has argued, for example, that the origins of the resistance lay not in the social and religious antagonisms introduced by the Canadians but by a racial and sectarian conflict

between the English-speaking Halfbreeds and Métis which had its roots deep in Red River's past.¹¹⁸ Current scholarship, however, disputes both explanations. Economic historian Irene Spry has argued that Pannekoek's racial conflict theory is based almost solely upon clerical sources, which she notes "must be used with great reserve".¹¹⁹ She puts forward documentary evidence taken from parish marriage records, Hudson's Bay Company documents and private journals which suggest that no deep-seated racial conflict existed between the Métis and Halfbreeds. In fact, both groups enjoyed a large degree of harmony as a result of their common traditions in the fur trade and buffalo hunt.¹²⁰ The conflict existing in Red River society, Spry argues, was between the well-to-do gentry, retired HBC officers and the clergy, and the "unlettered" engagés of the company. A second division, she maintains, also existed between the "professional" farmer and the buffalo hunters. "The gap was one occasioned by ambition, affluence, education and social status as against poverty and the inferior status of employees or, at best, of hunters, petty traders or small farmers."¹²¹

What Spry is suggesting is that the divisions which existed within Red River society were ultimately based more upon economics than racial identification. If we view the evolution of the unique society that developed from the Forks, we begin to see it was characterized first and foremost by a hierarchical class structure. Based for the most part upon status and material wealth, the top of this hierarchy was composed of company officers, principal settlers (the retired Orkney chief factors and chief traders and their Halfbreed families), and the Anglican and Catholic clergy. The former fur trade officers who began arriving in the colony in the 1820s possessed considerable material wealth. With their large land grants these principal settlers were able to purchase the implements and seed

necessary to operate a moderately successful farm. More importantly, their wealth allowed them to more easily survive the drought, frost, flood and insects which periodically visited the settlement. In accordance with his desire to have these settlers play a major role along with the HBC in the maintenance of social control in Red River, Simpson appointed a number to the Council of Assiniboia. The clergy also fulfilled this function as representatives from both churches sat on the council. While the company maintained its own pervasive economic and political influence over the settlement, the principal settlers and the clergy helped reinforce their authority through the promotion of a strongly Euro-Christian social order. Below the company officers, principal settlers and clergy were the wealthier merchants and freighters such as Andrew McDermot, James Sinclair, Narcisse Marion and Jean Augustin Nolin. In terms of actual wealth they often surpassed that of the principal settlers but did not have the same power and influence because of their economic activities which at times put them out of favour with the company. As Robert Gosman has pointed out, Métis society at Red River was far from monolithic. While the largest part of the Métis were hunters and trappers (having perhaps only a small garden patch cultivated on their riverlot farms), there also existed a group of petty bourgeois entrepreneurs who held the largest share of political and economic power among the Métis in Red River.¹²²

Hunters, trappers, tripmen and minor agriculturalists were the lowest class within the Red River hierarchy. Composed of the poorer residents of the lower parishes and the hunter/trapper Métis of St. Boniface, St. Norbert and St. François Xavier, this group was without representation on the Council of Assiniboia and had little or no political power in the settlement.

The stratification of groups in Red River was partly the result of economic factors, partly because of race, and partly the result of the hierarchical tradition of life at a company fur trade post. The separation of officers and servants in the fur trade was transmitted to the settlement and influenced access to power and prestige. As tripmen and hunters rarely rose in the HBC's service nor later as residents of the settlement, there were little of the real or perceived forces of democracy which often moderate an awareness of one's position in the economic hierarchy. Divisions within the settlement were characterized by Alexander Ross as the conflict between those who were primarily farmers and those who were primarily hunters, or what he called the conflict between "a savage and civilized life" (the civilization/savagery paradigm).¹²³ The community's troubles in later years were the result of these class divisions which saw the rights of the landless Métis and Halfbreeds sacrificed on the altar of Anglo-Canadian hegemony.

To some extent, class divisions were moderated by traditional kinship networks. Ties of blood dating back to the fur trade affected one's place in the social structure and influenced community interaction and the provision of welfare to those in need. At the same time racial and kinship ties helped create a kind of cultural ambivalence among many. When James Ross, the Halfbreed son of White patriarch Alexander Ross, posed the question, "What if Mama is an Indian!" in a letter to his sisters, he demonstrated how the acculturation process for the children of the principal settlers meant the suppression of their Indian heritage.¹²⁴ Though class identification determined those like James Ross remained above the buffalo hunters and poor farmers, by the 1840s a developing racial tension had begun to influence status and upward mobility even among the offspring of the well-to-do.

The Role of the Churches

The Anglican and Catholic churches played an important part in the development of the settlement before 1850. Primarily this role consisted of attempting to eradicate vestiges of what the clergy labeled the "primitive traditions" of the Métis and Halfbreeds, and extending Euro-Christian hegemony in the West. Missionaires acted as agents of acculturation, aggressive purveyors of European and Canadian social values, moral assumptions and religious culture. Missions in Red River served as the organizational medium through which the Christian churches challenged the worldview of the Métis and English-speaking Halfbreeds. By emphasizing faith, education, conformity to a Euro-Christian ethic, and in the case of the Anglican Church, a commitment to agriculture, the missionaries hoped to bring about dramatic religious and cultural change in the aboriginal life of the settlement.

The Anglican mission in Red River was sponsored by the Church Missionary Society and by 1850 had established churches and schools in the parishes of St. John's, Kildonan, St. Paul's, St. Andrew's, St. Peter's and St. James. The CMS attempted to discourage the participation of its Halfbreed parishoners in the hunt and fur trade. Anglican missionaries taught that agriculture, education and Christian morality were the vehicles through which a British-style society could be created. For William Cockran stationed at St. Andrew's in the lower settlement, "The voyageurs' very bones must be broken" in order for them to dispense with past traditions and move toward a "civilized" and Christian standard of morality.¹²⁵ Agriculture, it was believed, was the key to this evolution, "being an important branch in the system of instruction".¹²⁶ Mission farms were established in order to satisfy the dual role of providing

country produce for the resident missionaries and as a tool for the instruction of local parishioners. School curricula that stressed subjects such as mathematics, history and geography, as well as practical agricultural and domestic skills, were established in the hopes of transforming Red River society. Coupled with religious instruction and twice-weekly church services, the program of the Anglican mission stressed the necessity to pattern society after an Anglo-Christian model. Permanent missions were favoured over itinerancy in the concerted attempt to lessen the pervasive influence of the fur trade and ensure the victory of "civilization" over "barbarism".

The stated aims of the Anglican church at first glance appear at odds with those of the Hudson's Bay Company. In reality, however, the two institutions shared similar points of view, having a common vision of the social structure of Red River society. For the clergy and the active and retired gentlemen, church and company together represented the ruling elite within the community, an elite which could provide guidance for the "lower orders". The Anglican church was dependent upon the company for financial assistance and the transporting of goods and supplies. Though West, Jones, Cockran and others criticized the company for fostering what they believed was immorality and licentious living among the Indians and Halfbreeds, they were indebted to it for its role in helping to acculturate the people into European manners, customs and beliefs. The company provided the political structure within which the missions could operate, and it relied on the church as a mechanism for social control within the settlement. It helped to keep those former company servants who had been retired to Red River after 1821 within the confines of the settlement, producing food for posts and brigades. Most importantly, it removed them as potential competitors in the

context of the developing private trade in Rupert's Land. Ultimately the Anglican church played a major role in the transition of English-speaking Red River from a society of hunters and traders to a community which by the 1840s had begun to exhibit increasing class fragmentation along with some of the social and racial ideals of the Victorian period.

The role of the Roman Catholic clergy among the large Métis population was characteristically different from that of the Anglicans. Where the latter believed in the primacy of "civilization" and its attendant social and political institutions, the former concentrated on teaching the Christian gospel while leaving unchanged many of the traditions and customs of the Métis and Canadiens. Though Bishop Provencher along with a handful of Catholic priests, and after 1845 the Grey Nuns, founded churches and schools, they did not believe the communication of Catholic doctrine implied the establishment of mission farms and other European institutions. The Métis were expected to comply only with the moral and ethical dictates of the church as outlined in the catechism.¹²⁷ For the Catholic clergy, Christianity outlined a moral code and as such was adaptable to the social and political situation existing within Rupert's Land. The buffalo hunt and tripping with the boat brigades were activities generally accepted by the priest who attempted to reform behaviour and institute a Christian morality within the context of an established social framework. While the church stressed the value of a settled life among the Métis, it did so not because of any moral or philosophical imperative but because it facilitated the communication of the gospel. The allegiances and traditions of the fur trade were not condemned by the Church of Rome in Red River as they were by the CMS. Instead, the Catholic church was integrated into the daily life of the community, even to the extent that priests accompanied the hunters on

their twice annual expeditions in search of the bison. If the Anglican church demanded an immediate and unwavering compliance to an Anglo-European worldview, the Catholic missionaries believed a gradual process of socialization via the teachings of the gospel was the most practical and effective means of extending the influence of its mission.

The CMS shared a common religious and ethnic background with many of the principal settlers and company officers in Red River. The Catholic clergy, however, were never allowed the intimacy of the colony's governing elite because of barriers of language and religion.¹²⁸ Membership on the Council of Assiniboia gained only limited influence for the church, and while a M tis petite-bourgeoisie developed after 1835 it could not exercise the kind of influence exerted by its English-speaking counterparts. When the simmering free trade issue erupted in 1844, a few of the Catholic clergy openly supported the aims and concerns of their M tis parishioners.

The Forks, Free Trade and the Disintegration of Company Rule
 Nowhere was the anomaly of Red River's existence within the economy of the fur trade more apparent than in the dispute over the private trade in furs. After the union of the two competing fur companies in 1821 and the reduction of the HBC's permanent workforce, opportunities for mixed-bloods within the company declined. Supplementing their limited involvement in farming, or participation in the buffalo hunt and contract work on the boat brigades, some took up the private trading of furs and other commodities. In the early years of the colony Chief Factor Clarke's suspicion that settlers were attempting to circumvent the company's outdated and unenforcable monopoly led to bad feelings between it and the colonists. George Simpson moved quickly

to defuse the worsening situation by deciding that selected individuals might traffic in goods other than furs.¹²⁹ While a few petty traders imported goods from England via York Factory for sale in Red River, it was entrepreneurs such as Andrew McDermot and James Sinclair who fashioned the private trade into an increasingly lucrative business. McDermot and Sinclair, and later Augustin Nolin, received licenses from the company enabling them to trade in plains provisions and some furs and to operate freighting contracts out of Red River. In 1825 Simpson even extended the licenses of the Pembina free traders to include the right to trade in furs, hoping to drive out of business a few American traders who were operating in the region.¹³⁰ While the HBC perceived this limited private trade as beneficial in that it relieved the company of risky trading ventures, it could not tolerate direct competition wherein traders did not sell directly to the company but instead purchased furs for export on their own account.¹³¹

By the early 1840s the operations of McDermot and Sinclair, as well as a host of smaller players such as Alexis Goulet, Peter Garrioch and Narcisse Marion, had grown large enough to pose a threat to the company's financial hegemony in the region. In 1844 independent trader Norman Kittson set up shop in Pembina and began to deal in furs. He generally offered a wider and cheaper selection of merchandise than did the HBC, and succeeded in attracting considerable business from the Forks. Chief Factor Alexander Christie moved quickly to have the Council of Assiniboia pass a number of regulations designed to curtail the free traders. Licenses were revoked, goods were seized in a high-handed and illegal manner by the company, and quotas announced on the importation of certain trade goods. Discontent seethed in Red River as animosity toward HBC rule among the Métis and Halfbreeds turned into open defiance. The challenge to its perceived authority went beyond the

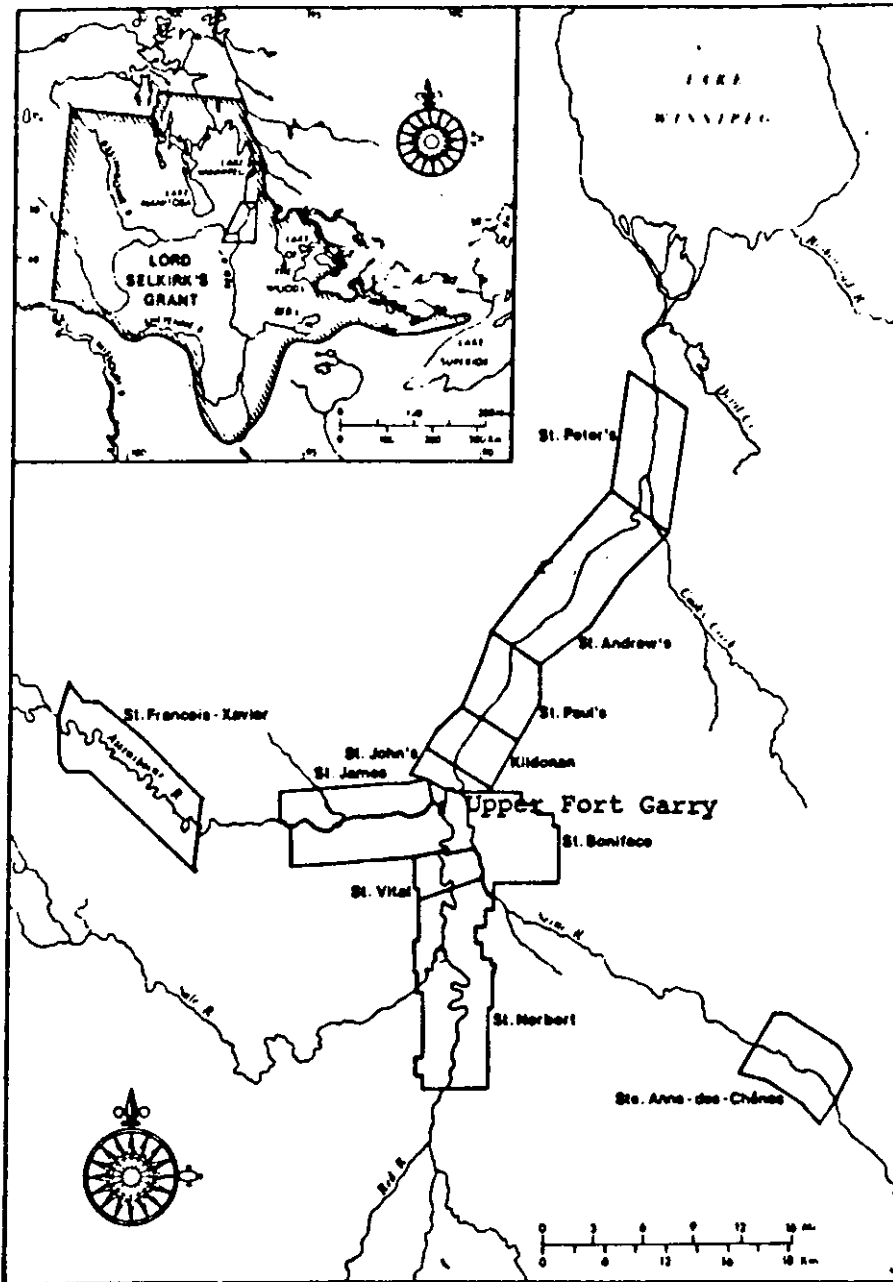


Figure 9, The Red River Settlement ca.1850.

company's claim to economic monopoly and symbolized a growing disenchantment with the Company's attempts to control most aspects of political, legal and social life in Red River. "The traders of Rupert's Land" writes Irene Spry, challenged the Company's domination of business activity in the Territory, the necessity of Company approval for virtually any business venture, and the limits set on any attempt to explore economic opportunities other than those offered or at least authorized by the Company."¹³²

One of the HBC's most active opponents was Catholic priest Rev. Georges Belcourt who clearly identified himself with the aims of his Métis congregation. Belcourt's opposition incurred the disapproval of Bishop Norbert Provencher and the rest of the Catholic clergy in the settlement who by 1844 had formed a quiet alliance with the company elite at Upper Fort Garry.¹³³ From his parish at Pembina where he had been posted in 1848, Belcourt continued to challenge the authority of the company and the control of the Catholic church in Red River. The year previous Belcourt, along with James Sinclair and other private traders, had organized a petition against the HBC and succeeded in getting almost 1,000 signatures.¹³⁴

In the face of such mounting opposition, George Simpson petitioned the British government for a force of British regulars to be sent to Red River. American expansion into the Oregon territory and the threat to British interests north of the Columbia was used by the company as a pretext to convince the Duke of Wellington that a military presence was needed in Rupert's Land. In September 1846, 307 men of the Sixth Regiment of Foot (the Royal Warwickshires), 28 soldiers of the Royal Artillery, 12 men of the Royal Sappers and Miners, and two members of the Royal Engineers arrived in Red River.¹³⁵ Upon arriving in the settlement the troops were quartered at both the upper and lower forts. Colonel J.F. Crofton, the military leader of the expedition,

established his headquarters at the Forks. The Royal Artillery, along with half of the Sixth Regiment, were also stationed there, while the balance of the troops were quartered 20 miles away at Lower Fort Garry. The Duke of Wellington's plan to upgrade the military defences at both establishments (at a cost estimated to be between £80,000 and £120,000) was resisted by Simpson who felt the company would inevitably bear the brunt of costs for the extensive renovations.¹³⁶ Simpson was successful in eventually having plans for new construction halted at the Forks.

The occupation of Red River by military troops had a dramatic effect upon the settlement. Much of the private trade was curtailed or driven underground while an economic boom for agricultural produce, country provisions and English manufactured goods occurred. Farmers increased their acreage during this period while contract freighters experienced a growing demand for their services.¹³⁷

With the departure of the force two years later in 1848, however, and their replacement by a company of Chelsea Pensioners, the free trade issue returned. In 1849 Christie's replacement, Chief Factor John Ballenden, arrested Guillaume Sayer, a Métis free trader, and hauled him before the general quarterly court of Assiniboia on charges of illegally trafficking in furs. The case proved a watershed in the continuing free trade debate and provided the opportunity for the Métis to express their objection to company rule and its attempts to enforce an outdated charter. After listening to a speech by Louis Riel Sr. from the steps of St. Boniface Cathedral, some 200 to 300 armed Métis converged on the courthouse. Though Sayer was found guilty the jury recommended mercy, a recommendation to which Chief Recorder Adam Thom reluctantly agreed. Sayer's discharge effectively broke the company's monopoly in Rupert's Land and the clarion cry "La commerce est libre"

from the assembled Métis signalled the economic separation of colony and company. As Doug Sprague has argued, The Sayer trail was thus a milestone in the history of the native people in the area—for two reasons. First, the committee included leaders from both groups, the Protestant as well as the Catholic. Second, they had shown that with the whole community united they could force outsiders to back down. Of course, the HBC continued to claim authority and also to pretend that they ruled Red River through their appointed Council of Assiniboia but that structure by-passed the real leaders of native society. The Council of Assiniboia consisted almost exclusively of retired fur traders and the clergy. The persons who probably commanded more respect were the Métis entrepreneurial elite on whom the Company heaped nothing but scorn.¹³⁸

The long dispute over free trade, which came to a crisis in 1849, signalled the disintegration of the HBC's monopoly in Rupert's Land as free traders moved out across the West trading for buffalo robes, furs and plains provisions. An independent Métis economy was firmly established and consolidated in this period as many became freighters, traders, guides and interpreters. It signalled an increasing political influence as new economic activities had a direct impact upon the Métis "personal and collective autonomy".¹³⁹ But as Robert Gosman has argued, it was not those in the mainstream of Métis society, the buffalo hunters, who benefitted most from this increasing power. "Rather it was the membership of a nascent petty bourgeois entrepreneurial class, composed of individuals whom the Company perceived to have interests in common with its own."¹⁴⁰ Though Gosman concedes the rise and composition of this Métis class is difficult to document, he claims they enjoyed considerable power in Red River during the 1850s and sixties and even held on for a number of years after Manitoba's entry into Confederation.¹⁴¹ With the decline of the fur trade, however, and the extension of Anglo-Canadian hegemony in the West, the Métis and Halfbreeds lost much of

their former power and influence, and effectively relegated to the fringes of the expanding wheat economy in the West developed under the direction of the National Policy.

Conclusion

The union of the Hudson's Bay and North West companies created an overly large fur trade workforce in Rupert's Land. As a result, a large group of Métis and English-speaking Halfbreed servants were declared redundant after the reorganization of 1821. Settling in Red River, these former fur trade labourers joined the tiny colony of Cree and Sauteaux, Métis gens libres, Selkirk settlers, French Canadian, Swiss and Demeuron colonists who already inhabited riverlots around the Forks.

In the period between 1821 and 1850 the Forks played an important role in the organization of the fur trade in Rupert's Land. Fort Gibraltar was occupied by the HBC and renamed Fort Garry. Thirteen years later, a short distance up the Assiniboine, Upper Fort Garry was built and it soon became the trade and administrative centre of the settlement. From upper Fort Garry produce from local farms and pemmican from the twice yearly buffalo hunts were shipped to the York, Norway House, Swan River and Saskatchewan districts. Connected via York boat with Norway House, York Factory and Portage LaLoche, the Forks played a critical part in the smooth transport of provisions, furs, trade goods and people throughout Rupert's Land.

In Red River the HBC shared political power with the Anglican and Catholic churches, as well as with a small elite of affluent landowners. The dispute between what Irene Spry has called "the mass of unlettered, unpropertied natives of the country...[the] hunters, petty traders or

or small farmers", and the HBC centred on free trade, or the right to trade in furs outside the company's monopoly.¹⁴² Many in the settlement prospered outside of the "official" limits of economic activity. While creating much of Red River's commercial and economic strength, the M tis were largely without political power in Red River. By 1850 and the creation of an independent M tis economy in the West, the HBC was unable to protect its trade monopoly in the region. The annexationist movement, which was at an incipient stage in Red River in the 1850s, would eventually bring about the extension of Canada's empire in the Northwest. Ultimately, the establishment of a resource-based hinterland economy in the West after 1870 resulted in the dispossession and dispersal of the original Native and mixed-blood inhabitants of old Red River.

INTRODUCTION

- 1 For a discussion of the origins of the terms Ojibwa, western Ojibwa and Saulteaux, refer to pp. 14-15 of this report.
- 2 The use of the term "Halfbreed" has been deliberately chosen to describe those mixed-blood residents of Red River who were of Indian and (predominantly) Orkney ancestry. In 20th century parlance the word "Halfbreed" came to have a negative or pejorative connotation. In recent years such terms as "country-born", "English-speaking mixed-bloods", "Rupertslanders", "English Métis" and "Native-English" have been used by historians when referring to the offspring of Anglo-British HBC traders and their Native wives. These new terms, however, can be misleading or confusing and I have chosen to use the traditional term "Halfbreed" when describing these English-speaking inhabitants of Red River. Historically, this term was used by Halfbreeds and non-Halfbreeds alike, and has recently returned to common usage by those groups of partly Native ancestry who wish to identify their unique and independent tradition in the West. I have also used the upper case 'H' in order to place "Halfbreed" at the same level ethnically as such designations as Métis, Scottish or French. As for punctuation, the use of quotation marks around the term further indicates the use of "Halfbreed" in the historical, or traditional, sense.

NATIVE - EURO-CANADIAN CONTACT, 1734-60

- 1 Martin Kavanagh, LaVérendrye, His Life and Times (Fletcher and Sons, 1967), p. 3
- 2 Ibid., p. xi.
- 3 Arthur J. Ray, "Indian Adaptations to the Forest-Grassland Boundary of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, 1650-1821: Some Implications for Interregional Migration," Canadian Geographer, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Summer 1972), p. 103.
- 4 According to anthropologist J.H. Steinbring, the "Lake Winnipeg Sauteaux derived from Ojibwa populations that originally occupied the lake and river country of the Precambrian Shield to the east". J.H. Steinbring, "Sauteaux of Lake Winnipeg," in The Handbook of North American Indians, ed. June Helm (Washington: Smithsonian Institute, 1981), Vol. 6, "Subarctic," p. 244.
- 5 Jennifer S.H. Brown, "Northern Algonquians from Lake Superior and Hudson Bay to Manitoba in the Historic Period," in ed. Native Peoples, the Canadian Experience, R.B. Morrison and C.R. Wilson (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986), pp. 209-11.
- 6 Arthur J. Ray, Indians in the Fur Trade (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), pp. 27-30.
- 7 Ibid., p. 31.
- 8 Tony Buckner, unpublished manuscript, Historic Resources, Manitoba Department of Culture, Heritage and Recreation, Winnipeg, 1984.

- 9 Lawrence J. Burpee, ed., Journals and Letters of Pierre Gaultier De Varennes De LaVérendrye and His Sons (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1927), pp. 253-4. (hereafter cited as Journals and Letters.
- 10 Ibid., p. 243.
- 11 Authur J. Ray, "Indian Adaptations to the Forest-Grassland Boundary of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, 1650-1821," pp. 112-3.
- 12 Elliot Coues, ed., New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest. The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry and David Thompson, 1799-1814 (New York: Francis P. Harper), p. 48 (hereafter cited as Alexander Henry Journal).
- 13 Aarron Arrowsmith, "Plan of the Red River Settlement as it was in June, 1816," ed. John Warkentin and Richard Ruggles Historical Atlas of Manitoba, (Winnipeg: Manitoba Historical Society, 1970), p. 189.
- 14 Peter D. Elias, The Dakota of the Canadian Northwest, Lessons for Survival (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1988), p. xiii.
- 15 Edwin James, ed., A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner (Minneapolis: Ross and Haines, 1956), p. 39 (hereafter cited as John Tanner Journal).
- 16 The common exploitation of resources in specific "buffer zones" by adjacent Native groups is a concept developed by anthropologist Harold Hickerson. See his article "The Virginia Deer and Intertribal Buffer Zones in the Upper Mississippi Valley", in Man, Culture and Animals, ed. Anthony Leeds (Washington: American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1965), pp. 43-65.
- 17 Gary Adams and Peter Priess, personal communication with the author, 18 October 1988.

- 18 Archaeological excavations at the Forks were carried out in the summer and fall of 1988 by the Canadian Parks Service, the provincial government and the University of Manitoba, and the East Yards Development Corporation. At this time it remains unclear the extent to which archaeological work will continue at the Forks in the future.
- 19 Lawrence J. Burpee, Journals and Letters, pp. 243-4.
- 20 Ibid., p. 298.
- 21 Ibid., pp. 250-1.
- 22 Edwin James, John Tanner Journal, p. 31; Elliot Coues, Alexander Henry Journal, p. 44; L.R. Masson, "Extracts from Mr. John McDonnell's Journals, 1793-1795," in Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest (Quebec: 1889), p. 284.
- 23 Arthur J. Ray, "Indian Adaptations to the Forest-Grassland Boundary of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, 1650-1821," p. 113.
- 24 John Milloy, "The Plains Cree: A Preliminary Trade and Military Chronology, 1670-1870." Master's thesis, Carleton University, Ottawa, 1972, p. 127.
- 25 Ibid., p. 128.
- 26 Abraham Rotstein, "Trade and Politics: An Institutional Approach," Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Autumn 1973).
- 27 Gerald Friesen, The Canadian Prairies: A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), pp. 17-18.
- 28 Arthur J. Ray and Donald Freeman, Give Us Good Measure (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), p. 233.
- 29 Olive Dickason, The Myth of the Savage (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1984), pp. 89-203.
- 30 Ibid.

- 31 Cornelius Jaenen, "French Attitudes Towards Native Society," in Old Trails and New Directions: Papers of the Third North American Fur Trade Conference (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), p. 70.
- 32 Sarah Carter, "A Review of Dickason's The Myth of the Savage," Prairie Forum, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Spring 1986), p. 118.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 See Figure 4 in Arthur J. Ray and Donald Freeman Give Us Good Measure, p. 34.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Lawrence J. Burpee, Journals and Letters, p. 7.
- 37 Ibid., p. 3.
- 38 Ibid., pp. 5-6.
- 39 Ibid., p. 92.
- 40 Robert M. Tegedhr, Rediscovery and Restoration of Fort St. Charles (St. John's Abbey Press, 1979).
- 41 Lawrence J. Burpee, Journals and Letters, p. 128.
- 42 Ibid., p. 191.
- 43 Ibid., pp. 197-8.
- 44 Antoine Champagne, "The Vérendryes and Their Successors, 1727-1760," Transactions of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, Series III, No. 25 (1968-69), p. 8. See also Antoine Champagne, Nouvelles Etudes sur les LaVérendrye et le Poste de L'Ouest (Montreal: Laval University Press, 1971), pp. 25-27. As part of the original master development plan of the federal/provincial "Agreement for Recreation and Conservation" for the Red River Corridor (1981), an archaeological survey was to be undertaken in the area in hopes of locating this post. The survey was eventually dropped from the corridor agreement.
- 45 Ibid.
- 46 Lawrence J. Burpee, Journals and Letters, p. 244.
- 47 Ibid., p. 251.

- 48 Ibid.
- 49 Ibid., pp. 275-6.
- 50 This 1737 map also labels the junction of the Red and "Roseaux" (Roseau) River which flows into the Red about 45 miles south of the present city of Winnipeg, as "La fourche". This is the spot where la Jemeraye died the year previous.
- 51 Lawrence J. Burpee, Journals and Letters, p. 233.
- 52 Ibid., pp. 298-9.
- 53 Ibid., p. 299.
- 54 Ibid., pp. 300-1.
- 55 Ibid., p. 301.
- 56 Ibid., pp. 302-3.
- 57 Ibid., p. 303.
- 58 Ibid., p. 308.
- 59 Antoine Champagne, Nouvelles Etudes sur les LaVérendrye et le Poste de L'Ouest, p. 26.
- 60 William Douglas, "'The Forks' Becomes a City," Transactions of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, Series III, No. 1 (1944), p. 53.
- 61 Antoine Champagne, Nouvelles Etudes sur les LaVérendrye et le Poste de L'Ouest, p. 27.
- 62 Elliot Coues, Alexander Henry Journal, p. 48.
- 63 C.N. Bell, "The Old Forts of Winnipeg, 1738-1927," Transactions of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, No. 3 (May 1927), p. 15.
- 64 Rodger Guinn, "The Red-Assiniboine Junction: A Land Use and Structural History, 1770-1980." Manuscript Report Series No. 355, Parks Canada, Ottawa, 1980, pp. 31-33.
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- 66 Peter Priess, Sheila Bradford, Biron Ebell and Peter Nieuwhof, "Archaeology at the Forks: An Initial Assessment," Manuscript on file, Archaeological Services, Canadian Parks Service, Winnipeg, 1986.

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- 69 L.R. Masson, Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest, p. 268.
- 70 Rodger Guinn, "The Red-Assiniboine Junction: A Land Use and Structural History, 1770-1980," p. 224.
- 71 Lawrence J. Burpee, Journals and Letters, p. 250.
- 72 Ibid., p. 357.
- 73 Ibid., p. 484.
- 74 N.M. Crouse, "The Location of Fort Maurepas," Canadian Historical Review, No. 3 (September 1928), p. 219.
- 75 Ibid., pp. 220-2. Crouse argues that LaVérendrye's policy was to establish new posts north and west, making the establishment of a new Fort Maurepas on the Winnipeg River in 1739-40 (and subsequent to the building of Forts Rouge and La Reine) superfluous. Crouse maintains this post was in fact never built. While she musters a few arguments in support of her thesis, she has chosen to ignore Pierre's memorandum of 1749 which clearly states that a Fort Maurepas existed at the mouth of the Winnipeg River. See Antoine Champagne, Nouvelles Etudes sur les LaVérendrye et le Poste de L'Ouest, pp. 27-31.
- 76 Lawrence J. Burpee, Journals and Letters, p. 221.
- 77 Antoine Champagne, "The Vérendryes and Their Successors, 1727-1760," p. 10.
- 78 Ibid., pp. 12-13.
- 79 Ibid., p. 13.
- 80 Arthur J. Ray, Indians in the Fur Trade, p. 23.

NATIVE SOCIETY AND ECONOMY DURING THE COMPETITIVE FUR TRADE PERIOD, 1760-1821

- 1 As quoted in E.E. Rich, The History of the Hudson's Bay Company: 1670-1870 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1960), Vol. I, p. 646.
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- 3 See, for example, Paul Thistle, Indian-European Trade Relations in the Lower Saskatchewan River Region to 1840 (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1986).
- 4 Arthur J. Ray, "Fur Trade History as an Aspect of Native History," in One Century Later: Western Canadian Reserve Indians Since Treaty 7, ed. Ian Getty and Donald Smith (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1978).
- 5 Jacqueline Peterson and John Anfinson, "The Indian and the Fur Trade: A Review of Recent Literature," Manitoba History, No. 10 (Autumn 1985), p. 10.

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- 7 A.S. Morton, "Forrest Oakes, Charles Boyer, Joseph Fulton and Peter Pangman in the Northwest, 1765-93," Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Series III, No. 31, p. 90.
- 8 Hudson's Bay Company Archives (hereafter cited as HBCA), B.239/a/64, f. 15, York Factory Journal, as quoted in Paul Thistle, Indian-European Trade Relations in the Lower Saskatchewan River Region to 1840, p. 28.
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- 10 See, for example, E.E. Rich, The History of the Hudson's Bay Company 1670-1870 and A.S. Morton, A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973).
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- 12 Ibid., pp. 35-36.
- 13 See Carolyn Gilman, Where Two Worlds Meet (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1982), p. 8.
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- 16 Ibid.
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- 20 Paul Thistle, Indian-European Trade Relations in the Lower Saskatchewan River Region to 1840, p. 53.
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- 22 Over 1,000 fur trade labourers were employed in the interior after 1774, while hundreds more manned the canoe brigades travelling between Fort William, Red River, York Factory and the Athabaska district.
- 23 Arthur J. Ray, Indians in the Fur Trade, p. 104.
- 24 A.S. Morton, "Forrest Oakes, Charles Boyer, Joseph Fulton and Peter Pangman in the Northwest, 1765-93," p. 90. Historian W.S. Wallace, The Pedlars from Quebec (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1954), p. 5 argues it was Thomas Corry who built this first post on the Red, while Morton argues in support of Oakes.
- 25 A.S. Morton, A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71, p. 271.
- 26 Minnesota State Archives (hereafter cited as MSA), Diary of John Macdonell, 4 September 1793.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Marcel Giraud, The Métis in the Canadian West, trans. George Woodcock (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1986), Vol. 1, p. 158.
- 29 Arthur J. Ray, Indians in the Fur Trade, p. 126.
- 30 Ibid.
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- 32 HBCA, B.22/a/1, f. 26, Red River Journal, 19 May 1794.
- 33 MSA, A-C428, Journal of Charles Jean Baptiste Chaboillez, 14 September 1797.
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- 35 For a discussion of the origins of the names Ojibwa and Saulteaux, see pp. 14-15 of this report.
- 36 Provincial Archives of Manitoba (hereafter cited as PAM), MG1 D3, Peter Fidler's Journal, 22 July 1814-16, July 1815.
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- 38 Elliot Coues, Alexander Henry Journal, p. 46.
- 39 Historic Resources, "Burials and/or Skeletal Remains Occurring in and Near the CN East Yards," unpublished paper, Manitoba Department of Culture, Heritage and Recreation, Winnipeg, 1987.
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- 43 Historic Resources, "Burials and/or Skeletal Remains Occurring in and Near the CN East Yards."
- 44 Historic Resources, "Chief Peguis", Manitoba Department of Culture, Heritage and Recreation, Winnipeg, 1982, p. 2.
- 45 Alexander Ross, The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress and Present State (London: Smith Elder, 1856), pp. 10-11.
- 46 Laura L. Peers, "An Ethnohistory of the Western Ojibwa, 1780-1830." Master's thesis, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, 1987, p. 162.
- 47 Ibid., pp. 163-5.
- 48 Marcel Giraud, The Métis in the Canadian West, p. 283.
- 49 Jennifer Brown, Strangers in Blood, Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980), p. 69.
- 50 Doug Sprague and Ron Frye, The Genealogy of the First Métis Nation (Winnipeg: Pemmican, 1983), p. 12.
- 51 Jacqueline Peterson, "Prelude to Red River: A Social Portrait of the Great Lakes Métis," Ethnohistory, Vol. 25 (Winter 1978), pp. 59-61.

- 52 PAM, MG2 S1-1, Selkirk Papers, "Macdonell's List of Free Canadians in Red River," 1814.
- 53 Alexander Ross, The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress and Present State, p. 24.
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- 92 PAM, Selkirk Papers, Thomas Thomas to Selkirk, 15 September 1815, p. 1434.
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NATIVE SETTLEMENT AND THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY, 1821-50

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- 14 See, for example, HBCA, B.235/a/5, 14 September 1822; 19 September 1822; 1 May 1823.
- 15 Ibid., 27 September 1822.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Ibid., 5 March 1821; 7 April 1821.
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- 19 John West, Substance of a Journal, p. 25.
- 20 PAM, Selkirk Papers, George Simpson to Andrew Colvile, 20 May 1822, p. 7608.
- 21 Government and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company to George Simpson, 27 February 1822 as quoted in HBCA, Minutes of Council, Northern Department of Rupert's Land, 1821-1831, ed. R.H. Fleming (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1940), pp. 32-33.
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- 43 W.L. Morton, "Agriculture in the Red River Colony," Canadian Historical Review, Vol. 30 (1949), p. 306.

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- 45 Ibid., p. 2.
- 46 Barry Kaye, "Some Aspects of the Cultural Geography of Red River, 1811-1870." Master's thesis, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, 1967, p. 80.
- 47 W.L. Morton, "Agriculture in the Red River Colony," p. 308.
- 48 Alexander Ross, The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress and Present State, p. 109.
- 49 W.L. Morton, "Agriculture in the Red River Colony," p. 309. Morton uses as evidence for his assertion the claims made by Donald Gunn, a farmer in the lower settlement, whose evidence was presented before the British Parliamentary Select Committee on the affairs of the HBC in Rupert's Land.
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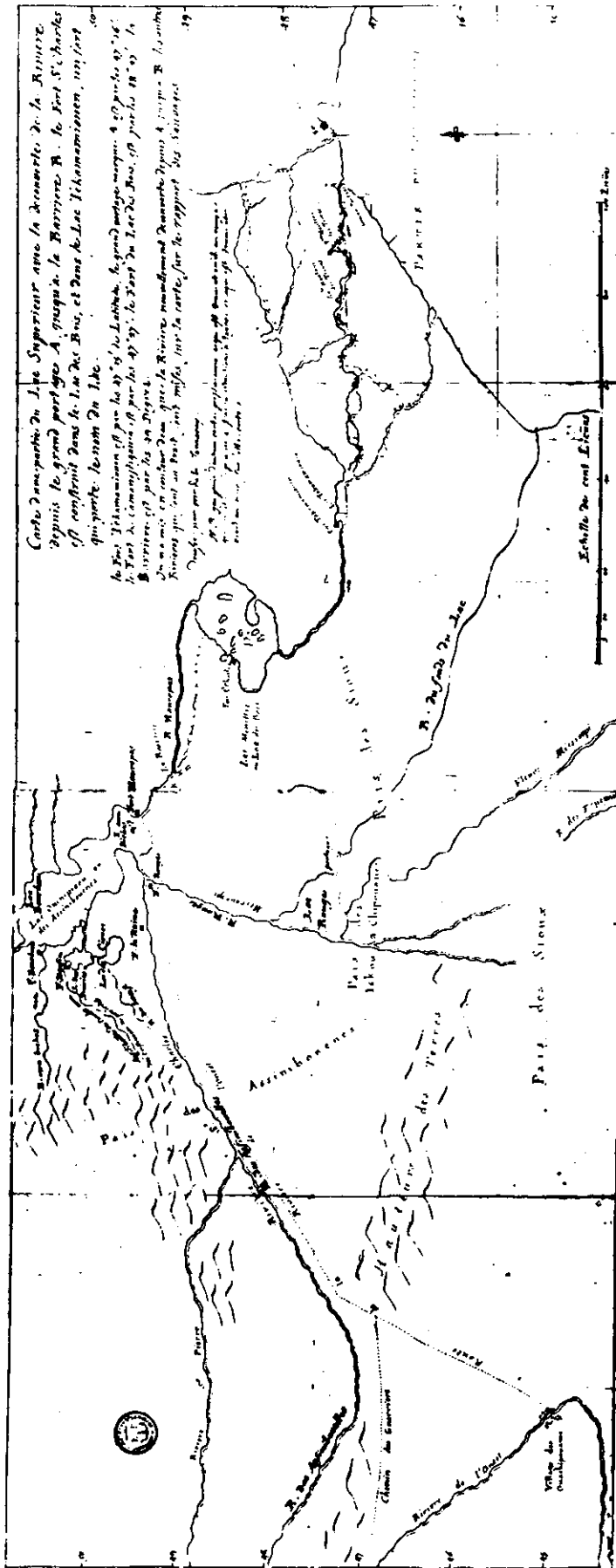


Figure 10 Map of part of Lake Superior with discoveries of the river from the grand portage "A" up to the barrier "B..." by M. de la Jemeray, 1733. (National Archives of Canada PH/902/1733.)

Rodger Guinn argues that this map depicts locations unknown to the LaVérendrye expedition in 1733 and was probably drafted after 1740.



Figure 11 Map containing the new discoveries to the west of Canada...1737, by La Vérendrye. (National Archives of Canada PH/902/1737.)

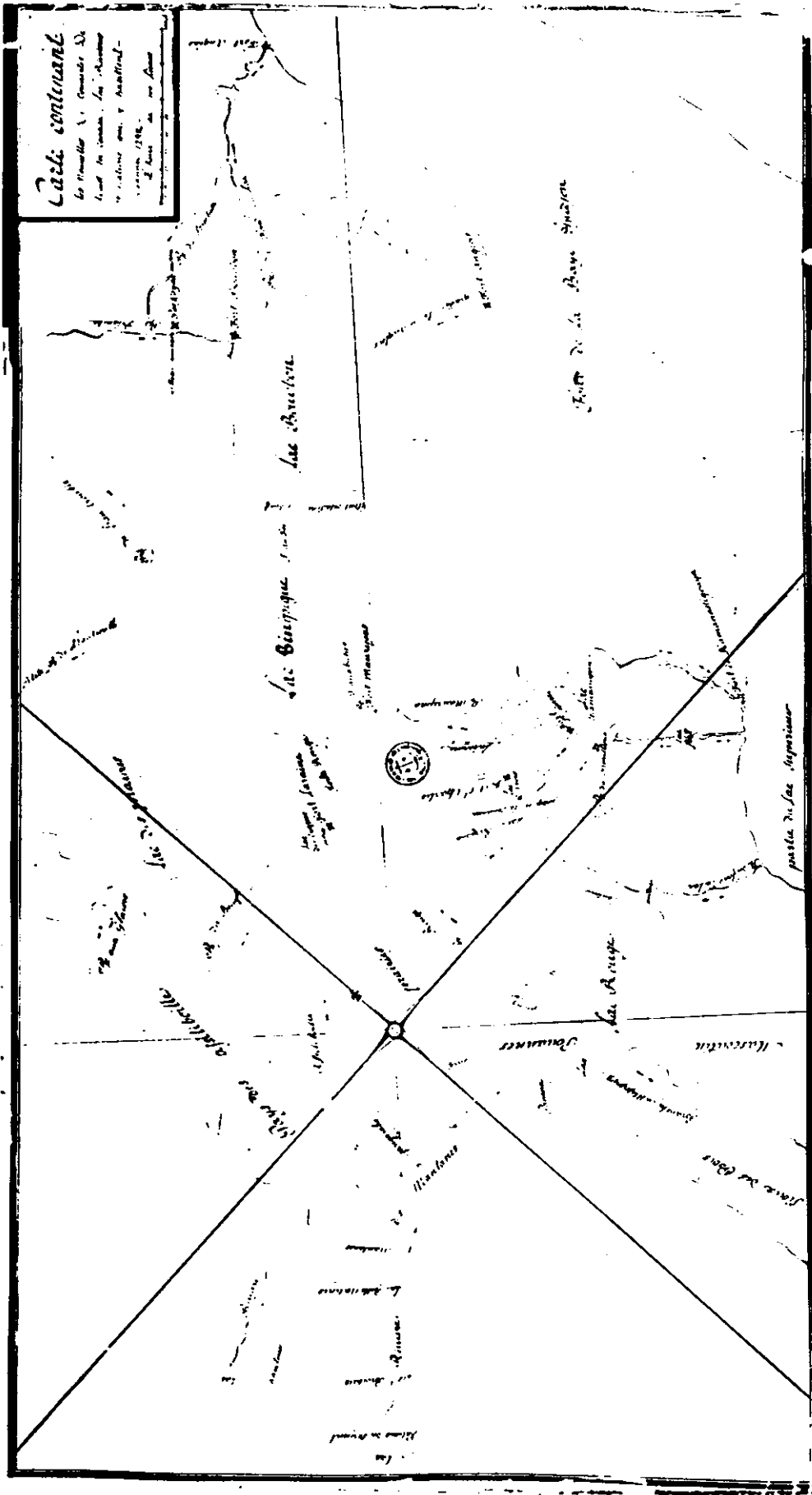


Figure 12 Map containing the new discoveries to the west of Canada...in the year 1740. (National Archives of Canada H3/902/1740.)

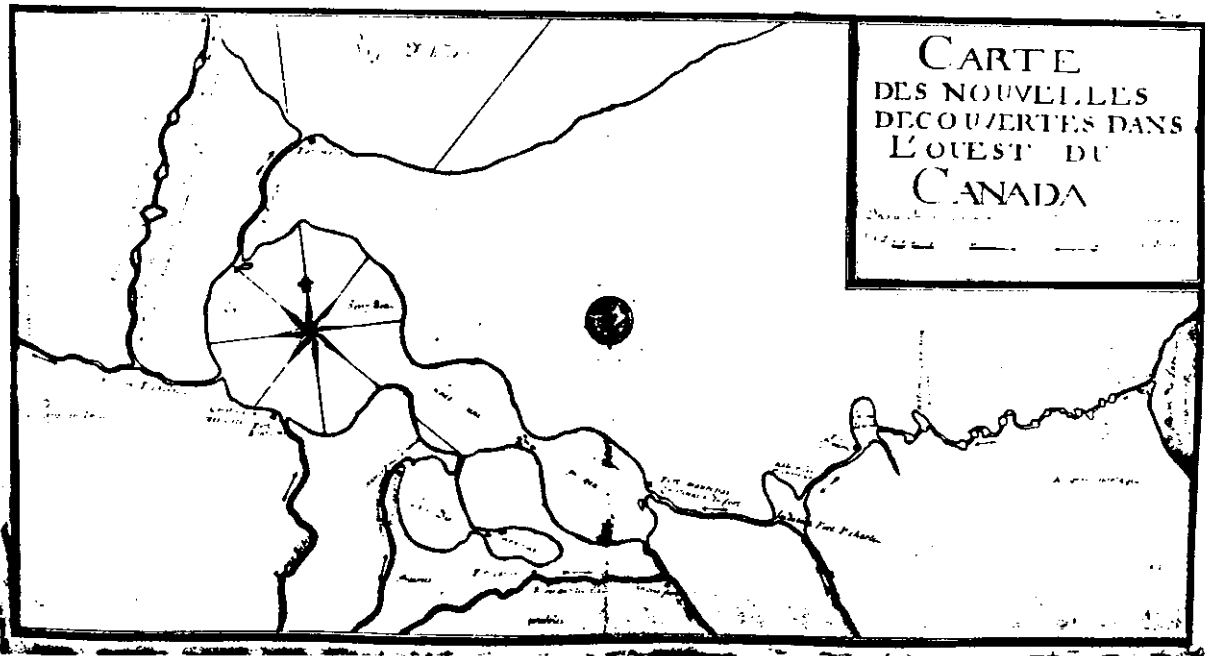


Figure 13 Map of the new discoveries to the west of Canada...1741. (National Archives of Canada H3/902/1741.)

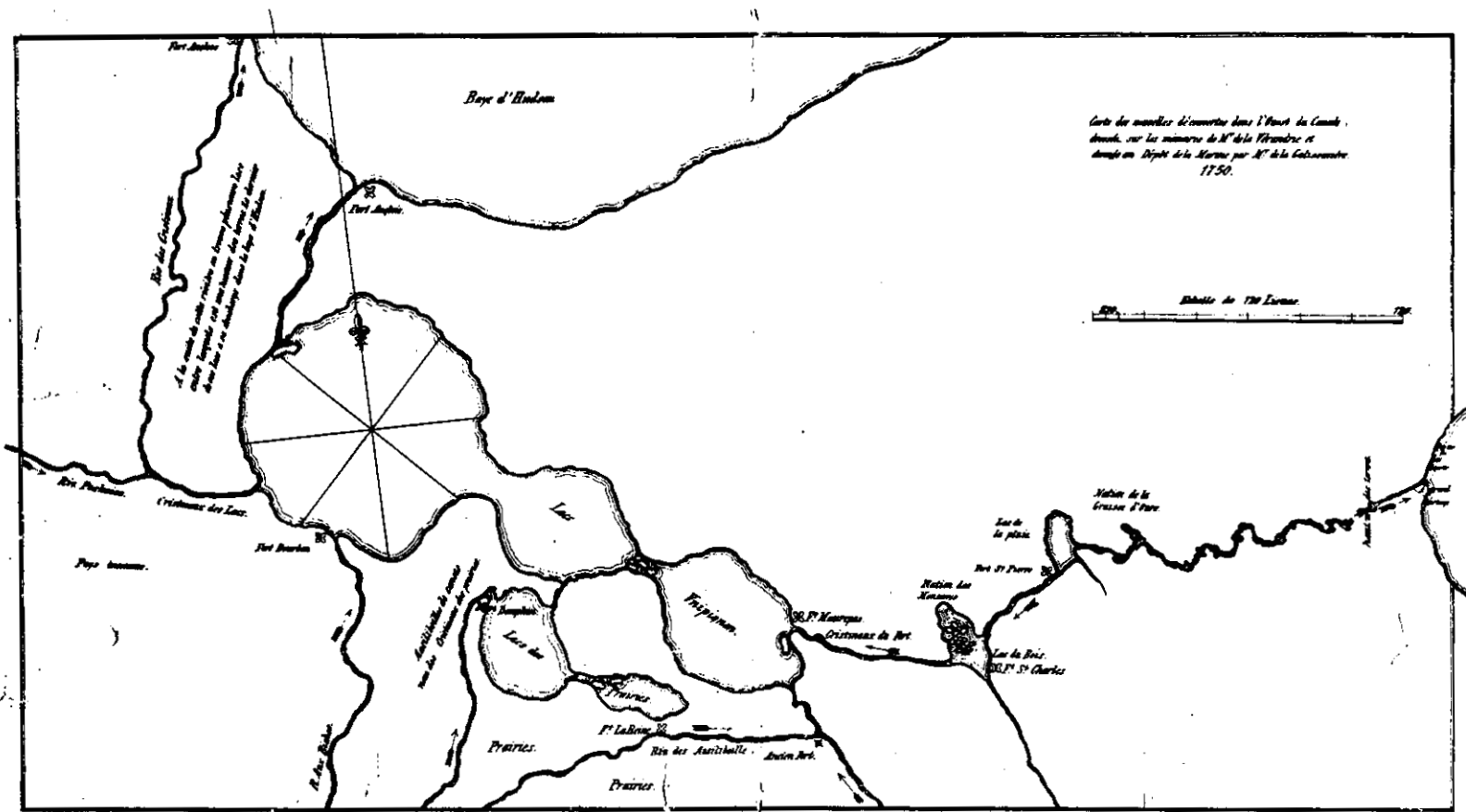


Figure 14 Extent of French Exploration up to Lake Winnipeg in the 18th century, 1750. (National Archives of Canada PH/902/1728-1750.)



Figure 15 LaVérendrye statue, LaVérendrye Park, St. Boniface. (Manitoba Archives.)

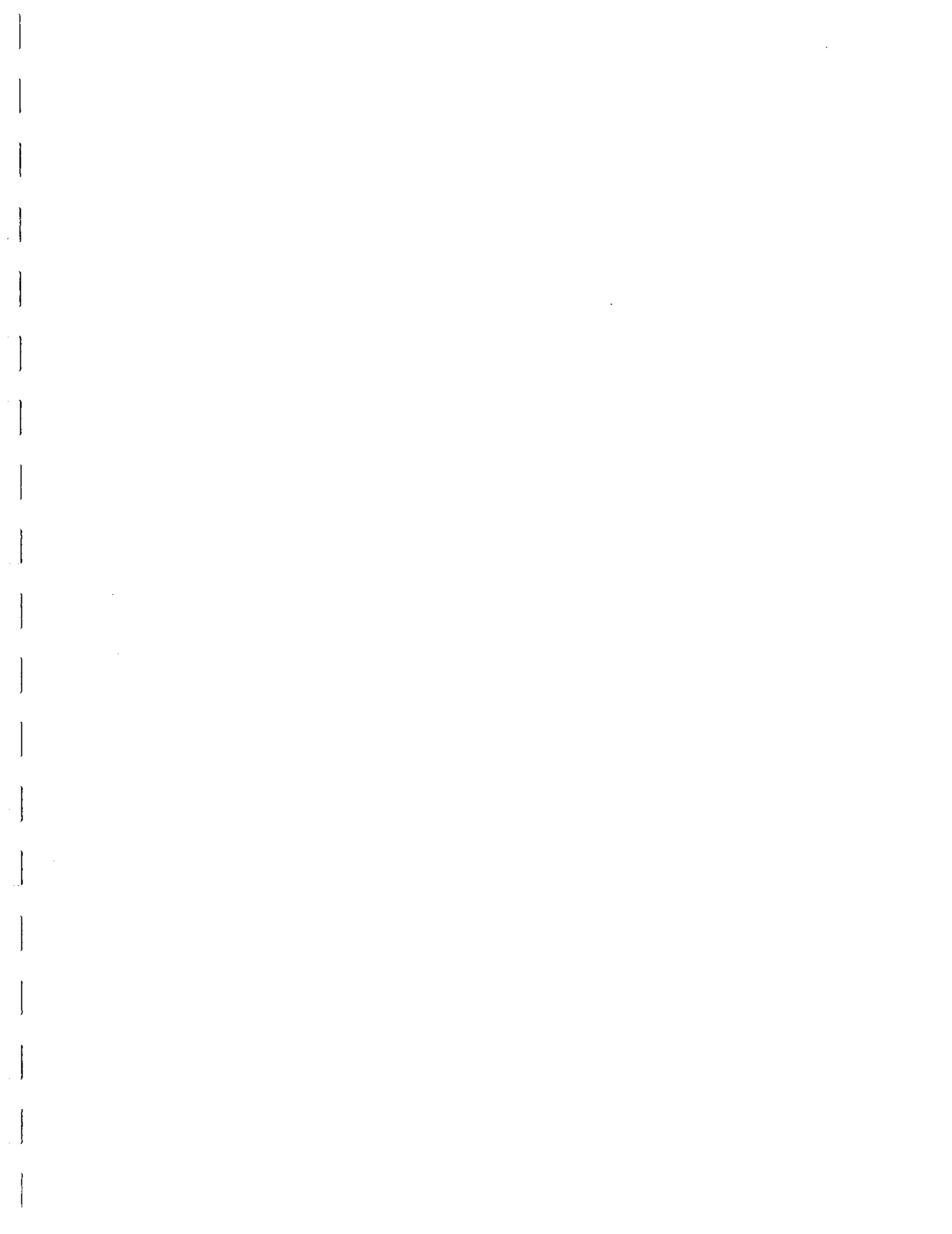


Figure 16 LaVérendrye statue at the Manitoba Legislative
Building, 1958. (Manitoba Archives.)



LA VERENDRYE

PIERRE CAULTER DE VARENNE, SEUR DE LA
VERENDRYE 1645-1699; EXPLORER AND TRADER
UNDER WHOSE AUTHORITY FORT ROUGE WAS BUILT AT
THE CONFLUENCE OF THE RED AND ARKANSAS
RIVERS IN 1763 THE FIRST RECORDING STRUCTURE BUILT
ON THE SITE OF THE PRESENT CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS

THE STATUE OF VARENNE, SEUR DE LA
VERENDRYE WAS COMPLETED IN 1907
BY THE MINNEAPOLIS SOCIETY OF THE
FRENCH CANADIAN ANCESTRY AND
THE MINNEAPOLIS SOCIETY OF THE
FRENCH CANADIAN ANCESTRY

Figure 17 First Fort Garry (Fort Gibraltar II) by Peter Rindisbacher. The rebuilt NWC fort was taken over by the HBC in 1821 and renamed Fort Garry after Nicholas Garry, a director on the HBC's London Committee and later the deputy governor of the company. (Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary, Alberta.)

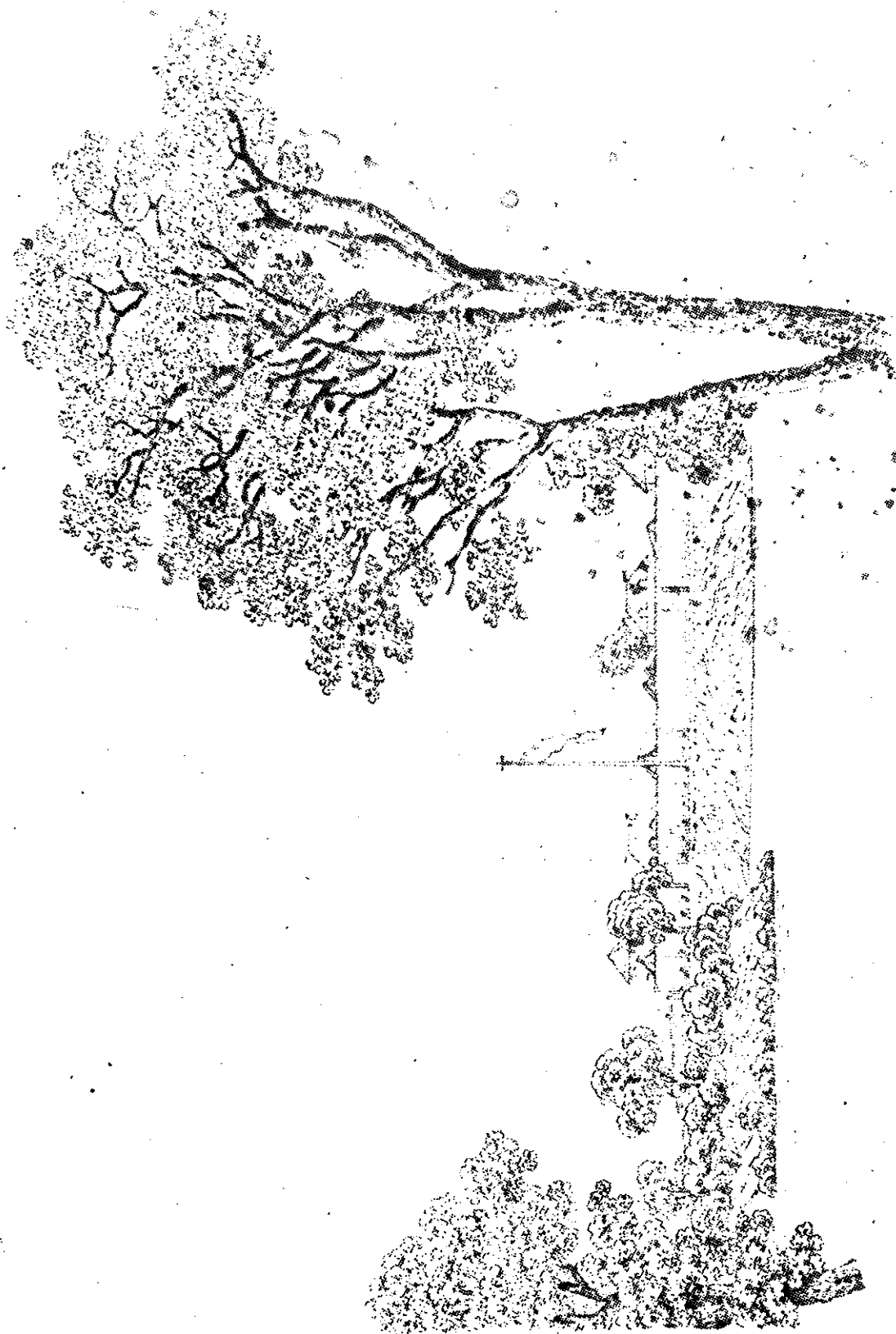


Figure 18 Fort Douglas, from a pencil sketch by Lord Selkirk, 1817. (Manitoba Archives.)

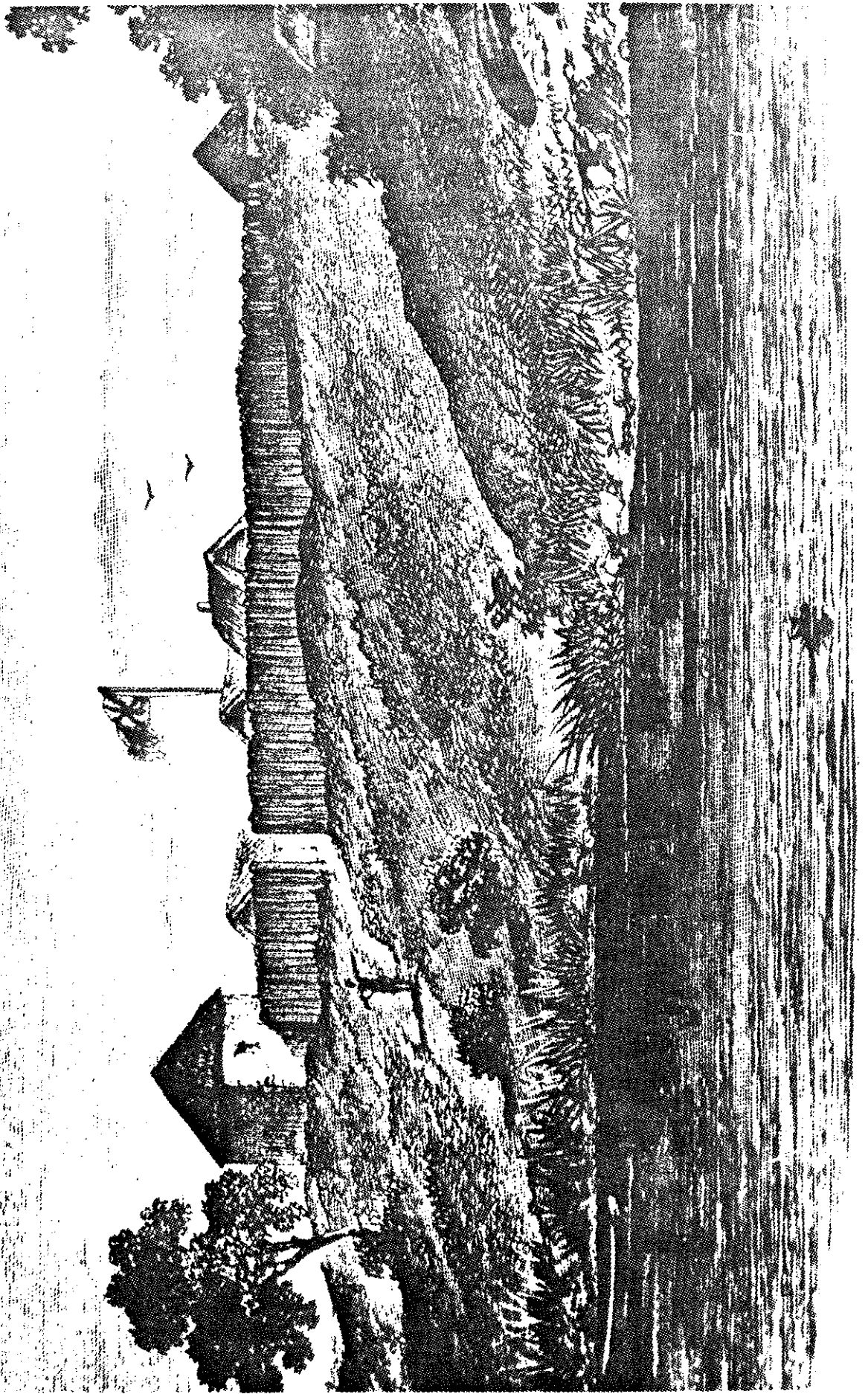


Figure 19 Fort Douglas, watercolour by Peter
Rindisbacher, ca. 1822. (Manitoba Archives.)

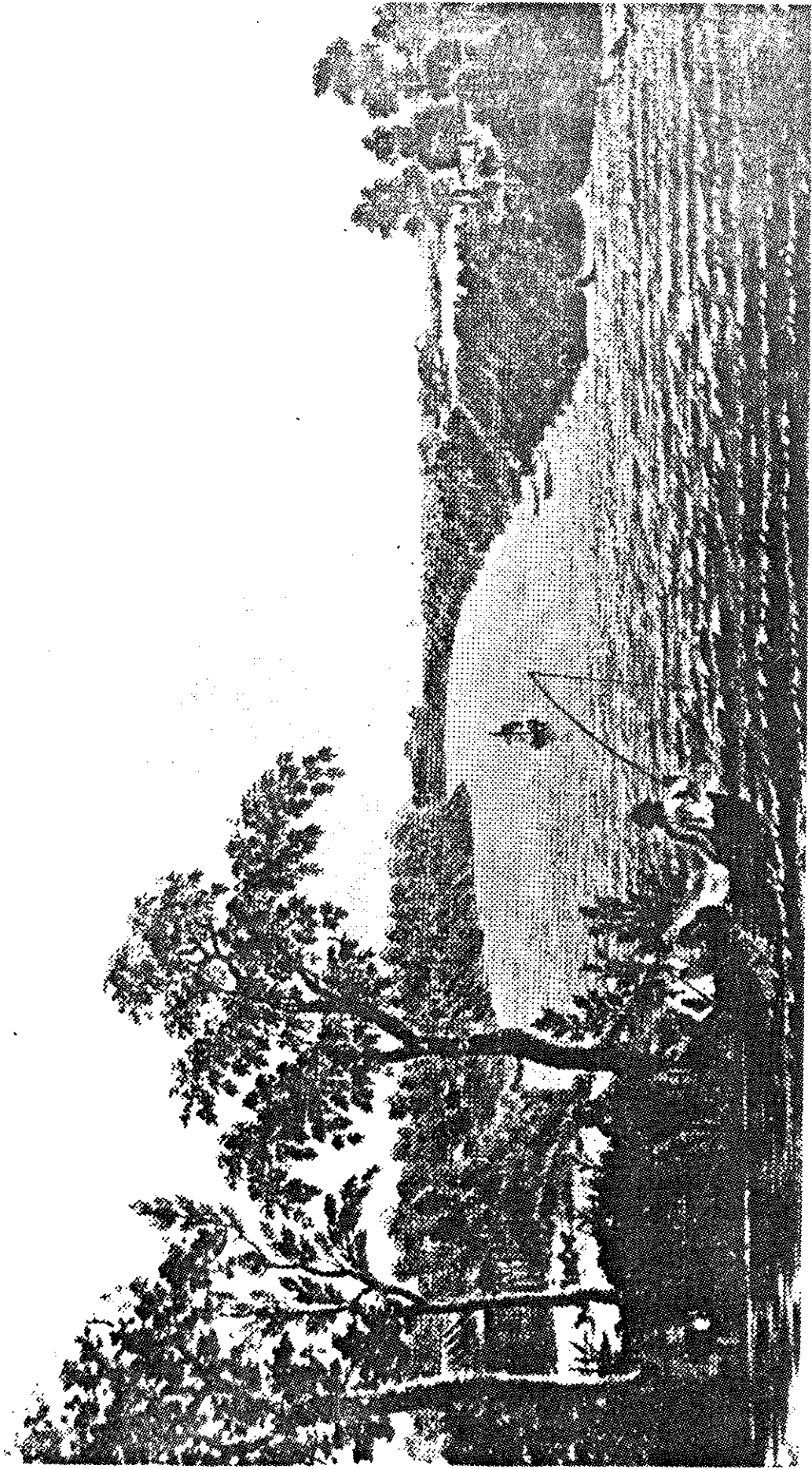


Figure 20 Captain Bulger, Governor of Assiniboia, and the Chiefs and Warriors of the Chippewa [Ojibwa] Tribe, of Red Lake, in Council, in the Colony House, in Fort Douglas, May 22, 1823, by Peter Rindisbacher. (Manitoba Archives.)

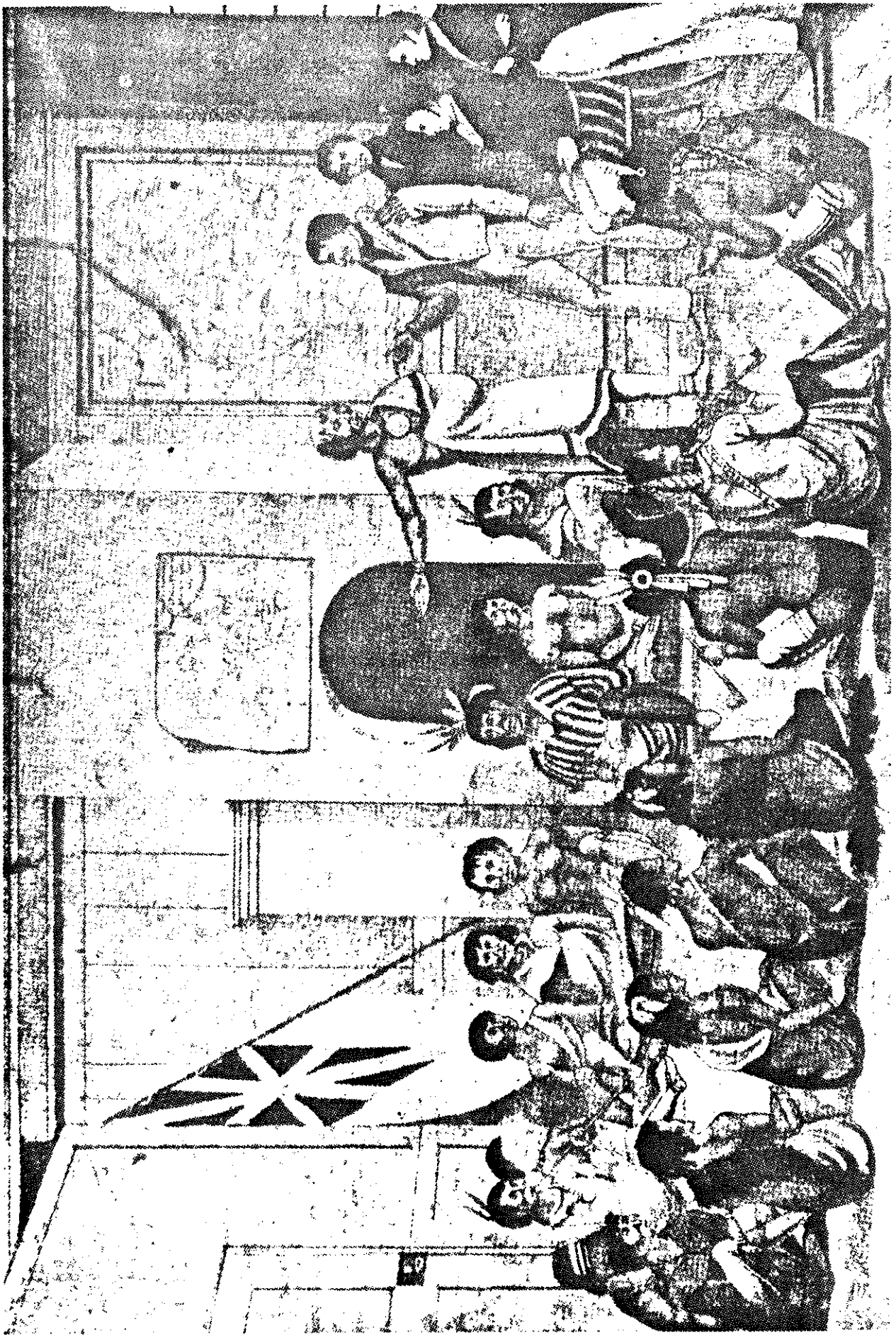


Figure 21 Miles Macdonell, Governor of Assiniboia.
(Manitoba Archives.)



Figure 22 Robert Semple. (Manitoba Archives.)



Figure 23 Cuthbert Grant. (Manitoba Archives.)



Figure 24 Peter Fidler's map of the Red River Settlement showing the riverlot survey and the location of the Battle of Seven Oaks, 1817. (Manitoba Archives.)

Sketch of river valley
taken at Red River 4th August 1877

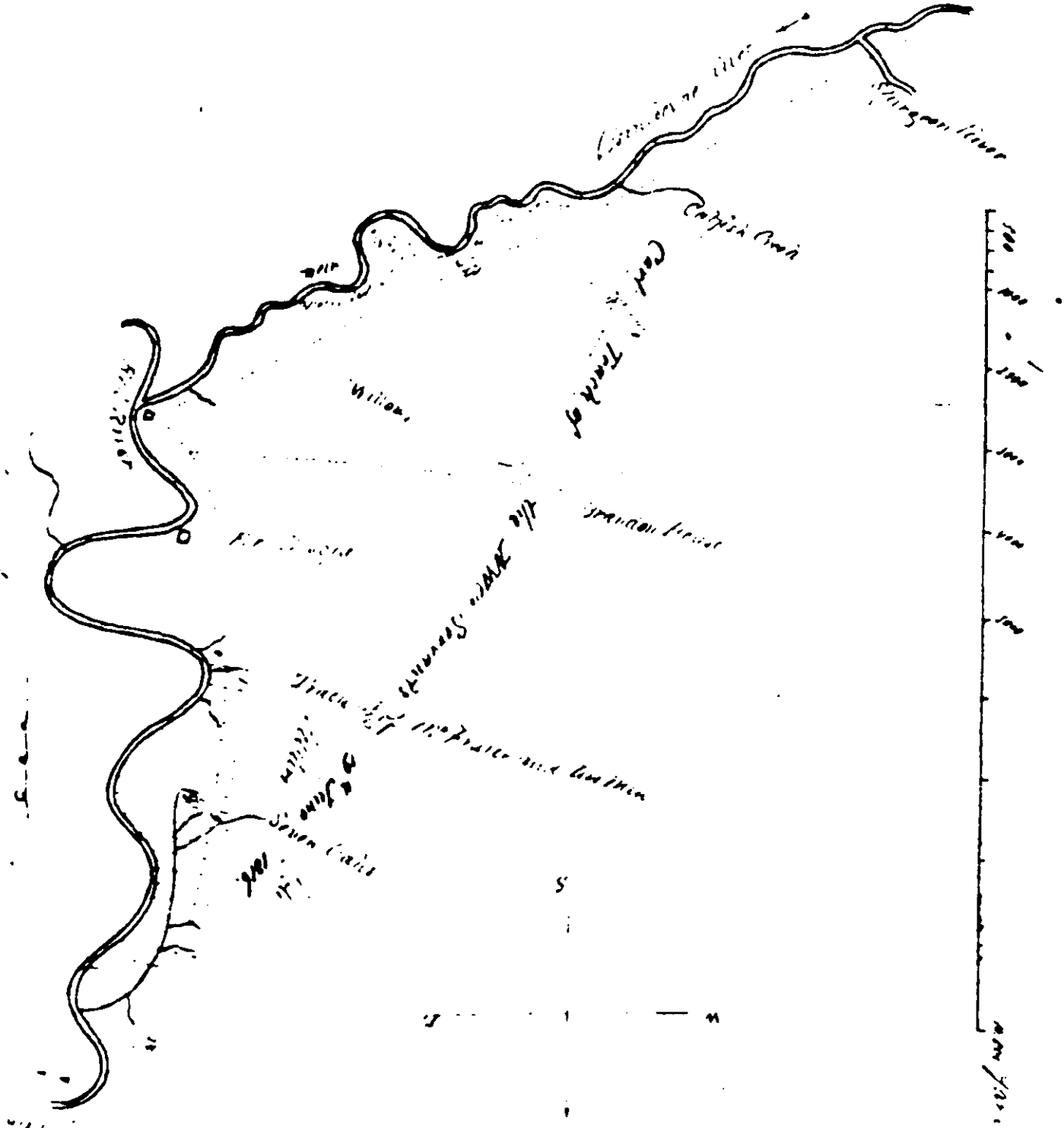


Figure 25 Aaron Arrowsmith's map of the Red River Settlement, 1816, 1819, based partly on information from Fidler's earlier map. (Manitoba Archives.)

PLAN
of the SETTLEMENT on
RED RIVER,
as it was in June 1816.

- A The place where Governor Snodgrass and his Party were massacred on the 10th June 1816.
- B & C Settlers Lots established in 1814 and waste by the North West Company in 1815 and again in 1816. A finally reestablished in 1817.
- D Lots and waste in 1815 and not since reestablished.
- E & F Place where the command & stores of the Regiment de Montreal have been settled, upon their establishment in the settlement in 1814.
- G Site of the Chapel & the Buildings erected in 1815 by Missionaries and by the Roman Catholic Bishop's order for the instruction of the Canadian residents at Red River.

Imperial Plain
a good Landing Place

SCALE

Miles

As there is little below the Point of the Forks & above
the Church creek, as also part of the lands between Red
River & the Little River has been so far the most part un
settled with Chain & compass. The rest of the Plan is
land taken from the Indians.

Plains covered with grassy Downs
extending 50 or 60 Miles northward and westward,
without any interruption of extensive Woods or Swamps,
but occasionally varied by small Lakes, Hills and
valleys of Wood.

cut back to Point of the Forks. Shows a line across
This road extends to Chambray's River, about ten Miles West
of the point where the ... below the Point of the Forks



As there is little below the Point of the Forks & above
the Church creek, as also part of the lands between Red
River & the Little River has been so far the most part un
settled with Chain & compass. The rest of the Plan is
land taken from the Indians.

Woods interspersed with small Prairies
extending for several miles.

Figure 26 A redraft of Fidler's 1816 map of the Red River
Settlement with later details added.
(Manitoba Archives.)

- A The place where Governor Semple and his Party were massacred on the 19th June 1816.
- B-C Settler's lots - established in 1814 laid waste by the North West Co. in 1815 & 1816 & finally reestablished 1817.
- C-D Lots laid waste in 1815 and not since reestablished.
- E-F Place where the German & Swiss of the Regiment de Meuron & have been settled upon the reestablishment of the settlement in 1817.
- G Site of Chapel & other buildings erected in 1818 by Missionaries sent by the Roman Catholic Bishop of Quebec for the instruction of Canadians resident at Red River.

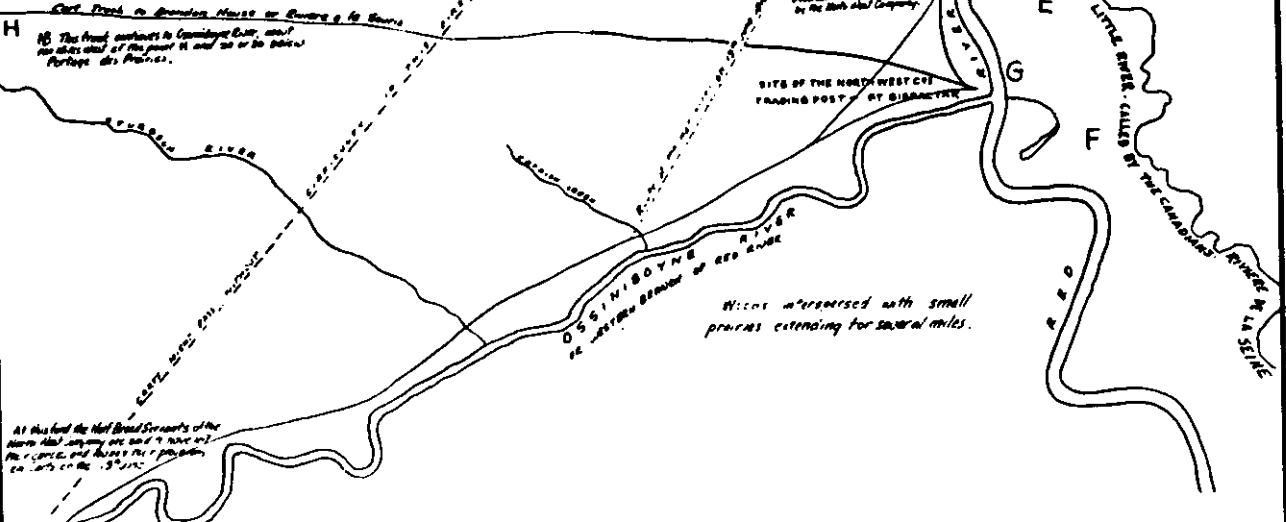


N.B. From a little below Frog Plain to the Forks and thence to Cutler. English as well as some of the land between Red River and the Little River has been for the most part surveyed with hair and compass. The rest of the plan is laid down from Eye draughts.

Some Farms of French Canadian Settlers; 80 to 100 miles northward and westward without the intervention of species of timber but occasionally marked by small lakes - thus a typical country.

Cart. Track to Brandon House or Rivière à la Source

H. The track continues to Cambridge Bay, and the distance of the point H and so on to below Portage des Prairies.



Large plain a good hunting place

Plains interspersed with tufts of wood

Plains interspersed with small prairies extending for several miles.

At this point the Half Breed servants of the North West Company are said to have met the people and killed the population on June 19th 1816.

FIDLER'S PLAN RED RIVER SETTLEMENT, 1816



Figure 29 Rev. A.A. Tache, 1851. (Manitoba Archives.)



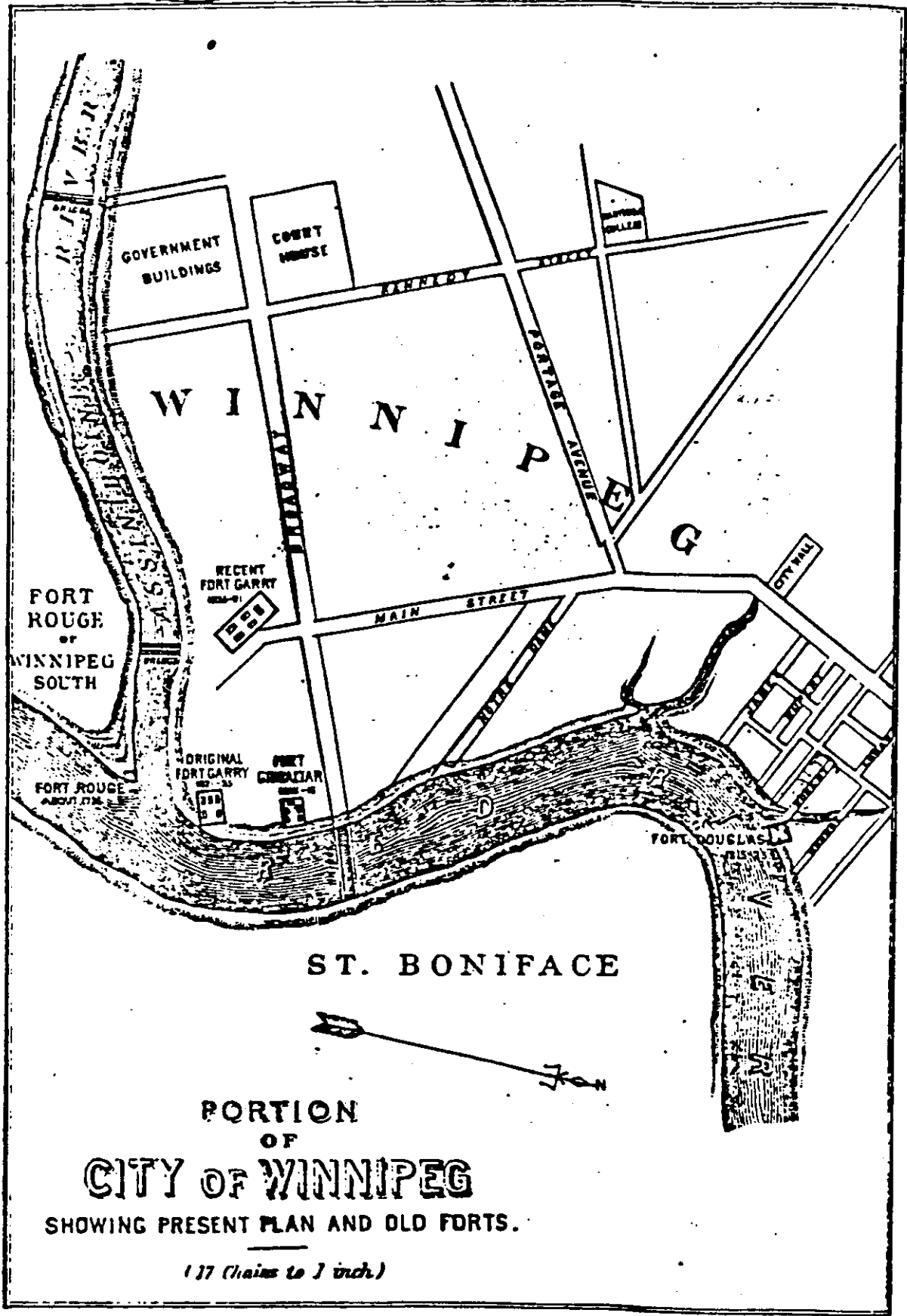
Figure 28 Rev. John West. (Manitoba Archives.)

Figure 31 Location of the "Five Forts of Winnipeg,"
according to George Bryce. ("The Five Forts of
Winnipeg," Transactions of the Royal Society of
Canada, Section II, 1885.)



Figure 30 Rev. David Anderson, first Anglican Bishop of Rupert's Land. (Manitoba Archives.)

Figure 32 Map depicting the location of various forts at the Forks according to historian C.N. Bell. Note that Bell shows Fort Rouge (1) to be located on the north bank of the Assiniboine. (C.N. Bell The Selkirk Settlement, Winnipeg, 1887, p. 14, Manitoba Archives.)



GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

COURT HOUSE

W I N N I P E G

FORT ROUGE OF WINNIPEG SOUTH

RECENT FORT GARRY

ORIGINAL FORT GARRY

FORT GIBRALTAR

FORT ROUGE ABOUT 1715

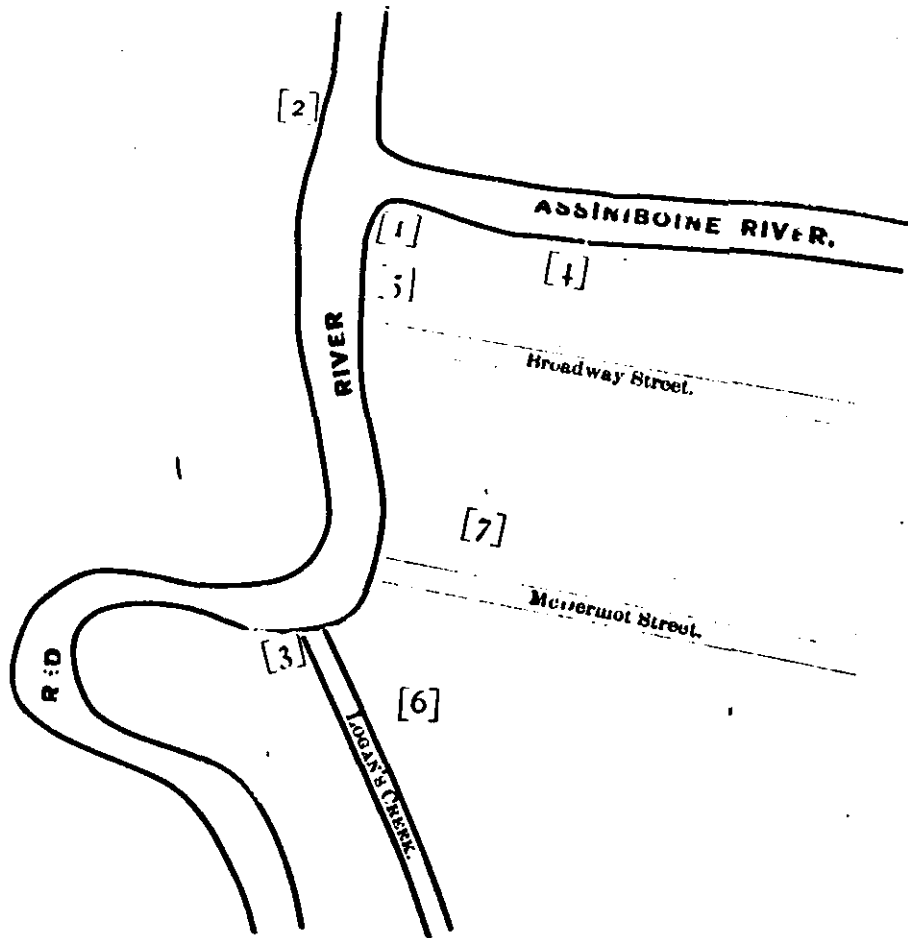
FORT DOUGLAS

ST. BONIFACE

PORTION OF CITY OF WINNIPEG

SHOWING PRESENT PLAN AND OLD FORTS.

(1/17 (chains to 1 inch))



KEY.

1. Fort Rouge--built by LaVerandrye about 1730.

The Forks--built by Northwest Company about 1803.

Fort Gibraltar--built by Northwest Company about 1808.

Destroyed by Lord Selkirk's agents in 1816. Rebuilt by Northwest Company about 1817; occupied by H. B. Co. after amalgamation with Northwest Company in 1821 and on April 18th, 1822, its name was changed by Sir Geo. Simpson, the H. B. Co. governor, to Fort Garry.

Fort Garry, a new fort built by Governor Pelly, but destroyed by the great flood of 1826. It was rebuilt by Governor Pelly in 1826, and afterwards was used as buildings for a model farm.

2. H. B. Co's store, "or," perhaps fort. In use prior to arrival of Selkirk colonists in 1812.

3. Government House of the Selkirk Colony, afterwards (in the fall of 1815) it was named Fort Douglas. 1812-1826.

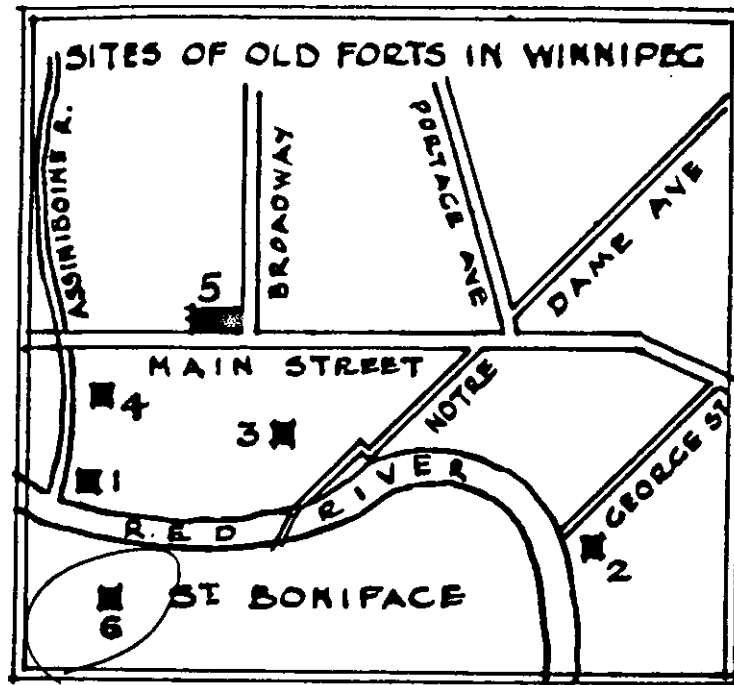
4. The last Fort Garry built by Governor Christie in 1835-36.

5. Stables built for model farm about 1840.

6. Grove of trees beside present residence of Ex-Mayor Logan, where Governor Semple and his party were buried after the Seven Oakes tragedy in June, 1816.

7. Hudson's Bay Company's fort (partly built by Peter Fidler in 1817, and finished by James Sutherland in 1819). It was situated between McDermot and Notre Dame street east, a few hundred yards back from the bank of the Red River. It was in use certainly in 1821, Joseph Bird being the chief factor in charge.

Figure 33 "Sites of Old Forts in Winnipeg," from C.N. Bell, "The Old Forts of Winnipeg 1738-1927," Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba Transactions, First Series, no. 3, 1927. Four decades after his first depiction of the location of various forts at the Forks (see Figure 32), Bell had made a few alterations. Note that on the site labeled number 1, Bell lists Fort Rouge (which he argued was situated on the north bank of the Assiniboine), Fort Maurepas (which was incorrectly labeled to be at the Forks on an early French map), the short-lived wintering posts of St. Pierre, Bruce and Boyer, and Alexander Henry, and the first Fort Gibraltar. Bell also located Fidler's Fort, or the "Forks Fort," and an early HBC post at the Forks as well.



1. Mythical Fort Maurepas, 1737
 Fort Rouge, 1738
 St. Pierre's Fort
 Fort Bruce and Boyer, 1780
 Fort Alex Henry, 1803
 Fort Gibraltar (original), 1807-16
2. Fort Douglas, 1812
3. Fidler's Fort (HBCo), 1818
4. Fort Garry, the 1st (rebuilt Fort Gibraltar), 1822-35
5. Fort Garry, the 2nd, 1835-82
6. Traditional Post of HBCo, 1780

Figure 34 View of Upper Fort Garry from across river, pen and ink sketch by George Finlay, 1847.
(Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary, Alberta.)
Note remains of Fort Garry I on the right.

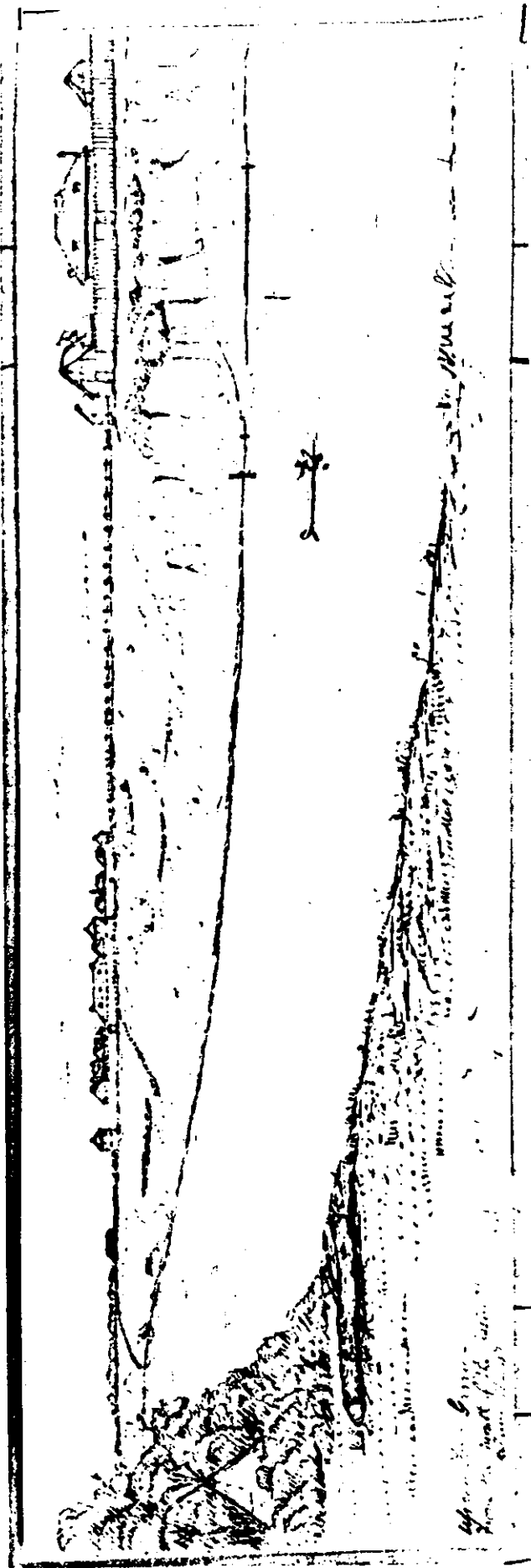
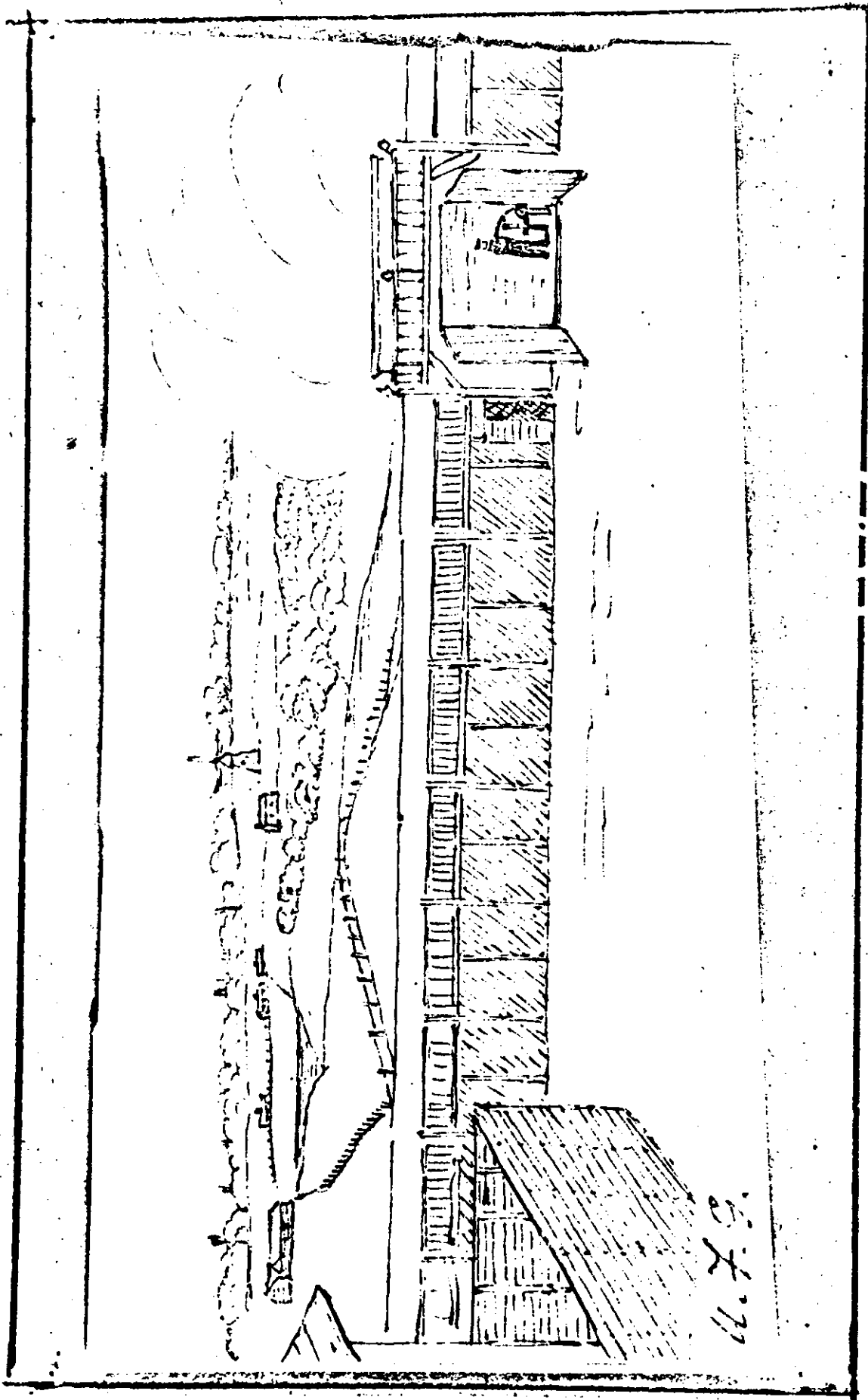
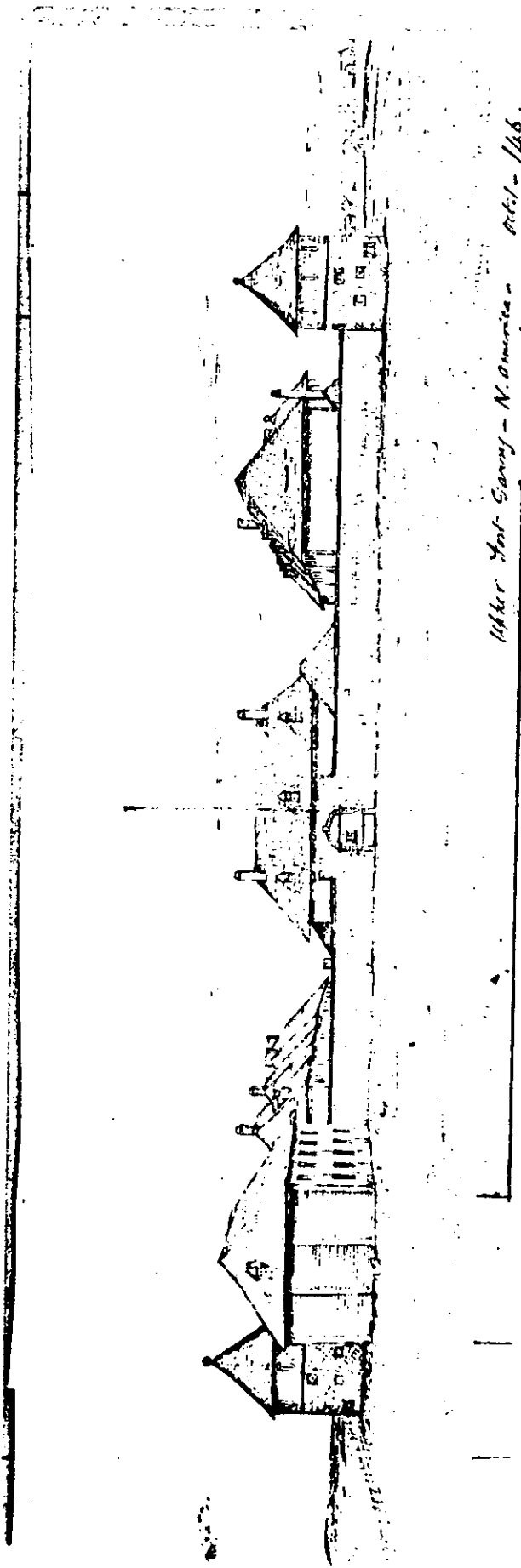


Figure 35 View from inside Upper Fort Garry, looking north, ink sketch of the front gate of Upper Fort Garry at the Forks by George Finlay, ca. 1846. (Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary, Alberta.) Note on the left the buildings in the background associated with the first Fort Garry. Also on the left, in the immediate foreground, Finlay has sketched the fence erected by the company to segregate its operations from those of the Sixth Regiment of Foot who occupied the fort between 1846 and 1848.



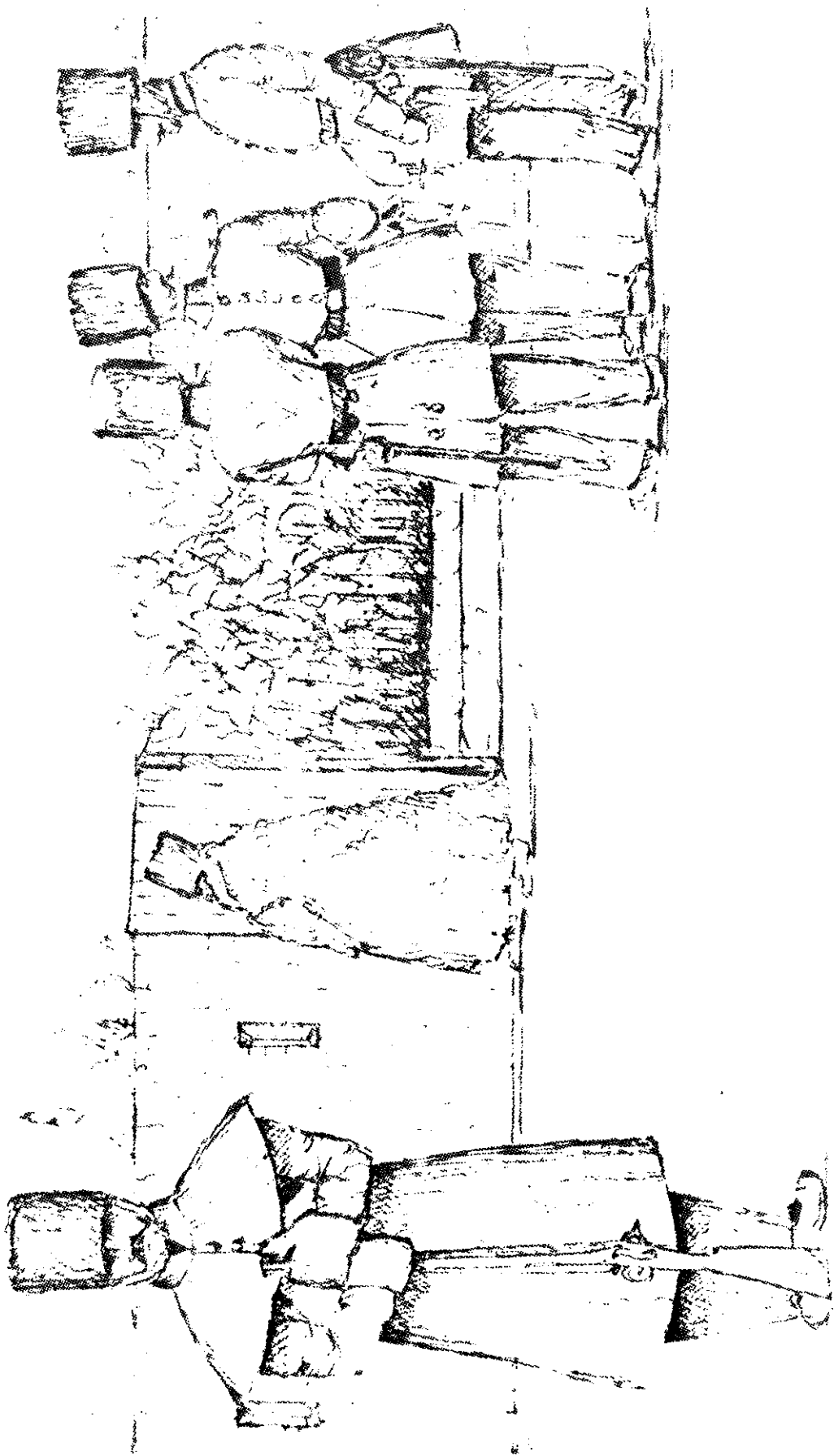
窓大明

Figure 36 Upper Fort Garry, pen and ink sketch by George Finlay, 1846. (Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary, Alberta.)



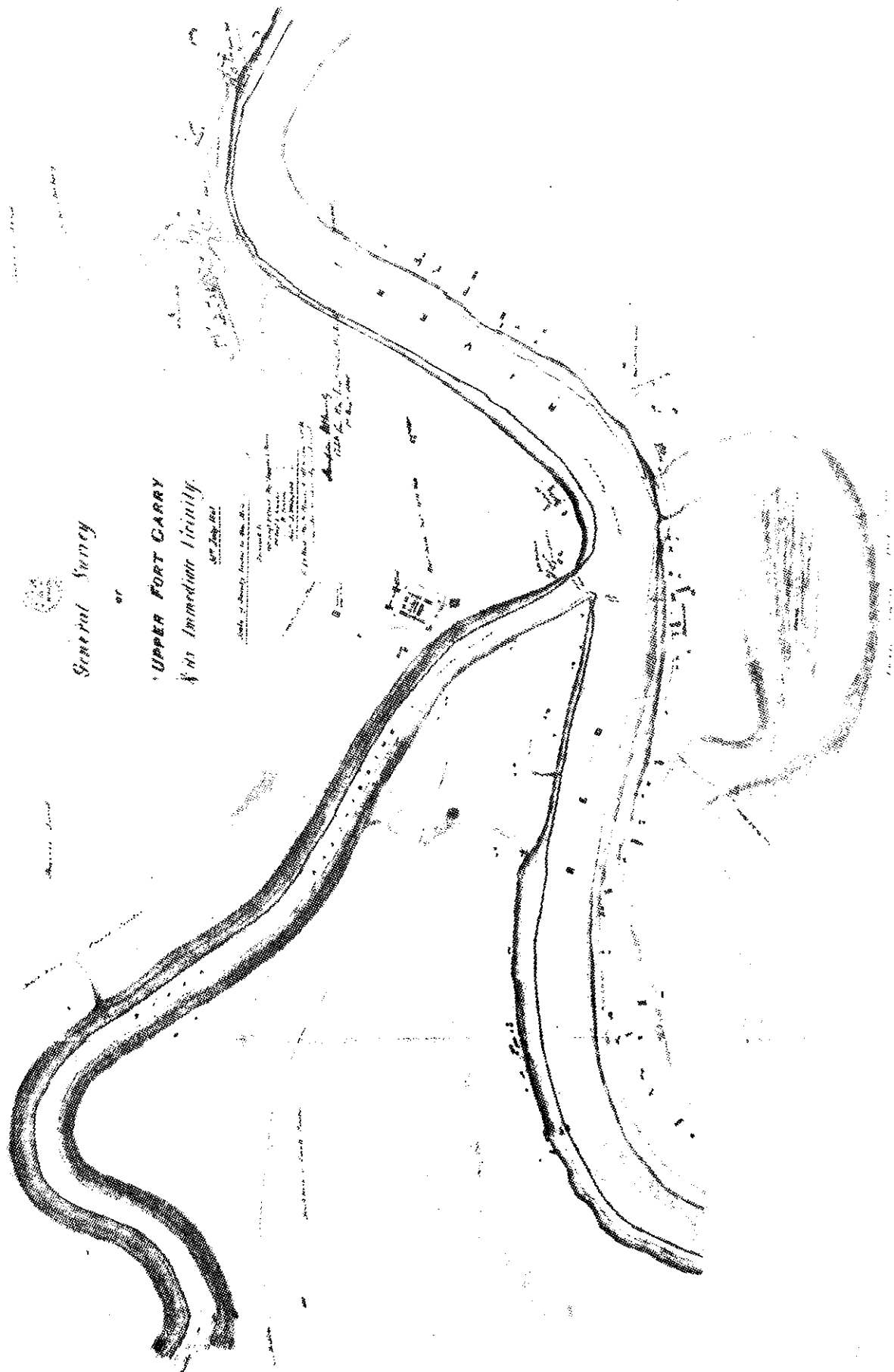
Maker Ant. Sany - N. America - 1861 - 146.

Figure 37 Winter Dress, Upper Fort Garry, pen and ink
sketch by George Finlay, ca. 1847.
(Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary, Alberta.)



Uniform of a Soldier - April 1862

Figure 38 General Survey of Upper Fort Garry & its
Immediate Vicinity, 1848 by Hampden Moody.
(Manitoba Archives.)



General Survey

UPPER FORT CARRY
 & its Immediate vicinity.

1872

Scale of 1 inch = 1 mile
 Prepared for the Department of the Interior
 by the U.S. Geological Survey
 under the direction of Wm. H. Dyer
 Chief of the Survey
 and
 Charles D. Walcott
 Geologist in Charge

Figure 39 Enlargement of previous illustration showing
buildings associated with Upper Fort Garry,
1848. (Manitoba Archives.)

Surveyed by

Capt. Sergt P Clark

2nd Corp S Anonko

R Penton

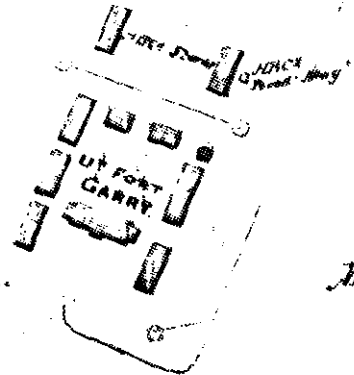
Private J. White

to White Horse Plains

Capt. Sergt P Clark

Garrison Hosp & Jail

Stable



Magn^t North. Varⁿ 14° 10'

Gravelly

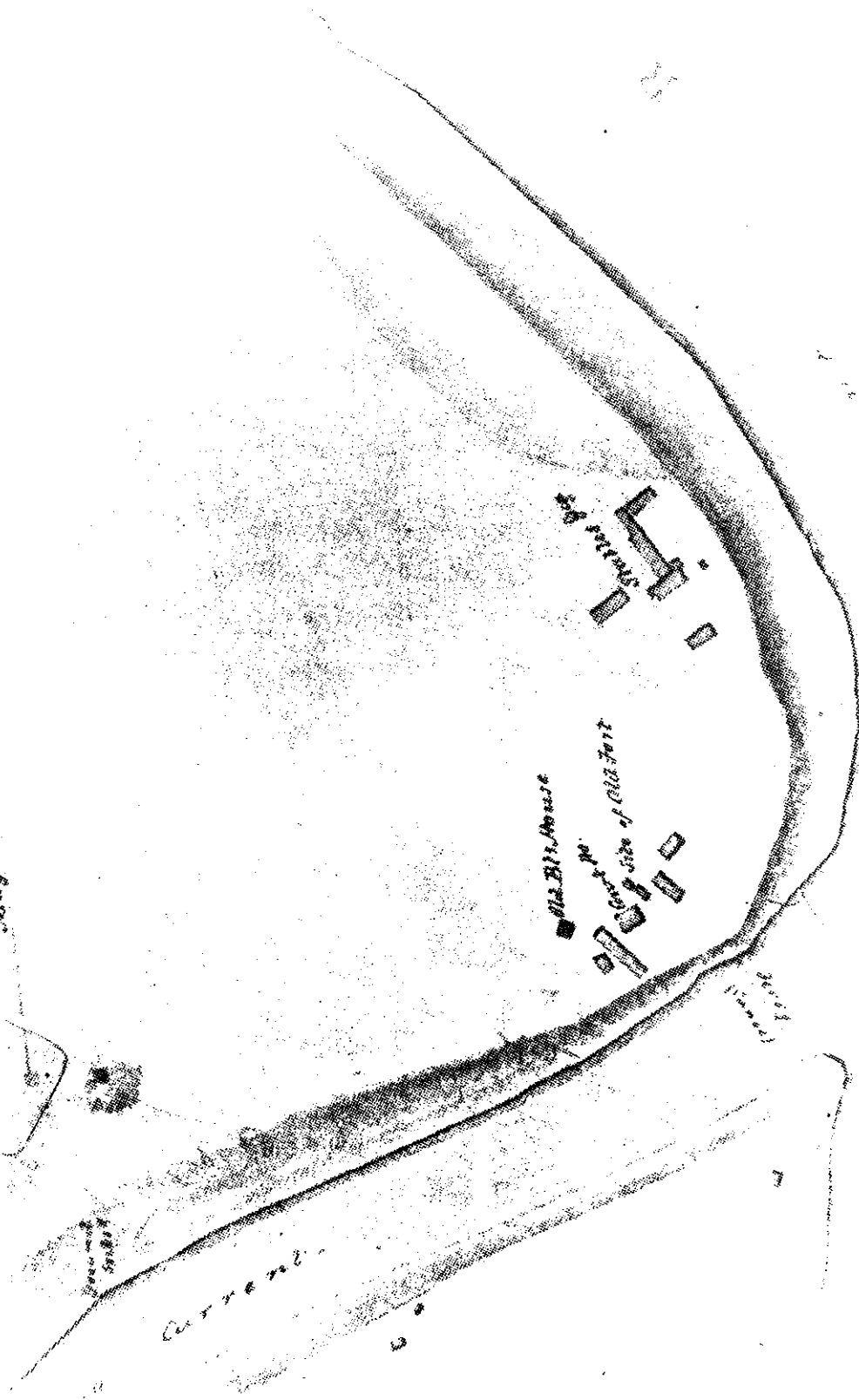
Carriage Rd.

Old B's House

at No. 117 Fort

Figure 40 Enlargement of the Moody map (Figure 38)
showing the remains of the first Fort Garry and
the buildings associated with the experimental
farm. (Manitoba Archives.)

Magn's North Yard in "



Magn's House

Site of Old Fort

Current

Handwritten notes or labels on the right side of the map

Small handwritten text near the bottom right of the map

Figure 41 Pen and ink sketch of St. Boniface Cathedral
from the Forks in 1847, by George Finlay.
(Glenbow-Alberta Institute, Calgary, Alberta.)

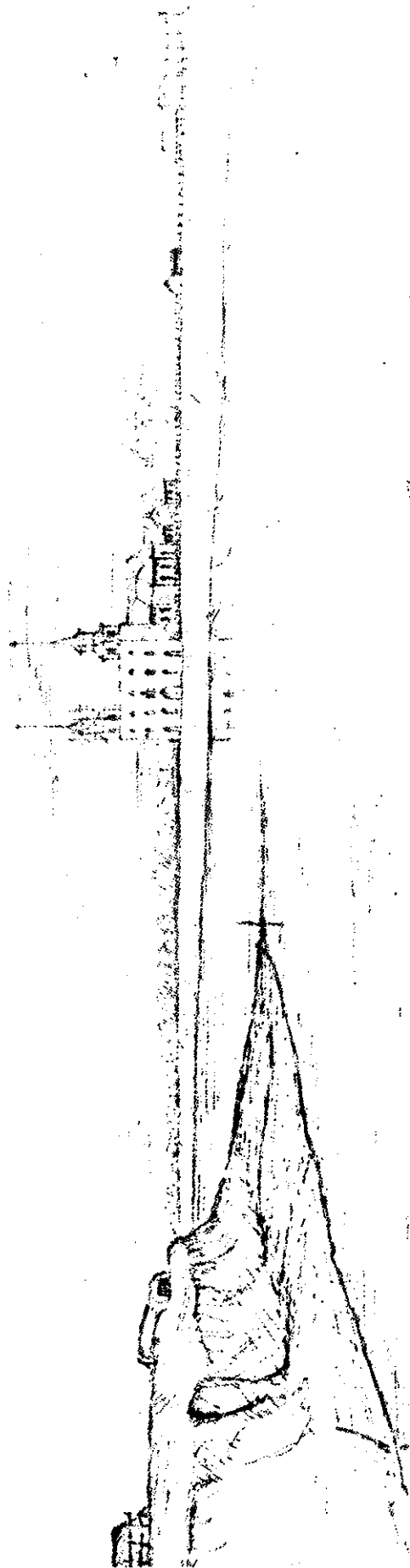


Figure 42 Map of the Forks area produced in 1863 from the earlier 1836 Taylor plan. Certain additional information (e.g., roads and fences) was added in the later map. (Manitoba Archives.)

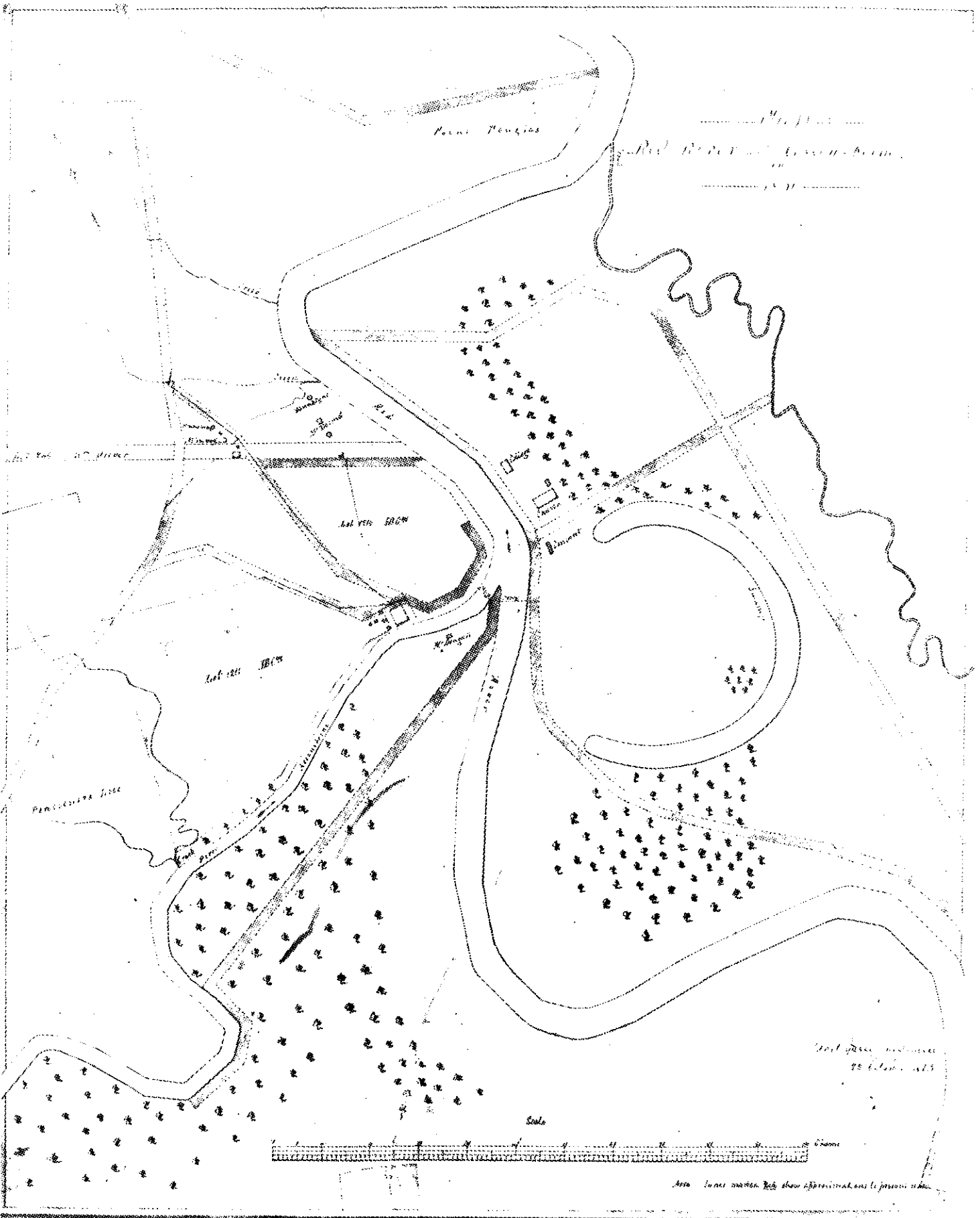


Figure 43 Rev. Louis Lafleche, 1844. (Manitoba
Archives.)



Figure 44 Andrew McDermot. (Manitoba Archives.)



Figure 45 Alexander Christie, ca. 1870. (Manitoba Archives.)



Figure 46 St. Boniface Cathedral and Grey Nuns Residence
as seen from the west bank of the Red at the
Forks, by H.L. Hime, 1857-58. (Manitoba
Archives.)

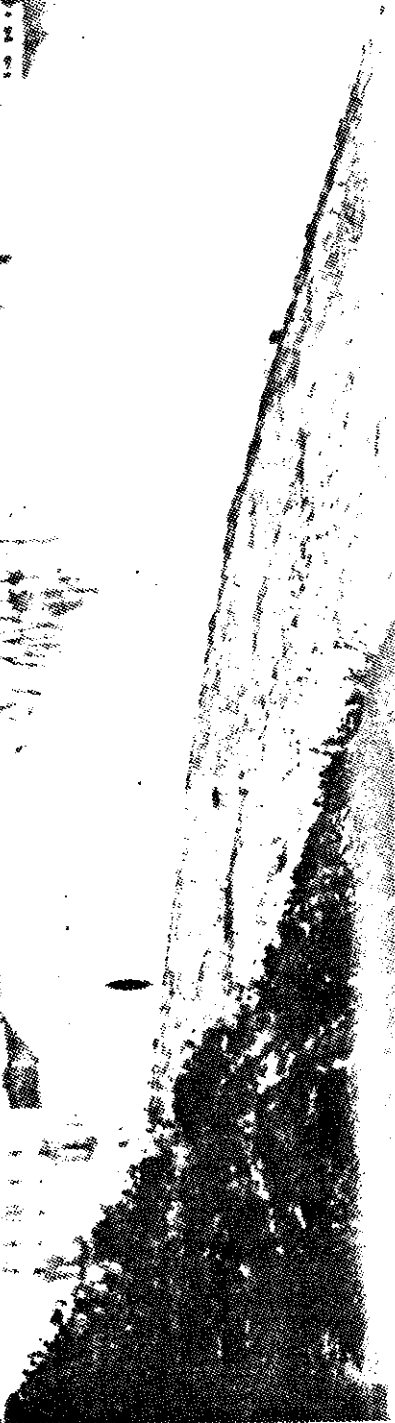
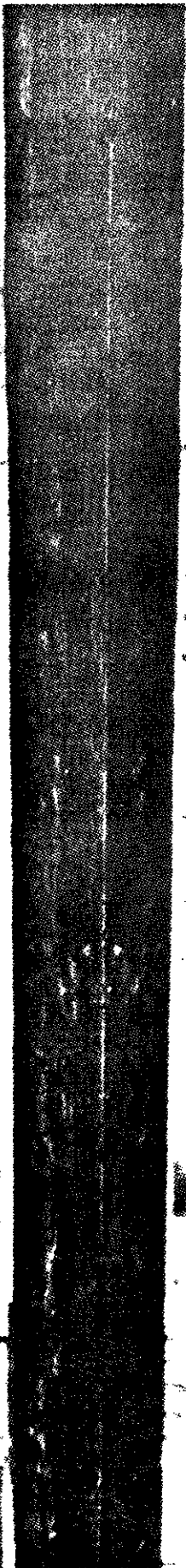


Figure 47 Louis Riel Sr. (right) and possibly Guillaume Sayer on the left, n.d. (Manitoba Archives.)



Figure 48 Louis Riel Sr. and Julie Lagimodiere Riel,
n.d. (Manitoba Archives.)



Figure 49 Upper Fort Garry 1840, from a sketch by Isobel
Finlayson. (Manitoba Archives.)

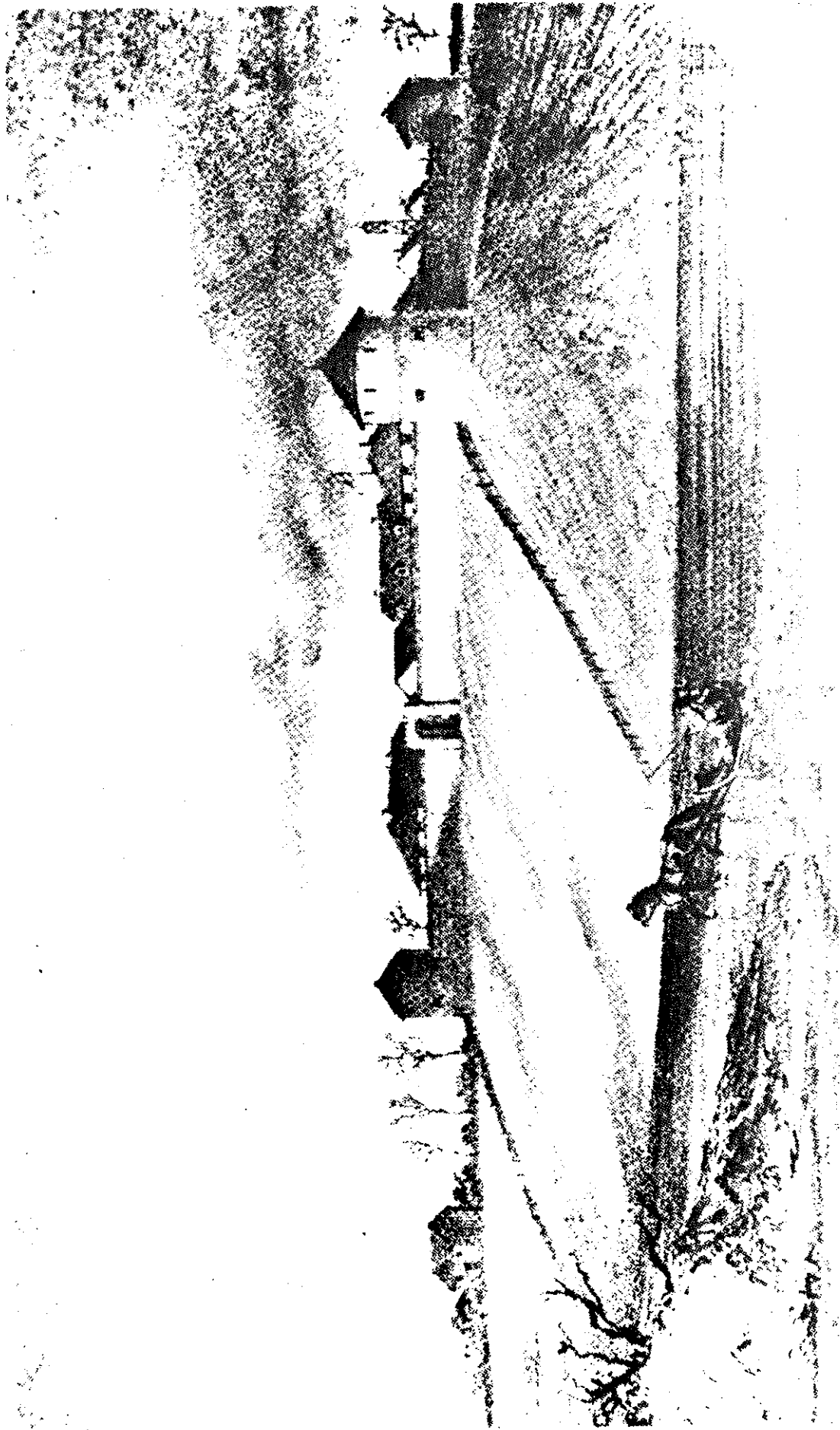


Figure 50 Upper Fort Garry, 1846, after a painting by
Paul Kane. (Manitoba Archives.)

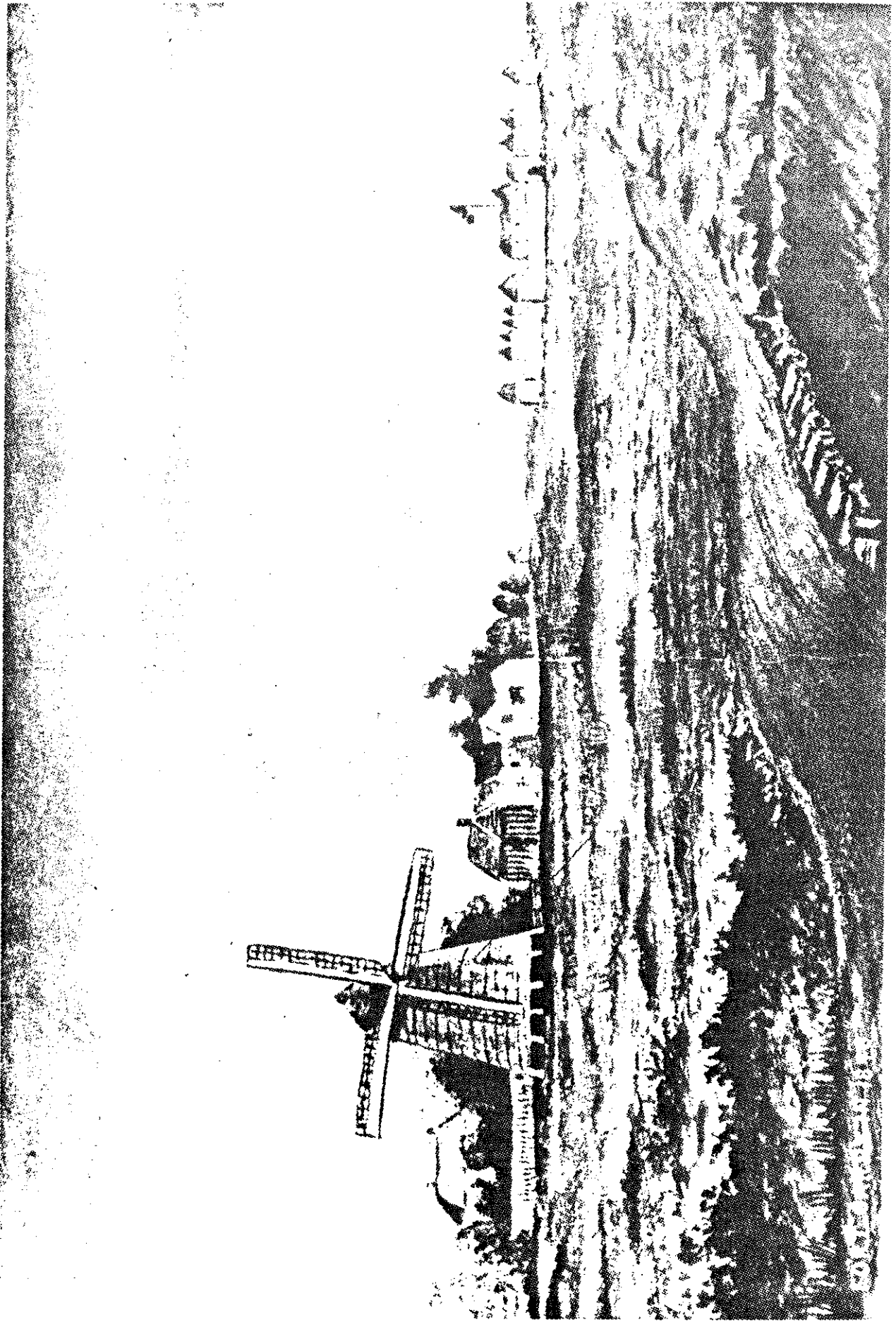


Figure 51 McDermot's from Bannatyne's House, an 1857 illustration depicting McDermot's house and store and the north and west sides of Upper Fort Garry. (Manitoba Archives.)



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