



Rupert's Land
Research Centre

NEWSLETTER



515 Portage Avenue,
Winnipeg, MB. R3B 2E9

RUPERT'S LAND RESEARCH CENTRE**NEWSLETTER**

Volume 7, #1 (Spring 1991)

**DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE
FROM TIM BALL**

Difficult times have not deterred the plans for the coming year. Please take time to read the section in this newsletter describing our plans for the **1992 Rupert's Land Colloquium** which, I believe, will be a unique and exciting event. Please note that a Call For Papers has been included with this issue.

Response to Richard Ruggles' book has been very positive and we are pleased to have been associated with McGill-Queen's University Press in this venture. It is a more ambitious effort than anything we have done before. Mindful of the problems that the Hudson's Bay Record Society faced, we have been somewhat cautious about taking on such large projects, and hope that continued membership support will justify the production of this book.

We continue to seek new members and invite you to solicit any group or individual you think might be interested. The more members we have, the greater will be the opportunities for larger and more diverse projects.

In Winnipeg, the opening up of the Forks site has been quite successful, despite some initial concerns and criticism. It has been refreshing to hear the public demand that aboriginal interests, historic sites and heritage preservation be the predominant objectives of Forks development. As a member of the Heritage Advisory Committee to the site, I have been constantly impressed by the evident commitment to restricting commercial developers and preserving historic integrity of the site. The site has been occupied and used by human beings for thousands of years. For the last three centuries, it has been a focal point of the fur trade, from La Verendrye, through the North West Company's occupation, to the arrival of the railway.

A few of the 1990 Colloquium (Orkney) papers are now available. The titles have been added to the Colloquium Papers Order form at the end of this issue.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Renée Fossett Jones for invaluable support and efforts in maintaining the Rupert's Land office through the year, and also Erica Smith, our 1990-91 Harington Award winner, who as part of the Fellowship, is required to assist in the office. As always, the contributions of the Harington Fellow have gone well beyond the requirements of the award. All four of our Fellowship holders have justified our confidence in their abilities: Renée Fossett Jones, the 1987-88 Fellow, is in the second year of a history Ph.D. program at University of Manitoba, and has been awarded a Social Sciences

and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRCC) award for the second time; Jim Daschuk, 1988-89 Fellow, is completing his Master's thesis, and has received a SSHRCC award to enable him to begin doctoral studies in the fall; Peter Geller, 1989-90 Fellow, is in the second year of doctoral studies and is also the recipient of a SSHRCC award as well as the University of Winnipeg Governor-General's Medal for Master's work; and Erica Smith, the 1990-91 Fellow, has been accepted as a doctoral candidate at Carleton University and has received one of the university's Doctoral Fellowships.

1992 RUPERT'S LAND COLLOQUIUM

Our last two Colloquia have been ambitious treks to Churchill in 1988 and the Orkney islands in 1990. We do not intend to try to match the Orkney experience in 1992, however, we do want to offer a unique experience for scholars and friends of the fur trade alike.

The 1992 Colloquium will be held in Winnipeg, commencing **February 6, 1992**. The theme will be **Rupert's Land in Winter**. While Papers certainly do not have to deal with this topic only, we hope that some presenters will want to discuss aspects of life in Rupert's Land in the winter.

The choice of dates for the Colloquium is appropriate to our winter theme, in that they coincide with Winnipeg's exciting **Festival de Voyageur**.

Festival du Voyageur is an annual celebration of the culture and heritage of the fur trade era in Manitoba. It encompasses all ethnic groups involved with post-European contact and provides a wide variety of activities including dogsled and snowshoe racing, as well as music and artistic endeavours. Franco-Manitobans and aboriginal groups are deeply involved in planning and carrying out the events of the Festival.

Rupert's Land Research Centre and the Festival are joining together to acknowledge several events. The first is the 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival in the New World; second is the 350th anniversary of the founding of the city of Montreal, home of the North West Company; and third is the 125th anniversary of the founding of Canada. The event has the overall title of **The Grand Rendez-Vous**.

The Special Steering Committee of the Grand Rendez-Vous (Festival du Voyageur) has described the objectives of the 1992 Festival in the following words. "The conference will focus on the major contributions of the fur trade as well as its colourful socio-cultural characteristics." The four main objects will be: "Cultural; to present and discuss the important role cultures have played in the development of Canada. Historical: to create an opportunity to discuss the important events of the fur trade era and how they have influenced our perspectives. Educational; to better understand the role of history as well as the use of various mediums that could be used in the communication of history. Artistic; to give a higher profile to the Arts as a medium to interpret and communicate history."

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The Rupert's Land Research Centre and the Festival du Voyageur are acting together as an umbrella organization serving as the focal point for a variety of activities going on across the city. The Colloquium provides the central intellectual beacon for the conference and the Festival the arts and entertainment beacon. Our Colloquium begins with a reception on the evening of Thursday, 6 February, 1991. Each of the following days, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, will feature a paper presentations session, and a field trip. Possible sites for conference sessions are St Boniface College, the Hudson's Bay Company Archives, the Fort Garry Hotel, and both universities. One day will be spent at Lower Fort Garry, part of the time being dedicated to paper presentations and part to touring the Fort.

Festival activities in which Colloquium participants will be included are tentatively planned to include a Grand Rendez-Vous (Friday evening), and a Grand Ball (Saturday evening). The final event of the Colloquium itself will be a brunch on Sunday with a guest speaker.

The full slate of activities of the Festival du Voyageur commence on Sunday and carry on through the following week. To expand the opportunities, the Festival Committee has invited cultural and heritage groups to organize events during the period from February 6-16. A complete list of activities will be made available as soon as possible.

At this point many of the details are not yet complete, however, we ask you to make a commitment to attend and if possible to give a paper. The registration fee will be \$40.00 (\$30.00 for 1992 members, and students). Because the Colloquium will be more or less fixed geographically, the Research Centre is not undertaking hotel bookings or travel arrangements. We do, however, remind you that members of RLRC receive a discounted price at the Relax Plaza Hotel, located centrally downtown, next door to the University of Winnipeg. The registration fee will not cover the cost of lunch at Lower Fort Garry or the closing brunch on Sunday. We have applied for supporting funds and corporate donations to cover these, and other, activities. As planning proceeds, we will be able to provide more information in a newsletter in September or October.

The final date for pre-registrations is December 31, 1991. Please submit titles and abstracts by November 1, 1991.

Members of the RLRC Colloquium Committee are Tim Ball, RLRC Director, and Bob Coutts, Parks Canada, both of whom are on the Special Steering Committee of the Grand Rendez-Vous (Festival du Voyageur); and Jennifer Brown, RLRC General Editor, Sarah Carter, RLRC Canada Research Fellow, and Renée Fossett Jones, RLRC Affiliate.

We warmly invite you to this exciting event. Come and experience Rupert's Land in winter, and consider what life was really like for aboriginal peoples, fur traders, and settlers.

EDITOR'S MESSAGE
From Jennifer Brown

FRIENDS OF RUPERT'S LAND

We were most gratified at the number of people who, in response to our last Newsletter, took up the invitation to become Friends of Rupert's Land. Since we do not receive grants from any level of government or from the University of Winnipeg, we rely greatly on memberships and on your generosity. Your contributions help to keep the publication coming (note, for example, the forthcoming activity announced in this Newsletter), and to cover ever-increasing costs of postage and materials. We are fortunate to have the continued volunteer help of Renée Fossett Jones as she carries on with doctoral studies at the University of Manitoba, and the valued assistance of this year's Harington Fellow, Erica Smith, as she completes her thesis in our joint University of Winnipeg/University of Manitoba Master's Programme in History. My warmest thanks to them both.

It is a pleasure to welcome the following supporters as Friends of Rupert's Land. Please let me know if any names have been missed. Donations sent to the University of Winnipeg on our behalf should have received a receipt for tax purposes, and were placed in the Rupert's Land Historical Studies Fund established by Harcourt Brown. Other gifts directly to the Centre support our operating costs; but we do not have our own authority to issue tax receipts.

Friends of Rupert's Land

Helen Akrigg
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Quentin Brown
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Raymond D. Fogelson
J. Una Johnstone
Donald G. McGillivray
Toby Morantz
Curtis Roy

Margaret Shaw
Shirlee A. Smith
Irene Spry
Paul D. Wright

And other University of Winnipeg supporters.

ANNOUNCING A NEW EDITION OF KRECH BIBLIOGRAPHY

We would like to draw your attention to our announcement of the second edition of the **Native Canadian Anthropology and History: A Selected Bibliography** edited by Shepard Krech. The first edition was an early RLRC members' selection. An order form is included at the end of this newsletter.

RLRC BOOK LAUNCHING

On February 7, 1991, the Rupert's Land Research Centre, the Department of History at the University of Winnipeg, and McGill-Queen's University Press welcomed more than fifty guests to a reception launching two books: our 1991 members' volume, co-published with McGill-Queen's, Richard I. Ruggles' **A Country So Interesting: The Hudson's Bay Company and Two Centuries of Mapping, 1670-1870**; and Sarah Carter's **Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy**. Sarah Carter is a Canada Research Fellow affiliated with the Centre and the Department of History.

Both authors were in attendance, as was Philip Cercone, editor-in-chief of McGill-Queen's University Press, and Professor

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Peter Goheen of Queen's University, who is also a member of the editorial board of the Press. University of Winnipeg President Marsha Hanen welcomed the guests and spoke warmly of the Centre and its activities. Professor Goheen introduced Richard Ruggles, and Professor Victor Batzel, Chair of the University of Winnipeg History Department, introduced Sarah Carter.

The Ruggles volume was recently mailed to our 1991 members. We ordered a small stock of extra copies of this limited edition to accommodate late renewals and new members. Members receive a considerably lower than trade price on the volume, plus our newsletters and other benefits. We hope present members will help to publicize the Centre, this volume, and our other publications. As well, we highly commend Sarah Carter's book to our members; it may be ordered from McGill-Queen's or your bookstore.

WESTERN CANADA PICTORIAL INDEX CATALOGUE

Please notice a special insert in your Newsletter from our Western Canada Pictorial Index. Some years ago, WCPI circulated a limited microfiche edition of all its computer-indexed pictorial holdings on western and northern Canada. It sold out very quickly, and we are now pleased to announce a new, much enlarged edition (indexing over 60,000 images) for library and personal users. The cost is a moderate \$50., and for a limited time, individual Rupert's Land members are invited to order sets at \$45. (Please specify on the form that you are a 1991 member).

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

September 25-29, 1991 SIXTH NORTH AMERICAN FUR TRADE CONFERENCE Mackinac State Historic Parks will host the Conference at Grand Hotel, Mackinac Island, Michigan. For registration packet and further information write: Sixth North American Fur Trade Conference, Mackinac State Historic Parks, P.O. Box 370, Mackinac Island, Michigan, 49757.

October 25-27, 1991 TWENTY-THIRD ALGONQUIAN CONFERENCE University of Western Ontario, London, Ont, N6A 5C2; phone 519-661-3430. Registration fee: \$20 (student rate \$15) US or \$25. (student rate \$20) CDN. Hotel: Station Park Inn, 242 Pall Mall Street, London, Ont, N6A 5P6; \$68 CDN plus taxes per night for single or double occupancy; phone collect: 519-762-4444 or Fax 519-642-2551), identifying yourself as a conference participant. Send fees, abstracts and inquiries to Regna Darnell or Lisa Valentine, Dept of Anthropology, Social Science Centre, or Peter Denny, Dept of Psychology.

November 7-10, 1991 AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR ETHNOHISTORY Doubletree Hotel, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Individual abstracts of 100 to 200 words should be typed double-spaced and include the title, author, address, and affiliation at the top of the page. Abstracts should be accompanied with the appropriate preregistration fee and sent to Dr Garrick A. Baily, Dept of Anthropology, University of Tulsa, Tulsa, OK, 74104. Deadline for submissions is 3 June 1991. Preregistration fees: Members \$25 US; Student/Retired Members \$15 US; Non-members \$35 US, includes ASE membership for one year. Please pay with check, money order, Visa or MasterCard. No foreign currency can be accepted.

LOWER FORT GARRY NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

The Canadian Parks Service is preparing a management plan to protect the resources and improve the services at Lower Fort Garry. During the month of April, 1991, public open houses were held which presented to the community three interpretive themes and a number of identified planning issues which will affect the future development of the site. The initial public response has been positive, however, further public meetings will be held in the fall of 1991.

These meetings will focus on options and alternatives to planning issues at the site. We invite RLRC members to send in their ideas and views and to add their name and address to the Lower Fort Garry mailing list.

For further information please contact: Joseph Constant, Canadian Parks Service, Lower Fort Garry Public Participation, 457 Main Street, Winnipeg, MB, R3B 3E8 [Ph: 204 983-7513; Fax: (204) 983-2014] OR Louis Guyot, Superintendent, Lower Fort Garry National Historic Site, Box 37, Group 343, R.R. #3, Selkirk, MB, R1A 2A8 [Ph: 204 482-6843; 983-3600]

A Living History Adventure: Canada From Sea to Sea by Jim Smithers

During the summer of 1989, twenty-five students and two leaders from the School of Outdoor Recreation at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario, completed the first leg of an ambitious five year plan. They retraced Sir Alexander Mackenzie's 1789 voyage of exploration and commerce. While completing this 3500 kilometre journey from Fort McMurray, Alberta, to Kendall Island on the Beaufort Sea, they faced many of the challenges experienced by Mackenzie and his hardy band of French Canadian voyageurs, native guides and hunters.

The Canada Sea-to-Sea Project is a cooperative effort of Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario, The One Step Beyond Adventure Group in Canmore, Alberta, and the Alexander Mackenzie Trail Association in Kelowna, British Columbia. The next three phases of the plan involve the retracing of Mackenzie's travels across Canada in search of the North West Passage (1991, Montreal to Winnipeg; 1992, Winnipeg to Peace River; 1993, Peace River to Bella Coola). As was the case in 1989, the modern day voyageurs will present a two hour historical interpretive programme for school and community groups along the route. In addition, they will be travelling in historically designed canoes (of modern materials), and they will have costumes, artifacts and trade goods appropriate to the time period.

The goals of this challenging undertaking are: to commemorate on its bicentennial anniversary the first recorded crossing of North America from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean; to educate Canadians about Canada's adventurous heritage and the need for readopting this spirit of adventure and entrepreneurship in today's increasingly urbanized world; to reestablish the first route to line Canada from sea-to-sea as a National Heritage Trail; to reaffirm for modern Canadians the spirit of teamwork, unity and multiculturalism that built Canada as a nation.

If you would like to know more about the Canada Sea-to-Sea Project, please contact Dr Jim Smithers at Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario, P7B 5E1. A copy of the expedition diary is available on request. (From the Canadian Historical Association NEWSLETTER, Vol. 16, #3)

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The Rupert's Land Research Centre of the University of Winnipeg is pleased to present the following text of workshop discussions held on current directions in fur trade and native history under the auspices of Alberta Culture in March 1990. The participating scholars have agreed to have their discussions published in this format as a record of a most interesting and stimulating occasion. Our thanks to them and to Alberta Culture for making this workshop publication available to our readers.

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SUMMARY REPORT
FUR TRADE AND NATIVE HISTORY WORKSHOP

Historic Sites Service
Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism
March 17, 1990 Edmonton, Alberta

Prepared by Michael B. Payne

On March 17, 1990 the Historic Sites Service of Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism organized a workshop on "New Research Directions in the Fur Trade and Native History of Northern Alberta, For Application in the Interpretive Development of Dunvegan and Fort George-Buckingham House." The following is a summary report of the proceedings of the workshop. It is not a transcript or a précis; instead, it highlights the workshop discussion of present state and future directions of fur trade and native studies, especially as they apply to the research and interpretation programs at the Historic Dunvegan and Fort George/Buckingham House sites. A bibliography of relevant report follows the text.

After a brief introduction from Carl Betke of the Historic Sites Service, the formal presentations began. The first speaker was John Foster of the University of Alberta, followed by Jean Friesen of the University of Manitoba, Jennifer Brown of the University of Winnipeg, Arthur Ray of the University of British Columbia, Dale Russell of the Saskatchewan Research Council, and David Burley of Simon Fraser University.

John Foster began by commending Douglas Babcock's "Opponents and Neighbours: A Narrative History of Fort George and Buckingham House Fur Trade Posts 1792-1800" and noting that it reflects what is still the real strength of fur trade studies: the examination of the trade as a commercial system. The social history of the fur trade and particularly of post communities, on the other hand, continues to present unanswered questions and problematic assumptions. For example, historians are too quick to assume that posts were organized along the lines of patriarchal households and that the social forms and customs of the traders' home societies were transferred unaltered to the Northwest. In reality there were powerful influences operating in the fur trade encouraging change and adaptation. For example, the Saskatchewan River posts were ethnically mixed, and while this fact is

generally acknowledged in fur trade literature, there has been little consideration of its consequences. Nor have historians explored the consequences in terms of behaviour and culture of the fact that posts were largely -- though not exclusively -- adult male communities, or the importance of the fact that most social interaction at the posts took place face-to-face.

In native history an equally broad range of questions remains unexamined or at best imperfectly explored. Did the fur trade cause fundamental and permanent changes in native societies or were the changes more superficial or adaptive? For example, when some Cree abandoned their role as middlemen in the fur trade and became plains bison hunters, was this a totally new economic strategy or an elaboration of older traditions? Similarly John Foster raised the question of the role of the fur trade in post-contact Indian migration. It is generally assumed that the fur trade encouraged substantial migration and that the building of posts facilitated the movement of bands into new territories, but without much hard evidence of why this should be so or how it occurred. Perhaps historians have been using the fur trade to explain change in native cultures too uncritically.

Foster introduced the problem of understanding and interpreting the freeman/Métis experience. He suggested that we still have little insight into the forces and perhaps choices that led some families to take on an Indian identity while near relatives became identified as Métis. Was the primary distinction a matter of kinship or some more complex interconnection of factors?

Jean Friesen continued the discussion of the current state of aboriginal history. She suggested that a number of trends have emerged in what is no longer exactly a "new" historical field. As aboriginal history has become institutionalized, its strong interdisciplinary focus has imposed some paradoxical constraints. Researchers are struggling to grasp historical, archaeological, anthropological, political, and literary evidence all at once. As a result, as the field broadens the topics addressed narrow. In fact the actual output of new research is probably decreasing, and what does appear is becoming almost exclusively regional in its focus. As a recent book by Ken Coates and Robin Fisher, Out of the Background: Readings on Canadian Native History, indicates, native history has still not really been integrated into our national history. Over all the history that has been produced is conservative, cautious, definitely not faddish, and generally competent, but whether or not it has actually come "out of the background" is another matter.

Friesen characterized the development of native history according to three general periods or approaches. The first and earliest, which unfortunately is still being written, emphasized Indians as part of the natural background -- the obligatory opening chapter in older textbooks which set out the geography, flora and fauna, including native people, of Canada. The second approach became more common in the 1950s and 60s and is associated with historians like S.F. Wise and George Stanley. They emphasized native people as allies and dependents in military, fur trade and mission history. In the 1970s this in

turn gave way to a view of native people as partners, consumers, initiators, even sovereign or autonomous historical actors, albeit within a limited range of historical circumstances.

But is this enough to support the claim that Indians are now out of the historical background and getting equal billing in our history? Friesen suggested the answer to this question is "No," except by a very limited definition of history which equates the term with the scholarly writing of history. For the most part, non-natives still write and interpret native history and control the selection of sites to be "celebrated". Changing this situation will be a long and difficult process, but if a start is not made now the process will not become any simpler in the future. We need to start seeing history as a form of empowerment and as native people begin to control their own history new approaches to the writing and interpretation of that history will become essential.

Friesen suggested that Catharine McClellan's book, Part of the Land, Part of the Water, may represent the prototype of a new native history, rooted in both the native community and in native and European scholarship. It would not separate and compartmentalize the fur trade period but would link past experiences with the current situations of native people. It would recognize that native people have a different conception of history than Euro-Canadians, and therefore, in order to interpret this history it may be necessary to move away from linear, chronological presentations and uniform/uniformed narrators and to develop a different range of site areas from those used in the past. Native empowerment and control may well mean focussing interpretation not on the trading hall but on the encampments outside post walls and introducing a sense of the moral and spiritual content of Indian historical understanding. After all learning and respect ought to be the purposes of historic sites and not just entertainment.

In her hopes for the future direction of native history Friesen suggested that we need to move away from a concentration on land claims research to a more broadly defined notion of land as resources, including timber, fish, and water among others. She also argued that instead of becoming more narrow and regional in focus we need to develop a more international context for our work. For example, the history of Canada's native people is part of the global history of European expansion and economic change and of the diffusion of disease and ideas. Moreover the audience for Canadian history has changed. It is no longer so uniformly white and middle-class as it was, and we can no longer assume that most site visitors share a general set of historical and cultural reference points. Finally, introducing an international perspective into our history offers an opportunity to explore themes and approaches such as labour history and the study of peasant societies, which have great applicability to our history, but which Canadian historians have too often overlooked or ignored.

Jennifer Brown opened her remarks with a discussion of the processes and particular problems of doing public or applied history/ethnohistory. In her estimation, the general quality of public history is much higher than most academics care to admit,

but it continues to occupy a rather suspect position -- at least in academic eyes -- on the fringes of intellectual respectability. Yet public history may well have some lessons to teach academic historians. In particular, public historians are faced with the problem of making historical experience concrete in a way that few academic historians ever are. Public history is also more explicitly interdisciplinary than most other history since it brings together archaeology, architectural history, and other disciplines in addition to more traditional fields of historical research. Moreover public history increasingly has a strong oral component which offers a means of bringing otherwise silent native voices into the research and interpretation process.

If academic historians and ethnohistorians represent a reluctant and often uninterested constituency for public history, Brown suggested, they are not really its primary audience. In the final analysis this audience is site visitors. The people who go to historic sites, many of whom are middle-class parents with children or teachers with students, impose constraints on interpretation programs and limit what can be done in the name of historical accuracy. Historians and site staff may often pay more heed to the interests and preconceptions of these people than they would like, but public history, like historic sites, can never entirely ignore visitation rates.

Brown also pointed out that issues of freedom and constraint arise in the relations between those who write and interpret site history and those who administer those same sites -- not to mention the politicians who finance sites in the name of the general public. Politicians and managers are not willing to use taxpayers' money to finance programs or displays that a substantial number of site visitors might find offensive, and so most sites offer a rather sanitized and idealized version of the past.

Similarly, sites can hardly fail to reflect in some fashion the prevailing political and intellectual climate of society. The current emphasis on multiculturalism and the notion that all cultures are created equal represents an important advance on former ideas of cultural evolution and hierarchy from the primitive to the civilized, but it is still constraining for all that. Brown warned that in the attempt to define ethnic categories and cultures in the past and then research and interpret them, there is a strong element of artificiality and presentism. Perhaps the best example of this is the co-opting of people who did not define themselves as Métis, or identify with those who were Métis, into what is essentially a modern broad conception of this cultural and ethnic identity. This process may be socially and politically useful, but like cleaning up sites to make them more palatable, it introduces important limits on how the past is portrayed.

The legacy of insensitivity towards local populations and native groups, and consequent political tensions inherent in establishing and maintaining Parks and historic sites needs to be recognized. Land has been appropriated, populations moved, and groups who did not want a site and who did not want outsiders writing their history have had these very things foisted upon

them. These problems merely underline the fact that public history is not entirely public. It has its elites and its special interests, and these can and do change over time. We need to realize that public history has an appropriative side that lays claim to selected parts of the past and elevates them for social and political purposes. In addition we need to remember that the process of elevating one voice mutes others.

Brown recommended that public history and sites could and should be more explicit about these constraints. It could be made clear to visitors that historical reconstructions are not complete and some material is glossed over or even completely ignored. We could be more open about the ways in which sites are selected and about how the history they present is shaped, staged and simplified. In this way we could move away from the tendency to present neat packages of history that are supposedly complete and definitive, but in fact are not.

Arthur Ray focussed his remarks on what, if anything, was new in native and fur trade history, and the directions he thought these fields might take in the near future. He suggested that it is difficult to define topics, or approaches, or questions in these fields that are truly new. In native and fur trade history, the current situation is more a renewal of interest in practical history due to the enormous importance of land claims research. Land claims research, whether for or against a given claim, now appears as a regular part of academic conferences, and the advocacy side of research is becoming more and more significant. On a personal note, Ray remarked upon the irony that in the 1960s when he began studying Indians in the fur trade, few subjects seemed less "socially relevant", yet now the opposite is true.

The "social relevance" of native and fur trade topics has led to a rekindling of interest in these fields, and some significant reworking and reappraisal of what we formerly thought to be true. However, most of the research done recently or now underway consists of case-studies that are very site-, region-, or band-oriented. Ray called for more comparative research aimed at developing a systematic framework for putting all these case-studies into some context.

Historic sites can play an important role in researching and interpreting native history. The Canadian public is not well informed about native history or cultures, and sites which present a native perspective on local history have a significant educational impact on that public. For these reasons, Ray observed, researchers of native or fur trade history need to be sensitive to the fact that what they do and write and say has a real impact on native people; their work is not simply an abstract academic exercise.

Turning more specifically to the study of the fur trade, Ray saw most research still focussed on the pre-Confederation period and on the mercantile fur trade. One reason is that it is the earlier trade records are more complete, better organized, and easier to master. Researching the post-1870 trade is in some senses less satisfying since it is almost impossible to feel that you have examined all the relevant documentation. Hudson's Bay Company records become just one of many sources including

missionary, government, and other trading company records. In spite of these problems, Ray suggested that research on the late 19th and 20th century fur trade is a very promising area of study, and holds great significance for Fort Dunvegan.

In this period, fur trade history increasingly reflects broader trends in economic history. The old mercantile order was progressively undermined by the modern industrial economy. Similarly, the decline of the Hudson's Bay Company's hold on the fur trade can be seen as paralleling the loosening grip of British capital on the North American economy after World War One. Indeed American and Montreal-based competitors re-emerged almost exactly one century after the Hudson's Bay and North West companies merged in 1821. The conduct of the fur trade was deeply affected by technological changes, especially in the areas of transport and communication, and by the intermittent growth of a cash rather than a barter or credit economy. In terms of social history, hierarchy in northern communities was no longer just a function of rank in the Hudson's Bay Company's service by the late 19th century. The post manager had to share power and prestige with missionaries, government officials, policemen, and even rival traders.

The fur trade did not disappear after 1870 as most history texts imply. In fact the total value of furs traded actually increased after Confederation. What really happened was that the economy in the North diversified, at the same time as the proportionate share of total production represented by the fur trade declined. In fact the fur trade only gives the illusion of being a spent force in the 20th century. As the northern economy diversified, natives had alternatives to the fur trade and they took them up. Pursuing fur trade history into the modern period can help to erode the myths that native people only wanted to hunt and trap in the past, and that they still have no other economic interests or strategies beyond hunting and food gathering.

Dale Russell's remarks were particularly directed at the research and interpretation programs for Fort George/ Buckingham House and the study of native groups in the pre and immediate post-contact period of the 17th and 18th centuries. It is extremely difficult to locate the territories of native groups and to trace their patterns of migration in this early period due to lack of documentary evidence. Records are fragmentary and inconclusive prior to the establishment of inland posts by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1774. For the most part researchers have to rely on the anecdotal evidence of first-hand observers, most of whom were actually only later visitors to the Saskatchewan River area, and on records kept at bayside posts. As might be expected, trade records and post journals from York Factory or Churchill are a crude tool for analyzing the situation in the interior, and we have little clear idea even of the numbers of native people in the various tribal and band groupings in the Saskatchewan River area for this period. When numbers of Indians visiting a bayside post are mentioned, there is no way of estimating what proportion of the total population they represented. But we do know enough to start questioning simplistic notions of dependency in the early fur trade period.

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When about 450 to 750 men travelled down to York Factory and Churchill to trade in a given year, it seems only logical to assume that the vast majority of the native population of the North-West had only tenuous ties to the trade.

As soon as we question the idea that native groups quickly became enmeshed in the fur trade, much of the remaining edifice of early western Canadian history also crumbles. For example, if most of the Cree and Assiniboine were only occasional participants in the fur trade, their post-contact migrations, if they did indeed occur, can scarcely be explained by a search for new sources of fur. The questionable value of using the fur trade to explain tribal and band mobility is well illustrated by the Chipewyan who were alternately displaced by the Cree in search of furs and drawn to bayside posts because of their trade aspirations. For similar reasons the use of the fur trade to explain post-contact alliance systems is equally problematic.

Dale Russell also urged researchers to avoid some deeply ingrained stereotypes and biases that pervade fur trade and native history. For example, the widely-held belief that European trade goods were superior to the equivalent objects made by natives and that natives quickly saw the superiority of these new goods and became avid traders is used to support a range of dubious assumptions. Not the least of these is the suggestion that their dependence on trade goods led Cree and Assiniboine groups out onto the plains and to adopt a way of life based on bison hunting sometime about 1800. The best available evidence suggests instead that the Cree and Assiniboine had long experience as bison hunters, and therefore, this was not just an adaptation to changing circumstances in the fur trade.

Overall Russell urged that we use the limited sources we have much more critically and that we approach journals and trade records with greater skepticism and not simply accept what they say at face value.

David Burley addressed his comments directly to the problems of fur trade archaeology. He noted a long tradition, even among some historians like A.S. Morton, of wishing to get out and actually see and touch sites and artifacts. Although portions of the fur trade are extremely well documented, there is a sense that post records are somehow easier to misread or misinterpret than bits of the "true cross" -- the bones and artifacts and foundations found on sites -- which do not lie. About 150 to 200 post locations have been identified in western Canada, and about 50 of these sites have been excavated and researched in some fashion by archaeologists. Given this effort, one might assume that fur trade archaeology has made a significant contribution to understanding the history of the fur trade, but according to Burley this is not the case.

In order to explain how so much archaeology could have been done with such limited results, Burley outlined the development of fur trade archaeology over the last four decades. Between the 1950s and the early 1970s much of the work done at fur trade sites was well-meant but virtually useless. Sites were excavated for no better reason than because they were there and someone was interested in the project. An enormous amount of material was collected, but the excavations were never written up, artifacts

were not catalogued, and much of what was found now literally rusts away. Major fur trade sites, like Fort Carlton, have been used up for a few museum pieces, yet once a site has been excavated, the work cannot be repeated. Fortunately this kind of archaeology is unlikely to recur, but the loss was enormous, equivalent in some respects to historians ripping up documents after they read them.

The second category of archaeological work on fur trade sites has been "mission-oriented." Aimed at answering specific questions of interpretation or for restoration or reconstruction, the goals of this sort of archaeology rarely rise above discovering straightforward structural details. Although most of these excavations were more competently run than earlier work, these studies tell us little beyond sizes of buildings and locations of chimneys. This kind of archaeology is also wasteful since it too obliterates evidence in the process of collecting it for limited purposes.

The third category of fur trade archaeology is research or question-oriented, and it does represent a significant advance on artifact-collecting and "mission-oriented" work. Still, in attempting to answer problems like, "Is a given site Fort George or Buckingham House?", this kind of archaeology only acts as a means of testing or confirming documentary evidence without really augmenting that evidence. In recent years fur trade archaeology of this sort has also been attempting to address more substantive questions such as how social organization or ethnicity is reflected in actual sites, or gathering information about the logistics of the fur trade. Yet even in these studies, archaeology offers little that is new to fur trade historiography. Most work consists only of taking things that are already known about the fur trade and applying these insights to specific sites.

Burley then posed the question of why fur trade archaeology has proved so sterile up until now. Part of the answer must be that archaeological evidence is not suited to writing specific histories, and it is rarely possible to organize this evidence into narrative or chronological form. But he also suggested that much of the reason has been the sorts of problems fur trade archaeologists have addressed. Instead of looking at subjects that historical records can answer in greater detail and with less difficulty, fur trade archaeologists need to look for information on matters post records do not document well, if at all.

Archaeology can play an important role in understanding native history. For example it can explore migration and other matters in the pre-contact period, and after contact it can offer insight into native interaction with posts, including the kinds of consumer choices Indians made. It can also serve a revisionist function by documenting the environmental impact of the trade. In noting the environmental stress occasioned by post communities, archaeology can strip some of the romantic veneer from the fur trade. Indeed fur trade archaeology must be careful not to re-entrench stereotypes but to question them.

After the initial presentations, time for commentary was allowed. Most discussion concerned the role of native people and

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native history at historic sites. The general sense of the discussion was that although a greater effort is now being made to include native history at sites, much still remained to be done. In emphasizing the pioneer myth, for example, history in essence excludes native people, though as Arthur Ray noted, native groups carried the fur trade forward. They were the pioneers of the trade, but this is rarely acknowledged outside of a small circle of academic specialists. Similarly, native people themselves are rarely included in site selection, archaeological programs or historical research and interpretation. Jean Friesen suggested that we need to go beyond encouraging greater native participation to giving equal status and value to their knowledge and traditions and sense of their own history.

A number of people addressed the situation of fur trade archaeology. David Burley remarked that archaeologists are still being trained to study systems and not people and that this makes their work inaccessible to the very communities they are supposedly studying. Others commented upon the need to excavate sites outside post palisades as a means of exploring the experience of women and those native people who may not have participated in the fur trade. This led directly into a discussion of how sites tend to project a very selective image of the past. Jean Friesen commented on the tendency of public history to engage in the "invention of tradition," and others mentioned the way historic sites shape and frame the history they present. Overall there was general agreement that public history, like any history, can never be completely apolitical, but that there might be some value in making the process of selecting what sites portray more open.

After lunch the workshop resumed with short presentations on the plans for developing Historic Dunvegan and Fort George/Buckingham House. Because the planning and site development for Fort George/Buckingham House were more complete, much of the initial response from workshop participants concerned plans for that site. Two possible storylines and design concepts for Fort George/Buckingham House were presented. The first, described as "Points of View," would depict the fur trade through the eyes of a number of specific characters, while the second, "Motion," would emphasize transport and communications themes and the annual and seasonal cycles of the trade. A third option, entitled "Icons," was not presented formally, but would use the site to challenge some of the myths and preconceptions Canadians have developed concerning their collective past.

The workshop participants were then asked to comment on these site plans. John Foster indicated that relating the interpretation program at Fort George to the local population and post residents had great potential, especially if it could be expanded to include information on the Indian world outside post walls. Similarly an emphasis on women's roles and experiences in the fur trade might raise problems of information and interpretation, but it would add a stimulating dimension to site programs.

Jean Friesen suggested that the decision to drop the "Icon" approach to Fort George was sensible. While interesting, it presupposed a shared knowledge of Canadian history and symbols

that is not there any more -- if it ever existed. She felt that the "Motion" option placed too much emphasis on technology and transportation and missed the sense of the post as a community. However, if it were to put the fur trade into a broader context -- as a meeting between different economies or the integration of a community into a global economy -- this design plan would have more substance.

Her preference then was for the "points of view" approach which she felt embodied a sense of debate and conflicting interpretations of evidence: the heart of historical discourse. Such an approach would also encourage repeat visitation, because no two visits would be exactly the same. By targeting specific interests it could attract a wide variety of people without resorting to a "broadest common denominator" appeal. The drawback to this option, as Friesen saw it, was that it would "individualize" the experience of visiting Fort George/Buckingham House. The ideological and historiographical content of such an approach aside, most people go to historic sites for a collective or shared experience and very few people visit sites on their own. If adopted, the "point of view" design should take such matters into consideration.

Friesen concluded her remarks by noting that the plans for Historic Dunvegan appear to assume the "righteousness of mission", and that they do not include any critique of missionary activity. John Foster then noted that the Anglican missionary at Dunvegan was native, and Jean Friesen agreed that the missionary aspect of the site opened up particularly interesting interpretive opportunities at the site.

Jennifer Brown outlined six general questions raised by fur trade history as a whole and the two sites in particular. The first of these is the question of whether or not a "fur trade society" existed, and if it did what exactly is meant by the phrase. The fur trade was socially, culturally, and ethnically diverse, and it may be productive to visualize it as a centrifuge, as well as in the centripetal terms implied by a phrase like "fur trade society." Similarly phrases like "marriage according to the custom of the country" were widely shared but they meant very different things to different people in different times and places.

Jennifer Brown's second question was "Is there such a thing as the fur trade era?" The traditional periodization of the fur trade no longer seems very useful, and the myth that the fur trade ended with Confederation needs to be exploded. As for beginnings, Europeans did not introduce trade into the Northwest, and historical interpretation needs to pay more attention to pre-contact trading patterns.

Historians also need to come to grips with the extent to which the fur trade was not just about trading for furs. Much of the work of both traders and the native producers of furs was at most tangentially related to trade. And the furs themselves were by no means unprocessed; the trade was not simply the export of raw resources. For this reason constantly describing the fur trade as "pre-industrial" may be too simplistic, especially as it obscures the "value added" to fur trade exports by this processing.

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A fourth subject still in need of research and re-interpretation, pointed out by Brown, concerns the roles of women in the fur trade. Women have been included in fur trade history, but almost exclusively in domestic roles as wives and mothers. We need to pay greater attention to women as producers and to recognize their concrete contributions to fur trade labour. In general we need to stop writing about women in the passive voice and make their agency in historical processes clear.

An allied question is the need to turn the usual treatment of native history -- as an aspect of fur trade history -- around and begin looking at fur trade history as an aspect of native history. Many, probably most, native people were only tangentially involved in the fur trade. Even those who became middlemen or who worked provisioning posts spent much of their time at other activities. Unfortunately, we have used fur trade sources, which make the trade and traders the centre of attention, uncritically for too long, and we have usually failed to take into account the "hegemonic discourse" they contain. In order to understand the fur trade as an aspect of native history we need to take native traditions and accounts seriously, and not just as supplements to the archival record.

Finally, Brown suggested that we need to ask whether or not posts were centres or peripheries or both at different times. Historians and others are inclined to view them only as centres and organize their interpretations around them, but for many of those actually involved in the fur trade the post was not the centre of their world. For them posts were places where different groups came together at specific times for limited purposes.

Arthur Ray suggested that since the focus of fur trade research, and the interpretation of sites remains the "external economy" of importing trade goods and exporting furs, other subjects simply do not receive the attention they require. For example, the "internal economy" of the trade, such as post provisioning or the manufacture of trade goods and supplies, still needs research especially the management of this economy. He suggested that the only aspect of the provisioning side of the fur trade which has been studied in detail is the pemmican trade. Similarly, we still know very little about how the posts within districts interacted, let alone how the various fur trade districts did. Yet company accounts are well-suited to this sort of study as they track flows of goods and supplies and even personnel between posts and districts.

Ray also commented on the fact that while the writing of the social history of the fur trade is much discussed, it is less frequently attempted. The main collections of correspondence, and journals and diaries have already been examined, but account books and other sources could be used for social history if the questions asked were changed somewhat. For example, there has been little consideration to date of any connection between types of goods traded and the gender of purchasers. Similarly, there is an absence of good comparative material between posts concerning the actual work of these posts. Post residents hunted and fished at all posts, but there were important differences

between posts in the proportion of labour directed towards producing trade goods or seeking firewood. It is possible to generate labour or employment profiles of posts and compare them over time and across regions.

Ray concluded by noting some of the particular interpretive opportunities presented by Fort Dunvegan. As a post-Confederation site it offers a chance to explore the impact of external changes and forces on the fur trade in the region. As the local economy diversified the native population and company employees at Dunvegan had to adapt. Gold rushes, the signing of Treaty Eight, even the growth of Edmonton, all affected the fur trade at places like Dunvegan, but exactly how and to what end we really do not know yet. As a northern site, Dunvegan also opens up opportunities for exploring that overlooked aspect of Canadian history as well.

Dale Russell expanded upon some of the comments of earlier speakers, particularly noting the roles of women and children in the production of furs and provisions for trade. He also noted that the sites of both Fort Dunvegan and Fort George/ Buckingham House were chosen specifically because of their proximity to a native population, and the history of these Indians must receive emphasis in any site development. By the same token interpretation at these sites needs to be careful not to overlap anomalous occurrences, like the Gros Ventre attack on Manchester House, no matter how much attention such occurrences receive in post records.

Russell also confessed to an aversion for most standard reconstructions and displays of arrowheads and expressed a hope that the interpretation program would make a real effort to educate the visiting public. In order to do this, he proposed that some attention be paid to providing potential visitors with background or preliminary information before they arrive at either Fort George or Dunvegan. Radio or television vignettes might be one way to accomplish this, and materials and information about other sites should be available in order to encourage follow-up visits to Fort Edmonton or Head-Smashed-In.

David Burley raised the question of how archaeology would be included in the interpretation at these sites and to what end. If artifacts were displayed would they appear in the traditional, but sterile, museum case? And if material goods were to be made part of interpretation, would site visitors get a sense of how they were used and their impact on the lives of native people?

In general, Burley was impressed by the potential of the "point of view" approach to site design at Fort George/ Buckingham House since it offered the prospect of a continual updating and revising of interpretative materials. He did caution, however, against assuming that most site visitors would have much background knowledge of Canadian history.

Burley was also interested in the potential of the interpretation program at Fort Dunvegan. Because the site was occupied from the early 19th to the 20th centuries, a sense of the evolution of the fur trade and of northern history could be given there. For this reason, it would be unfortunate if the whole program revolved around the history of the few surviving

buildings at the site and became locked into describing a tiny two or three year slice of the area's history.

After a short break, the workshop resumed with responses from site historians and archaeologists. The first speaker was Doug Babcock, a research consultant who has worked on both sites; Judy Larmour, a research consultant who has worked on material history and furnishing studies of the church and factor's house at Dunvegan; Mike Forsman, the archaeologist at Fort George/Buckingham House; and Heinz Pyszczyk, the archaeologist at Fort Dunvegan.

Doug Babcock began by noting that he was in the process of revising his narrative history of Fort George/Buckingham House. By giving him much to think about the proceedings of the workshop were valuable, but they were likely to make the process of revision more daunting. He then took up the question raised by several of the workshop participants of the degree to which native people were actually caught up in the fur trade. He described his own sense that at Fort George/Buckingham House, it was wise to be skeptical of the notion that the majority of native people were regular participants in trade. On the contrary, frequent post visitors were almost certainly the exception to the rule. He also proposed a way of moving beyond the debate over dependence -- who was dependent upon whom and why and for how long -- by considering the more general question of power and power relations in the fur trade. Such an approach could help to make the underlying political dimension to fur trade studies more manifest.

Judy Larmour noted that while acknowledging concerns and short-comings in fur trade and native history was useful, acting upon these matters is a much more complicated process. As she remarked later there may well be some serious problems in applying general interpretative approaches to specific sites.

Larmour was interested in seeing the missionary dimension of white/native relations aired, and she suggested that there was a need at Dunvegan for a closer integration of the research and interpretation programs between the mission and the factor's house sites. In order to do this missionary/native relations need to be studied in the same kind of detail as relations between fur traders and natives have been. In fact some of the approaches and insights of fur trade history may be applicable to the study of missions.

The situation at Dunvegan is complicated by the fact that it was such a complex community, and Larmour suggested that more work was needed just to get a good profile of the society there. Roman Catholic missionaries were only one segment of a community which also included at times Anglican missionaries, Hudson's Bay Company traders, independent traders, Cree, Beaver, and Iroquois Indians, Métis, and government agents. The missionaries were certainly aware of this social and cultural pluralism, but its effects remain largely unexplored. This situation must have produced a variety of tensions between Catholic and Protestant, for example, and even among individuals working within the same organization since hierarchy within the Oblates or the Hudson's Bay Company was not absolute or unchallenged. Institutional and individual views could and did

differ, and as a result we cannot simply assume that what was generally true in mission life was also true at Dunvegan.

Larmour concluded by describing some of the particular problems in researching and presenting the missionary side of Dunvegan's history. She suggested that when one ventures into the realm of religion and spirituality one must be aware of the potential for misunderstanding and thus giving offense. Thus an effective interpretation program can only be developed by employing great sensitivity and circumspection.

Mike Forsman prefaced his remarks with the observation that fur trade sites across western Canada usually present a rather traditional -- and predictable -- version of fur trade history. What then does Fort George/Buckingham House have that is different? He felt that the answer lies in finding a broader anthropological or theoretical framework in which to place Fort George/ Buckingham House. The approach of Toby Morantz and Daniel Francis in Partners in Fur may provide the kind of model of "cultures in contact" that the site needs. In emphasizing the multiplicity of groups involved in the fur trade such an approach would allow for an interpretive complexity beyond the traditional competition between Nor'Westers and Bay men. This is particularly important since many fur trade employees became freemen and took on essentially native roles in the trade. Thus over time, any given individual might play a variety of roles in the trade. A culture contact approach would also allow for the inclusion of other themes in the site storyline. For example, the native insistence on an elaborate pre-trade ceremony, and their control over this ceremony's structure and forms, could be integrated more easily into this kind of approach than into the traditional narrative history other sites employ. Finally in emphasizing the multiplicity of groups which came together at Fort George/Buckingham House, Mike Forsman argued that the interpretation program would then be able to make links with modern culture contacts/conflicts and the social dynamics of multiculturalism.

Heinz Pyszczyk confined his remarks to the more specific problems of site archaeology. He noted that archaeology tends to address matters currently in academic vogue, and so the cultural ecology approach to fur trade archaeology of the late 1970s has given way successively to concerns with inequality, ethnicity, and in the 1990s, gender. With each shift in focus a little more is learned, but not all topics are equally easy for archaeology to address.

Archaeology and by extension, site interpretation, are limited by what they can actually display and make visible. The material culture of post residents can be shown, but similar artifact collection and interpretation for native groups is much more difficult. Most native sites were occupied for very short periods. They are scattered and are likely to be found only on the extreme periphery of post sites. The fact, however, that archaeological programs are often constrained by the need to excavate the main post buildings or to ensure that reconstructions will not disturb valuable archaeological resources means that what is excavated is often not ideal from the point of view of research. Thus practical considerations

often force site archaeology into directions the archaeologists themselves would not necessarily recommend.

Heinz Pyszczyk also disputed some of David Burley's observations on the current state of fur trade archaeology, arguing that the current data base is not adequate in many areas. For example, there is no reason to assume XY Company posts were identical to other company posts, but none have been excavated yet in Alberta and few anywhere else. Comparative material between posts is also slender, especially between posts in different regions and over time. Similarly, David Burley's suggestion that archaeology needs to become more humanistic and less system-oriented may be overly optimistic at this time. Measuring ethnicity or inequality, let alone looking at gender, in the archaeological record may well require the kind of refined technique and analysis that is only just now being developed. Nevertheless, working from a material culture base, as archaeology does, offers a prospect of overturning many of the stereotypes that have crept into fur trade studies and a chance to see the trade from the perspective of those who actually worked in it.

Much of the subsequent discussion revolved around the question of native visibility in the archaeological record at posts. The general opinion was that the transient nature of native encampments at posts, the fact that these sites were likely to be cleaned up after groups left, and the thin temporal slice they represent all contributed to limiting what could be learned from them - albeit without entirely eroding their value as archaeological sites.

The question of mission history and how to interpret such a difficult subject was also discussed at some length. Jean Friesen argued that it was more dangerous to ignore potentially contentious issues like native spirituality and the impact of Christian teachings on native cultures than to face them. Jean Friesen and Jennifer Brown both suggested that some kind of comparative approach which pointed out the similarities in function between Christianity and native spirituality might make an important point. Similarly, juxtaposing a sweat lodge with the mission church would underline the fact that these structures "housed" alternate forms of spirituality. Jean Friesen and John Foster also commented on the existence of a strong native tradition of Christianity -- rather different in form and content from Euro-Canadian Christian faiths -- that should be acknowledged.

The final word fell, however, to Arthur Ray, who reminded everyone writing about the fur trade and developing interpretative programs for historical sites that fun sometimes motivated participants at least as much as iron kettles or £17 a year. Some sense of this fun would not be out of place at either Historic Dunvegan or Fort George/Buckingham House.

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