Historians of Their Own Lives: Okanagan and Settler Ukrainian Women’s Cross-Cultural Relationships during British Columbia’s Colonial and Industrial Development

by

LaVonne Kober

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Abstract

This thesis examines cross-cultural relationships between Indigenous Okanagan and settler Ukrainian women who lived in Vernon and Head of the Lake areas of British Columbia during the province’s colonial and industrial development in the early 1900s. The lived experiences shared by female participants in this project challenge the dominant historical narratives that have traditionally overlooked women’s lived experiences. Women’s histories are retrieved from the silence and invisibility of omission to fill in gaps in the literature concerning cross-cultural relationships between Okanagan Indigenous and settler Ukrainian women. In conceptualizing the histories of these women this thesis argues that the processes of colonization, largely influenced by male Eurocentric perspectives, have negatively impacted the development and maintenance of female cross-cultural relationships. Using Indigenous methodologies and research approaches that honor and respect Indigenous perspectives and worldviews, I embarked on individual interviews with two older Okanagan and two older Ukrainian women from Vernon and Head of the Lake areas. Throughout the interviews it became evident that the intersections of race and gender prejudices were deeply embedded within the colonization processes of BC. These affected how Okanagan and Ukrainian women lived their lives individually and in relation to each other. A narrative analysis of the oral histories of Okanagan and Ukrainian women offers a study of the situations of Indigenous and immigrant European women in the early twentieth century in the Northern Okanagan. Through the use of oral interviews, archives, and narrative analysis this thesis explores how colonialism and the dominant culture influenced the significance of and the extent to which female cross-cultural relationships occurred during BC’s colonial and industrial development.
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I thank my family. First and foremost, I thank my life partner and best friend, Conrad, who has endured countless hours of listening (sometimes forced) to my ideas, epiphanies, and sometimes difficult frustrations. Conrad’s unwavering support and inspirational insights contributed greatly to this project. To my children, Sean, Jeff, and Vanessa, I thank you for your support and patience.

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Proseminar course in which I learned much about being a graduate student. I am grateful for Dr. Berg’s teaching methods which allowed students to respond to material and discussions within the parameters of their own unique learning and participation styles.
Dedication

For all the Okanagan and Ukrainian women whose stories have never been heard the way they deserve to be, and to my family, past, present, and future members.
1 Introduction

1.1 Research Beginnings and Interests

My interest in recovering the life stories of elder Okanagan and settler Ukrainian women, who have lived their lives in the areas of Head of the Lake and Vernon, British Columbia during the late 1800s and early 1900s, was initially ignited while studying Gender and Women’s Studies with Dr. Margo Tamez at the University of British Columbia Okanagan. While exploring feminist thought in reference to communities, societies, and nations pertinent to Indigenous peoples, I explored relationships between Indigenous women and white settler women during British Columbia’s early colonial and industrial development. My research revealed gaps in the historical narrative specifically concerning the lives of Okanagan women from the Head of the Lake and Ukrainian immigrant women. I noted particularly an absence of information regarding their histories and their experiences in relation to one another across the traditional literature. Much of the documented history of Head of the Lake and Vernon, British Columbia is characterized by white male European authorships and perspectives. Personal reflection on my own ethnic Ukrainian background and social relations with an Okanagan child generated curiosity about how my own conceptions of race and ethnicity were shaped through adults’ inter-relations in places such as Vernon and the Head of the Lake. I found very little information on Ukrainian historical narratives of Ukrainian women who experienced the immigration process and journey from Ukraine, to the Canadian prairies, and finally to British Columbia. Knowing that Okanagan women and settler Ukrainian women lived in close geographical proximity, I was curious if female cross-cultural relationships existed during the colonial and industrial development of British Columbia. My research efforts uncovered little information about the existence of cross-cultural relationship between Okanagan women and settler Ukrainian women.
in the areas of Head of the Lake and Vernon BC during the early 1900s however, my findings in local archives revealed the importance of the gendered dimensions of history construction, colonization, industrialization and the marginalization of Indigenous and ethnic European women’s voices, experiences, and perspectives.

As a third-generation Ukrainian immigrant my family’s history has passed down from my mother to me about the experiences of my ancestors prior to, coming to, arriving, and being in Vernon in the early 1900s. As non-English speaking immigrants, their stories reflect many aspects of living in this area as a non-dominant group. Their specific views have never been given the attention they deserve in British Columbia’s historical archives. At the same time, the Okanagan women at the Head of the Lake have also passed down their histories to their sons, daughters, grandchildren, and extended family members. Their perspectives which draw upon distinct and integral relationships with the Okanagan as their indigenous homeland have experienced extreme marginalization in the history of the region and British Columbia. As both groups of women lived in close proximity to one another during the early 1900s, my interest lies not only in the personal histories that women from Ukrainian and Okanagan peoples may tell, but also in exploring how gendered and racialized factors of colonialism affected Okanagan and settler Ukrainian women’s cross-cultural experiences. Would the stories of women hold the answers to this question? Would the oral histories of women living during British Columbia’s colonial and industrial development in the early 1900s reveal encounters in contact zones such as home-based economic spaces, schools, or meetings in church? If so, what significance did women place on these cross-cultural relationships, if indeed they did exist?

While referring to the history of British Columbia R. W. Sandwell said,

Within the grand narrative of modernization that continues to define history, the story of the last two hundred years is told as the transition from rural to
When one considers the grand historical narrative of British Columbia, the above quote is limiting. It suggests that the only categories of history worth knowing are presented in distinct dichotomies. A dichotomous approach to history leaves little room for the inclusion of stories and personal lived experiences of Indigenous peoples and marginalized immigrant groups who are equally a part of their own histories that transcend and also disrupt the linear narratives of nations, states, and nation-states. As well, Indigenous peoples and non-dominant immigrant groups are simultaneously “of” Canada and “of” other narrative histories that contest the centrality of the western European white male and female settler pioneer history. Too often Canada’s history emphasizes those whom historians regard as key actors in defining the national and provincial historical narrative. Laura Peers and Robert Coutts have shown that recent theory on colonization explores “contact zones,” or social locations where distinct peoples meet and interact with one another negotiating between domination and subordination that “characterize relationships between settler and Indigenous people,”2 and varying degrees of subordination and agency between Indigenous and immigrant groups which are subordinated by the same dominant group. In Vernon, Head of the Lake, and the Okanagan, the key factors are the inter-group relational factors between Anglo-Saxons and Scots, Anglo-Saxons and Germans, and Okanagan peoples and their indigenous lands. Crucial to colonization and industrialization is the relationship of the colonial elites to subordinated European ethnic groups such as the Ukrainians.

The history of British Columbia has traditionally reflected male Eurocentric interpretations of provincial and regional history and simultaneously minimized the history of

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marginalized groups including Indigenous peoples, Indigenous women, and immigrant women. Prior to 1980 Indigenous historical perspectives were allotted minimal attention in “scholarly texts and historic sites.” Following the 1980s, a shift occurred where social history initiated an interest in expanding on historical themes. Themes including “women’s history, ethnic and immigrant histories, occupational histories of the working class, and Indigenous histories” became increasingly visible and began to transcend the dichotomous categories of history described by Sandwell. However, many lived experiences of British Columbian women offer rich, meaningful, and insightful perspectives on lived realities, which provide new insights on social, economic, and political factors that contradict the grand historical narrative of this province.

I strongly identify with Elizabeth Furniss’s statement. She states that traditional Canadian historical narratives “comprise what the Marxist literary critic, Raymond Williams, calls a society’s selective tradition; a partial vision of history that provides the official story of that society’s past.” The official history of British Columbia has been written, instilled, and institutionalized in public spaces including schools, museums, public meetings and ceremonies, and in institutions of political and economic authority such as court buildings, ministries, and banks. Historians, including Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, argue that the selection and exclusivity of historical narratives have been strategically produced by colonial governments in order to present the process of colonization as inevitable and legitimate. The ultimate power of a selective narrative, however, “exists in its eventual colonization of popular consciousness:

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3 Peers and Coutts, Aboriginal History and Historic Sites, 275.
4 Peers and Coutts, Aboriginal History and Historic Sites, 278.
when it becomes transformed into a set of unquestioned historical truths.” As most places, in the Okanagan and in the Vernon and Head of the Lake social relational sites, these historical “truths” have become embedded within the consciousness of society’s members. Understanding of the past only through the normative lens operates to maintain traditional historical narratives that sustain class and power structures and thus becomes difficult to decolonize.

How, then, do we decolonize the popular consciousness? By investigating and including oral histories of Okanagan and settler Ukrainian women as more than minimal experiences to the historical narrative will popular consciousness begin to shift? How do we retrieve women’s histories from the silence and invisibility of omission? In a society that is seemingly ‘at war’ with Indigenous women and immigrants what challenges prevent society from appreciating the value of Indigenous and Ukrainian women’s historical experiences? Elaine Leslau Silverman suggests that women’s historians must be active in asking new questions and venturing beyond the suggestive to develop definitive answers to the new questions. To implement a straightforward strategy will mean that “women’s history makes women the subjects of a new body of literature.”

In other words, women’s history does not remain invisible, unspoken, unrecorded, or relegated to the peripheral historical narrative as an auxiliary side story referred to somewhere in the transitions between “rural to urban, agricultural to industrial, familial to individualistic, Gemeinshaft to Gesellschaft, or from traditional to modern.”

Building upon this challenge and from an advocacy standpoint, this project seeks to uncover stories of Okanagan and settler Ukrainian women by gathering the life experiences of two elder Okanagan women and two elder settler Ukrainian women. By focusing on their oral

9 Sandwell, *Beyond the City Limits*, 4.
histories, this project makes important contributions to recovering women’s histories and offers deeper understandings of cross-cultural relationships that occurred between women who experienced distinct and important realities during British Columbia’s colonial and industrial development in the northern Okanagan. Traditionally women’s Indigenous and immigrant ethnic histories have not been given the attention they deserve and have been largely relegated to history’s margins. Woven throughout this project is a decolonization of a male-biased dominant historical narrative with a commitment to recovering a more inclusive narrative derived from women’s oral histories.

1.2 Contemporary Identity of Okanagan First Nations Peoples/Influential Indigenous Intellectuals

Okanagan First Nations peoples have been deeply affected by colonialism in all dimensions of their lives. This is interwoven through politics, economics, social and health issues, education, loss of language, lands and natural environments, and traditional perspectives. It is important to speak to the contemporary identity of the Syilx People of the Okanagan Nation and that they be identified and acknowledged. The Syilx People are the earliest dwellers of the interior of British Columbia. The Okanagan traditionally inhabited an area expanding over 69,000 square kilometers which included the area as far north as Mica Creek, British Columbia, and as far south as Wilbur, Washington, in the United States. The western expansion included the Nicola Valley and the eastern boundary straddling the Kaslo and Kootenay Lakes. In 1865, after J. C. Haynes, the local Justice of the Peace, “argued that the reserve awards were excessive,” the colonial government drastically reduced the size of these traditional lands and limited access to resources required by the Okanagan people to sufficiently meet and sustain

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their needs.\textsuperscript{11} This aspect of colonization contributed to the collapse of economic self-sufficiency bringing about a severance between the people and their traditional lands and ways of living. Today, the Okanagan peoples are self-representing as a ‘resilient and determined people’ who are working together to reverse the effects of economic and political destruction and to maximize their economic, educational, political, and relational initiatives. They are determined to re-invigorate stewardship over their land by respecting their “traditional values and knowledge [as well as] the Okanagan language, history and culture.”\textsuperscript{12}

Indigenous scholarship has been influential in guiding and advising non-Indigenous scholars who are researching projects that involve reliance on current Indigenous perspectives to frame research conducted with Indigenous peoples. As a non-Indigenous scholar, I have benefited from the expertise of key Indigenous intellectuals who have contributed to my education concerning Indigenous ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies. Dr. Margo Tamez, a Hada’didla’ Ndé’ and Kónitsalii Ndé’ and citizen of the Lipan Apache Band of Texas, is an educator, writer, and human rights and social justice advocator. Dr. Tamez’s work on Indigenous people’s perspectives, human and women’s rights, and feminist thought has encouraged me to think critically in launching this research project and provided strategic directive and focus. Dr. Jeanette Armstrong, a Syilx from the Okanagan First Nations, whose research interests include Indigenous philosophies, Okanagan Syilx thought and environmental ethics, has given me support in studying Indigenous Methods and Methodologies. Her expertise in Indigenous perspective of the Okanagan has been paramount in shaping a research design for this project. Dr. Marie Battiste, a Mi’kmaq from Potlot’eck First Nations of Cape Breton Nova


\textsuperscript{12} Okanagan Nation Alliance, \textit{Okanagan Nation Traditional Territory}. 
Scotia, has worked on institutional change, decolonization, and the preservation of political and cultural diversity of Canada. Her work has inspired me to dig deeper into understanding difference and to incorporate the principles of that understanding into this project. The essays in Battiste’s book, “Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Wisdom,” represent Indigenous voices that seek to (re)tell their personal stories and histories and have provided me with examples to draw from. The work that these scholars have done has influenced how I view research designed within the framework of Indigenous Methodologies and Methods.

1.3 Historical Backdrop – Okanagan First Nations People

Knowing and learning about the contributing forces which played significant roles in determining where Okanagan and settler Ukrainian women were located in relation to one another in the historical context of British Columbia’s colonial and industrial development is crucial to making linkages between the gendered and racialized nature of colonization. It is without a doubt that this affected female cross-cultural relationships though the task is to determine when, where, how, and to what degree. A historical backdrop and explanation of British Columbia’s colonial project serves to locate, contextualize, and transport the reader to a launching point in understanding the political, social, and economic structures in which Okanagan and settler Ukrainian women negotiated their cross-cultural relationships.

Two significant events occurred in the mid-1800s that caused concern for British politicians of the Crown Colony of Vancouver Island and set the course for the colonial development of British Columbia. The boundary dispute with the United States in 1846 and the discovery of gold in the 1860s pressed government officials to concentrate on sovereignty and settlement issues. Settling sovereignty issues largely depended on convincing settlers to reside in
British Columbia and become permanent loyal subjects.\textsuperscript{13} From Confederation until the 1930s, the government relied on securing immigrants as a strategy for nation building and industrial development.\textsuperscript{14} The industry of fur trading between the Okanagan people and settlers worked to subordinate Indigenous peoples to roles beneath British settlers who inserted themselves between the Crown, colonial officials, and a globalizing economic market resulting in new social and economic structures. Although there are historians who view this social and economic exchange between Indigenous peoples and traders as practicing equal partnership, others believe that “the relationships were nearly always skewed by potential white hegemony and power in favor of the newcomers.”\textsuperscript{15} The fur trade era was short lived but the effects were disastrous. Two significant results transpired in the years leading up to the establishment of civil authority in the Okanagan in 1860: the extinction of many animals in the areas where the Indigenous lived and the breakdown of Okanagan chiefdom and leadership. Both proved disastrous for the future success of the Okanagan people.\textsuperscript{16}

The collapse of Okanagan traditional government and leadership was detrimental to the Okanagan people’s ability to self-govern. The provincial government continued with its aggressive preoccupation to secure immigrants and confiscate more land for settlement. In 1859 the first settlers arrived in the Okanagan Valley and by 1870 there were a handful of settlers who obtained approximately 320 acres of arable land with access to water. Cattle-ranching began to develop in the area while Father Paul Durieu built a home near Head of the Lake and with other


\textsuperscript{15} Peter Carstens, \textit{The Queen’s People} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 30-31.

\textsuperscript{16} Carstens, \textit{The Queen’s People}, 32.
priests established a Catholic church and a school by 1865. In order to secure land availability for new ranching operations the government needed to obtain an agreement with the Okanagan people; however, the Okanagan were not ignorant of the value of their land and their terms of settlement included all rights to resources on the lands of their chosen geographical dimensions and locations. In 1861, they selected the bottom land at the Head of the Lake and negotiated to keep their existing village sites, their fishing locations, and a significant range area for livestock.

Initially the government agreed to these terms, but the settlement agreements did not last long. J.C. Haynes, the local Justice of the Peace, drastically reduced the Okanagan reserve because he felt the existing territory was far too excessive. In 1865, the reserve at the Head of the Lake was reduced from 200 acres to 25 acres per household. It was at this juncture that white settlers began to acquire the lands that had previously belonged to the Okanagan people. By the time British Columbia entered confederation, in 1871, most First Nations groups in the province, including the Okanagan, had been stripped of their land, resources, and their rights to negotiate in land sales and were subsequently forced into political, economic, and social decline. After confederation the urgency to sign treaties with First Nations groups all but disappeared. Federal and provincial governmental indifference toward the plight of Indigenous communities did not go without continued consequences. First Nations communities throughout the province, including the Okanagan Nation, would live through continued hardships well into the twentieth century and up to the present day.

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17 Thomson, The Response of Okanagan Indians to European Settlement, 122-123.
18 Thomson, The Response of Okanagan Indians to European Settlement, 46-49.
20 Belshaw, Becoming British Columbia, 20.
21 Belshaw, Becoming British Columbia, 20.
At the Head of the Lake, Okanagan First Nations peoples were reduced to smaller areas of land on which to grow food and maintain a sustainable lifestyle. They found themselves in the position of having to adopt European modes of agriculture on their reduced land bases. Both Okanagan, as well as other Indian bands, became so discontented with their living situations that they threatened war. The government was forced to set up the Indian Reserve Commission (IRC) in 1877. The purpose of the IRC was to control Indigenous reaction to land issues in the Shuswap and Okanagan areas. In addition, the IRC controlled all aspects of the reserves in British Columbia. By 1880 the government unconditionally denied all Indigenous people opportunities or rights to purchase land off the reserve. Life would continue to transition for the Okanagan, but in very structured and restrictive ways including the “inability to make fundamental economic decisions.” By 1910 ranches located in the Okanagan Valley were bought by wealthy European developers who invested substantial amounts of money to also purchase irrigation systems and secure a monopoly on water rights. Economic growth continued to escalate for European settlers while activity on the reserve either stagnated or continued marginally with livestock and hay production.

While political and economic forces threatened the lives of Okanagan peoples with isolation on reserves, the provincial government simultaneously endeavored to prepare the people for “assimilation into the dominant society.” Attempts by the government to phase out all characteristics of Indigenous culture such as language, ceremonies, and dances would be largely enveloped within the parameters of Christian European-based education. The Residential

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School system was organized in 1892 to expedite the civilization and assimilation of Indigenous children. In conjunction with the Roman Catholic Church, the Methodist, Anglican, and Presbyterian Churches, the government formed Residential Schools with intentions to further segregate the Okanagan community from European settler communities. The children were forcibly taken from their families to permanently reside at the Residential School in Kamloops where they experienced intense exposure to European religion, language, customs, and work ethics.\(^{26}\)

The upheaval of government intervention in all aspects of the Okanagan way of life, the forceful apprehension of Indigenous lands, and British Columbia’s advertising for immigrants, laid the foundation for the kind of “newcomer society that would emerge in the second half of the nineteenth century.”\(^{27}\) Ukrainian immigrants were among those newcomers to the Canadian prairies and British Columbia. There were three distinct waves of Ukrainian immigration to Canada. The first wave occurred between 1896 and 1914, during the Laurier-Sifton years. Approximately 170,000 Ukrainians entered Canada. The second wave occurred from 1919 to 1939, with an addition 68,000 Ukrainian immigrants arriving. The third wave of Ukrainian immigration occurred between 1954 and 1954. This last wave was the smallest with only 35,000 Ukrainians entering Canada and any Ukrainian immigration of this magnitude has not happened in Canada since.\(^{28}\)

Each group of immigrants was a product of a unique set of historical experiences and, therefore, brought about apparent differences to the groups’ identity. The first wave was most

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\(^{26}\) Walker, *The Indian Residential Schools*, 4.

\(^{27}\) Belshaw, *Becoming British Columbia*, 20.

\(^{28}\) Brian Osborne, “Non-Preferred People in Canada’s Ukrainians: Negotiating an Identity,” eds Lubomyr Luciuk and Stella Hryniuk, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 82.
visible as it was the pioneering generation. This group is thought of as the “stalwart peasant in sheep-skin coats bravely clearing its quarter section of wilderness for future prosperity,” and occupies much of Canadian history concerning Ukrainian people.\(^{29}\) The second wave of immigrants, the wave this project is concerned with, arrived during the inter-war years. The experiences of this group of Ukrainian immigrants differed significantly from those who came previously. Those Ukrainians arriving in Canada during the Laurier-Sifton years were from Habsbur and under the control of Eastern Galicia and Northern Bukovyna. After the First World War, Independent Ukraine fell under the control of the Soviet Union, Poland, Romania, and Czechoslovakia. Ukrainians immigrating to Canada during the inter-war years were from these regimes. Ukrainians arrived in Canada with deep disappointment regarding the politically turbulent times their people were facing back in Ukraine.\(^{30}\) Repercussions of hardships faced in Ukraine manifested in the memories of Ukrainian immigrants and their “cultural baggage” had significant bearing on their experiences as immigrants in Canada.\(^{31}\)

1.4 Historical Backdrop – Ukrainian Settlers

A journey through the western interior of Canada, in the zone where the grasslands mix with the aspen-poplar forest, reveals extensive districts that stand out as one of the most distinct ethnic landscapes to be found anywhere in Canada and indeed in all of North America. They are the areas settled by Ukrainian immigrants and their descendants who began arriving in western Canada one hundred years ago.\(^{32}\)

\(^{29}\) Karen Gabert, “Locating Identity: The Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village as a Public History Text,” in Re-Imagining Ukrainian Canadian History, Politics, and Identity, eds. Rhonda L. Hinther and Jim Mochoruk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 2011 54-84.

\(^{30}\) Osborne, Non-Preferred People, 82.

\(^{31}\) Stella Hryniuk, “‘Sifton’s Pets:’ Who Were They?” in Canada’s Ukrainians Negotiating an Identity, ed. Luciuk Lubomyr and Stella Hryniuk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 4.

Osyp Oleskiw, a member of the Ukrainian intelligentsia, conducted research on the conditions of living in Canada during the latter part of the 1800s. He wrote a summary, *pro vilni zemli* (about free lands) outlining how Canada was suitable for Ukrainian emigrants.  

While Oleskiw attempted to secure an agreement with the Canadian government to give him control of organizing and sending Ukrainians to Canada for a fee, officials were reluctant to endorse the arrangement.  

Despite the government’s reluctance to work directly with Oleskiw, some 600,000 Ukrainians left the Austro-Hungarian Empire for Canada between 1896 and 1914, under the Liberal Government of Wilfred Laurier, and the Minister responsible for the Immigration Policy, Clifford Sifton.  

By 1897, W.F. McCreary, Canada’s Commissioner of Immigration, wrote a letter to James Smart, the Deputy Minister of the Interior, to recommend the restriction of Ukrainian immigration. McCreary objected to Ukrainian immigration because in his opinion their penniless state financially taxed the Canadian government.  

On June 1, 1899 the government imposed a money standard which meant that any Ukrainian arriving in Halifax or any other Canadian port must possess a required sum of money or they would be sent back to Ukraine on the same ship on which they arrived.  

Furthermore, Sifton’s successor, Frank Oliver, adamantly believed that while Ukrainians were hard workers and good farmers, they were a “drag on Canadian civilization and progress.” Oliver also argued that the cost of paying

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booking and steamship agents a set fee for each Ukrainian immigrant became an expense the Canadian government wanted to discontinue.\(^\text{38}\)

In reality, peasant Ukrainians who left Europe did not leave completely penniless. In the late 1800s, the peasantry in Ukraine included three levels with the poorest peasants living on fewer than two hectares owned mainly by absentee landlords from Austria, Poland, Romania or Germany who maintained their Ukrainian territories as exploited economic colonies. Most Ukrainians who arrived in Canada were from the “middle stratum of the peasantry who possibly lived on five hectares and were able to sustain a decent living without having to leave their farms and find seasonal work in Boryslav’s oilfields.”\(^\text{39}\) The wealthy peasants had no reason to seek immigrant status and the poorest peasants could not afford to; however, most Ukrainians who remained in Ukraine could never attain significant profitable improvements no matter what stratum of peasantry they were from. Ukrainians who left Europe immigrated to Canada for two reasons. First, social and political repression exacerbated economic troubles for the peasantry. Unemployed peasants held a discouraging sense of futility, and reports of existing opportunities in Canada consumed their attention.\(^\text{40}\) Second, Ukrainians feared that future financial security and land ownership opportunities for their children would eventually diminish if they remained in Ukraine.\(^\text{41}\) When Ukrainian immigrants did arrive on the prairies they were drawn to wooded areas and to places where other Ukrainians had already settled. They mainly settled in the areas that included, “south-eastern Manitoba…to the Yorkton-Saskatoon district, and along the Valley


\(^{41}\) Lehr, *Peopling the Prairies with Ukrainians*, 33.
of the North Saskatchewan to Vegreville, east of Edmonton.”

The familiarity of social, religious, and linguistic ties provided a sense of strong community for these new immigrants. However, this behavior proved to be economically disastrous for many Ukrainians. Ukrainians had preconceived notions that treeless land equaled infertility. The wooded areas they chose to settle were difficult and labor intensive to clear, therefore, making farming difficult and unprofitable. The high density of Ukrainian immigrants who congregated to the same area “restricted expansion into areas of better land.” Because Ukrainians sought to settle close to family and friends strong community and social ties were forged discouraging families to move to better tracts of land that were easier to farm.

Other cultural groups that had settled on the prairies “accepted the Anglo norm, [but] the Ukrainians resisted it.” James W. Darlington argues that reasons for Ukrainian resistance to Anglo norms were both “internal and external to the Ukrainian culture itself,” as they were atypical and counter to Ukrainian cultural norms. Ukrainians operated in resistance mode in almost every aspect of their experiences as foreigners in Canada. This was partly because survival strategies played out in response to prior political and economic suppression in Ukraine and partly because of resistance to the pressures of cultural assimilation in Canada. For example, many Ukrainians did not see the need to homestead such large sections of land. Familiar with a social structure comprised of compact village communities Ukrainians preferred to live in close proximity to friends and family and would have been content to settle on ten-acre plots:

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42 Gerus and Rea, The Ukrainians In Canada, 7.
43 Lehr, Peopling the Prairies with Ukrainians, 37.
44 Darlington, The Ukrainian Impress on the Canadian West, 56.
45 Darlington, The Ukrainian Impress on the Canadian West, 56-57.
46 Darlington, The Ukrainian Impress on the Canadian West, 56.
47 Darlington, The Ukrainian Impress on the Canadian West, 56.
“Adjusting to life on one quarter sections [of land] meant adjusting to a life of isolation.”

Moreover, Ukrainians fled from their homeland where the social locations of church, school, and geographic areas were controlled by foreign conquerors. Ukrainian immigrant women in Canada felt that the only social location left in which to exercise personal control was that of the private space of their homes: therefore, mothers sought to provide their children with traditional Ukrainian national upbringings. Frances Swyripa argues that “where the Anglo-Canadian majority strove to assimilate the first Ukrainian immigrants and their children to British standards and ideals, Ukrainian women felt pressure to neutralize [the] denationalizing influences of Canadian society.”

Another way Ukrainian immigrant women attempted to “neutralize denationalizing influences of Canadian society” was through forming organizations such as the Ukrainian Women’s Association of Canada (UWAC) and the Ukrainian Catholic Women’s League (UCWL). These organizations served as important central sources for tight community supports regarding family, social, and religious concerns. Many Ukrainian immigrant women were moved to react to political events occurring back home in Ukraine, and, therefore, their interests and energies focused on mourning the collapse of the Ukrainian homeland as opposed to assimilating into Canadian society at the expense of ignoring the disturbing political and economic conditions in Ukraine.

At the same time, Ukrainian immigrants struggled with the issues of assimilation, a shift in terms of employment opportunities began to occur on the Canadian frontier. Between 1905

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48 Petryshun, Peasants in the Promised Land, 75.
49 Frances Swyripa, “Wedded to the Cause: Ukrainian-Canadian Women,” in Canada’s Ukrainians Negotiating an Identity, eds. Lubomyr Luciuk and Stella Hryniuk (Toronto” University of Toronto Press, 1991), 251.
50 Swyripa, Wedded to the Cause, 251.
51 Swyripa, Wedded to the Cause, 246.
and 1914, many male Ukrainians joined the industrious work force working as miners, ditch diggers, road construction workers, mill workers, meat packers, and railway workers. Ukrainian immigrant women found employment as domestics for wealthy British immigrants. They easily found jobs as low-paid workers for the wealthy as “the English always wanted a Ukrainian girl because they [were] harder workers.”52 Ukrainian immigrant women were thought of as backward, uneducated, and male-dominated and an “Anglo-Canadian image of Ukrainian women as domestic drudges and beasts of burden” served to subjugate Ukrainian women situating them beneath Anglo women both socially and economically.53

The Canadian government wanted Ukrainian immigrants to assimilate into Anglo-Canadian culture. However, efforts to expedite this process were largely left to institutions that were willing to assume social roles.54 The Roman Catholic Church built churches in Ukrainian communities in competition with the Protestant churches who aimed to appeal to the Orthodox Ukrainians. Both the Roman Catholic churches and the Protestant churches established hospitals and schools in hopes of obtaining jurisdiction over the Ukrainian community.55 The Protestant churches, including the Anglicans and Lutherans, not only represented a religious faith, they epitomized the interests of British-Canadians in assimilating Ukrainian immigrants. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic Church was largely French-based and their attempt to gain Ukrainian support was not necessarily successful. Because the Roman Catholic Church did not understand the Greek Catholic rite, many Ukrainians became disillusioned with the church. Furthermore, the Roman Catholics were not able to “cater to the linguistic needs of the Ukrainians.”56

52 Petryshun, Peasants in the Promised Land, 116.
53 Swyripa, Wedded to the Cause, 246.
54 Petryshun, Peasants in the Promised Land, 75.
55 Petryshun, Peasants in the Promised Land, 110.
56 Petryshun, Peasants in the Promised Land, 111.
the Catholics and Protestants vied for Ukrainian souls, many Ukrainians ended up rejecting both
groups in favor of establishing their own churches. On the Canadian prairie frontier, including
the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, Ukrainians faced an array of continuous
changes that effected economic, social, and religious aspects of their lives. Ukrainians who were
desperate to secure stability in those areas embarked on yet another extension in their
immigration journey and travelled further west to British Columbia. This immigration journey
began with few Ukrainians moving to British Columbia. In 1901, there were only 23 Ukrainians
in British Columbia, accounting for 0.4% of the province’s population. By 1931, 2,583
Ukrainians lived in British Columbia representing 1.2% of the total population.

The two streams of historical backdrops presented above reflect how the provincial and
federal governments attempted to organize and deal with two groups of people, the Okanagan
peoples and settler Ukrainian immigrants, during the colonial and industrial development of
British Columbia. To understand the intercultural dynamics at the Head of the Lake and
Northern Okanagan, it is essential to understand where the respective histories of both the
Okanagan peoples and the Ukrainians settlers are located and situated. By probing deeper into
the political, economic, and social structures created by the colonial development of British
Columbia we can locate the lives of marginalized and subjugated women who negotiated and
adapted their lived experiences at every avenue of change that they were required to face.
Ruptures in traditional living practices, confiscation of territorial lands, and forced exposure to
dominant European language and religion were disruptive hallmarks for Okanagan women. At
the same time, the Okanagan peoples faced drastic changes in their lives imposed by the colonial
government, immigrant settler Ukrainian women were also negotiating and navigating their way

57 Petryshun, Peasants in the Promised Land, 113.
58 Gerus and Rea, The Ukrainians in Canada, 17.
through the enduring processes of carving out new lives, new social and religious networks, and new modes of economic survival in settler colonial spaces already well developed by Anglo, Chinese, Scots, Irish, French, and German settlers at the Head of the Lake. This racial and ethno-settler configuration is a crucial dimension for engaging the social realities of marginalized Indigenous and immigrant Ukrainian women.

A full and comprehensive perspective on historical narratives is not possible without considering individual and institutional experiences in tandem. Veronica Strong-Boag argues that it is not possible to fully interpret individuals or institutions apart from one another.\(^{59}\) The likelihood of overlapping lived experiences of Okanagan and settler Ukrainian women who lived their lives during the colonial development of British Columbia alters and disrupts the dominant Anglo-centric historical narrative of British Columbia. By reading across this grain and closely reading the stories of Okanagan and Ukrainian women in relation to one another the significance and effects of the intersections of race and gender can shed light on the diversity and complexity of these women’s experiences. The importance of this intersectional lens is reflected in the statement by Kathryn Elizabeth Moore Martin: “There is only a small field of literature that studies female cross-cultural relationships with a focus on Indigenous women’s experiences [and] oral history allowing access to a unique set of experiences.”\(^{60}\) Sarah Carter has also argued that, until recently, historians have relied upon documented and written evidences incorporated into the dominant historical narrative largely generated by a male Euro Canadian government. A more holistic understanding of the complex scope of women’s lived experiences during the early


reserve and industrial years in the West demands recovering the lived experiences of women told
in their own voice, interpreted within their own perspective, and on their terms.\textsuperscript{61}

2 Literature Review

The effects of the colonial development of British Columbia have been significant in influencing the extent of and the depth in which Okanagan and settler Ukrainian women experienced cross-cultural relationships. This project focuses on the life stories and histories of Okanagan and settler Ukrainian women who have lived at the Head of the Lake and in Vernon during the early 1900s. The objective of this review is twofold. First, to bring to the forefront Indigenous and immigrant women’s voices that will challenge the Eurocentric bias of British Columbia’s historical narrative and provide primary research via oral history. Second, to complicate the gendered dichotomies and over-simplified understanding of women’s lives in British Columbia and to elevate the complex dimensions of women’s lives as analyzed within the gendered and racialized nature of the colonial project. The review provides an approach that confronts this historical lacuna and works to elucidate the significance of female cross-cultural relationships in the Okanagan. Conventional sources that have contributed to our understanding of British Columbia’s dominant historical narrative have been insufficient when considering the infrequency in which women have been chroniclers and interpreters of their own lives. This review opens up a new space to attend to this as a key problem in British Columbia’s history.

Thus this chapter discusses the rigid process of historical documentation and how this was maintained resulting in the exclusion of the voices and perspectives of women during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century British Columbia. To accommodate this discussion I examine specific literature in three sections. The first section, 2.1, reviews literature concerning

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the historical narrative of British Columbia as it has been traditionally created, told, and maintained. This section will analyze how these narratives have been problematic in terms of women’s history. This analysis will demonstrate the historical context in which female cross-cultural relationships were constructed and negotiated during colonial development of the West and British Columbia in relation to Indigenous contestation. In section 2.2 I discuss existing literature that documents accounts of Indigenous and white settler women’s stories. This literature shows that historical documentation of women is indeed limited, but does demonstrate a slight historiographical turn in terms of traditional Eurocentric narratives written and interpreted mainly by white elite males. In section 2.3, I make a case for the inclusion of more women’s experiences in historical discussions and point out the relevance of such inclusions. This is accomplished by covering literature that critiques mainstream historical narratives and presents women’s historiographies as an alternative theoretical and methodological framework to gain a more holistic and critical perspective of British Columbia’s past.

2.1 The History of History Making

In this section, I examine the history of history making in British Columbia. The literature demonstrates how the colonial processes of nation-building concentrated largely on politics and economics resulting in a restricted, biased, and male-dominated historical perspective. The making of British Columbia is deeply significant in its own right. At the time of confederation, the newest province of Canada, British Columbia, was relatively void of a fixed and organized historical narrative that would function to characterize its own identity and

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still reflect European paradigms. As the most westerly and newest province to join confederation in 1871, British Columbia developed its history within a remarkably short time span. In that short time frame, the telling and teaching of mainstream Canadian history, written mostly by white male elite European voices, established and reinforced a colonial mindset in which Canadians faithfully store a conventional rendition of Canadian history.

In “Writing British Columbia History 1784-1958,” Chad Reimer explains the challenging undertaking of nation-building in British Columbia and how the role of history writing went hand in hand with the European colonial project. The colonial project, referred to as the “white settler society construct” by Daiva Stasiulis and Radha Jhappan, represents the intentions and actions of political actors to construct a “replica of British society” in Indigenous territory. The colonial project, which included pulling the hearts and souls of Indigenous peoples into subservience to governmental social, cultural, and intellectual programs, was intense and complicated. Colonization meant the expansion of the empire by confiscating land from Indigenous peoples and transmitting wealth and power into the hands of European elites. A key question that Reimer asks is, “How does a young society tackle the task of writing its history within the framework of the colonial project?”

Reimer demonstrates a progressive perspective on who wrote British Columbia’s history, how they wrote it, and why, as he examines the field itself as a category of analysis. He focuses his examination and subsequent critique of this topic by researching the work of five generations

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64 Schultz, Writing About Canada, 92.
65 Chad Reimer, Writing British Columbia History, 150.
68 Reimer, Writing British Columbia History, 150.
of historians, and he documents how these first historians contributed to the creation of British Columbia’s history through written narratives within the framework of European influence.\(^6^9\) The main actors spanning the five generations were European male historians considered to be the forerunners in establishing “a historical aristocracy for British Columbia.”\(^7^0\) The province’s history established its roots in European influence and Victorian ideology that enabled the process of British Columbia history making to become absorbed in imperial expansion and colonization.\(^7^1\)

The writing of British Columbia’s history was a significant tool in constructing a new European society within a short time span and the five generations of historians were cognizant that their contributions clearly and selectively shaped historical narratives. Historical themes emerged that included politics, economics, geography, topography, separation from the United States, and religion, and these themes were significant in creating a distinctive province with its own history.\(^7^2\) During this process, oral histories of Indigenous peoples and immigrants were considered unnecessary in shaping or contributing to the historical narratives and were, therefore, allocated little privilege in the written documentation of the province’s history. The dominant historical narrative would be sealed in stone for more than a century before the emergence of any significant challenge or critical analysis would emerge to unsettle the status quo and acknowledge alternative stories.\(^7^3\) Reimer is adamant that British Columbia’s traditional historic

\(^{69}\) Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History*, 4.
\(^{70}\) Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History*, 68
\(^{71}\) Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History*, 7.
\(^{72}\) Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History*, 150.
\(^{73}\) Reimer, *Writing British Columbia History*, 12.
Almost seven decades before Reimer’s work in 2009, Gustave Lanctôt, a French Canadian historian, referenced the history-making process of Canada. In his work, “Past Historians and Present History of Canada,” written in 1941, Lanctôt argued that the writing of British Columbia’s history took its original reference points from Canadian national history in which there were three distinct periods: The Indian, the French and the British. Lanctôt argued that Canada’s historical narrative originated in explicating information regarding Canada’s expansive land and resources that were unclaimed and available for colonial use and exploitation. Following the Indian and Anglo-French Wars a new turn appeared on the history making horizon. In 1871, a formalized process of historical document production was established in Canada and it came to officially represent the nation’s history. European methodologies, epistemologies, and ontologies influenced and supported the creativity of Canadian writers regarding the analysis of people and events that shaped Canadian society. These writing techniques were embraced by the Review of Historical Publication Relating to Canada, (part of the Canadian Historical Review launched in 1897), and were substantial in promoting the process of historical recording and preserving European standards of historical recordings and methods. It was at this juncture that the standard for forming and archiving history took its roots in British ideology. All other historical storytelling, writing, or claims would be measured and judged by this standard. Thus, as Lanctôt’s and Reimer’s analysis

74 Reimer, Writing British Columbia History, 68.
76 Lanctôt, Past Historians and Present History, 78.
77 Lanctôt, Past Historians and Present History, 79.
indicates, European epistemology and worldviews dominated to the near exclusion of alternative, even potentially complementary paradigms.

In keeping with the theme of writing and creating British Columbia’s historical narrative, R.W. Sandwell argues that the telling and passing on of provincial history was a conscious interplay between the dominance of capitalism and bias toward capitalist democratic constitutionalism and historical writing and documentation. Sandwell’s edited book, “Beyond City Limits”, is a compilation of essays written by researchers who examine the rural areas of British Columbia. The research reflects on the province’s culture and rural economy. Dominant historical inquiry on urban and industrial-based economics has tended to overshadow the importance of British Columbia’s rural history. The essays challenge the silences in the province’s historical record regarding rural spaces and tackle subject matter that breaks away from the traditional historical literature based on densely populated areas of Victoria, Greater Vancouver, and Nanaimo. These accepted narratives largely focused on the “young men characterized by liberal individualism, cultural alienation, waged labor, and high geographic mobility.” Considering the three broad categories of power, land, and gender, the researchers openly facilitate consideration on how small capitalistic populations broadly portrayed in the historical record of British Columbia stand in harsh contrast to the reality of the rural settler society. The writing of British Columbia’s history has focused less on the rural population where Indigenous history is embedded.

At the time of British Columbia’s early history writing, between 1881 and 1931, most of the population of British Columbia, including settlers and Indigenous peoples, lived outside of cities and towns. The dominant historical narrative of modernization depicts an opposing viewpoint on this statement and defines British Columbia’s history as urbanized and industrialized progress. British Columbia’s history, written and maintained over the last two hundred years, portrays these realities as dichotomous, “from rural to the urban, agricultural to industrial, familial to individualist, and from traditional to modern.” Sandwell refers to these dichotomies as a chaos that tends to trouble our understanding of British Columbia’s history. Readers of the province’s history understand selective categories that include those that have been predominantly written about. These selective categories, pulled mainly from resource-based capitalist themes, form the biased status quo in which readers think about and understand history. However, the dominant writing of capitalist-focused material was not the only characteristic of history making that would frame how British Columbians saw and understood the province’s history.

Utilizing European influence to compile historical narratives included other strategies that transpired beyond written documentation. Photographic images of the frontier were used in conjunction with written accounts to construct a credible European representation of Canadian history. Carole Williams has identified how the use of photography served purposeful history-making strategies. Williams illustrates how carefully selected historical narratives were matched with pictures of colonial life. Pictures taken of male settlers working on their farms portrayed the success of the newest province to join confederacy. Photos of white European mothers with their children dressed in their best clothing and posing on plush furniture provide a snapshot of

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81 Sandwell, *Beyond City Limits*, 3-7.
the ideal colonial family. However, these portrayals were used to instill particular ideas about conquest and possession on gendered, racial, and imperialist terms. Conversely, pictures of Indigenous women dressed in traditional regalia depicted Indigenous peoples as relic, mythological, legendary, and exotic. Indigenous life was commoditized and the camera was a tool for the visual preservation of what European elites believed to be vanishing.”

Not only was photography a tool used to express British Columbia’s constructed historical narrative, it was incorporated into national and intercontinental “print culture, the legal system, advertising, and the scholarship of social science.” Photographs were indispensable tools for furthering the frontier politically and economically. In the early 1890s, pictures were consistently accompanied with written texts describing the colony’s progress. The use of photography along with written explanations was a potent agent in strategically mirroring imperialist ideology and furthering the colonial project. As a result of using photography as a strategy to stamp visuals together with narratives into the minds of English-speaking settlers and colonists, marginalized groups including minority immigrants, women, and Indigenous peoples were purposefully excluded in the dominant narrative and ultimately denied historicity.

As the discipline of history grew and expanded into institutionalized public education and higher education textbooks were written with a major objective. The context and narratives were conceptualized and produced with Eurocentric and white settler bias, and provided a historical

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83 Williams, *Framing the West*, 9.


85 Williams, *Framing the West*, 10.
narrative that promoted a status quo for both provincial and national historical narratives.

Provincial history celebrated and embraced the stories of explorers, British settlers, and industrial advancement. These narratives constituted the “master narratives of Canadian nationalism.” Carole Williams critically identifies the master narrative as a nation’s “selective tradition,” which reduces the past to a perspective of history that is dominant, one-sided, and promoted and taught in public schools and universities. Margaret Conrad and Alvin Finkel co-wrote a Canadian national history textbook in several editions. The fourth edition, written in 2005, includes historical perspectives as told by Indigenous peoples utilizing their own methodologies, perspectives, and worldviews. While many welcomed a focus on Indigenous historical perspective, others did not. Dissenting views of whom and what is the Canadian national family surfaced and the following statement was written in the textbook’s introduction:

Our objective was to write a survey of Canadian history that incorporated new research in Canadian social history and include developments in the lives of all Canadians, not just the rich and powerful. While it was enthusiastically endorsed by some, our text also generated considerable controversy. Our focus on Aboriginal peoples, women, racial and ethnic minorities, the poor…was deemed to have contributed to the demise of a cohesive narrative of the nation’s history and even to the disintegration of the nation.

This statement, made in 2007, indicates significant resistance by the gatekeepers of the dominant historical narrative and unwillingness to consider other viewpoints and interpretations of regional and national history. Original writings and subsequent dominance of British Columbia’s historical narratives do not necessarily include narratives of Indigenous peoples, women, racial and ethnic minorities, and the poor, leaving in their wake a structured, and at times a biased,

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87 Williams, Framing the West, 18.
88 Margaret Conrad and Alvin Finkel, introduction to History of the Canadian Peoples 4th ed. (Canada: Pearson Education Canada, 2005), xix.
colonial mentality that proves problematic to transform. Joy Parr alerts readers to the responses of traditional and political historians as they see new work and approaches to history. New approaches “reorder the balance in the epistemology of history between the humanities and the social sciences and make life in these boundary lands exponentially more difficult.” Parr points out that some scholars believe the new social history is a negative force in national politics and that too much history of the ‘wrong kind’ or a history that challenges the existing settled historical narrative presents a problem. New methodologies that are relied on in women’s history are particularly seen as politically charged and even dangerous.

This section has examined literature that deals with the construction of British Columbia’s history within European ideological perspectives. The literature indicates that because British Columbia’s historical narrative has been mostly Eurocentric and male dominated, the inclusion of women’s and marginalized immigrant’s histories have been problematic. Furthermore, there continues to be resistance to the inclusion of differing historical perspectives. The next section is a discussion of literature examining the lives of Indigenous and immigrant settler women whose histories did manage to gather particular attention during British Columbia’s colonial development. The stories are indeed significant; however, they do not gain the same levels of importance as the major historical themes outlined in the first section. Furthermore, these histories have been described and documented by women scholars and not male historians. This is significant and points to the turn toward opening up historical paradigms and methodologies to initiates new spaces for the history of alternative experiences and models of understanding of power relations.

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89 Williams, Framing the West, 20.
91 Joy Parr, Gender History and Historical Practice, 10-11.
2.2 Indigenous and European Settler Women on the Frontier of British Columbia

Early literature on cross-cultural relationship between Indigenous women and settler women in British Columbia is limited, but it does reveal some aspects of these relationships that occurred early in British Columbia’s colonial development. Susan Moir Allison is an example that can be drawn on for reference in terms of cross-cultural relationships between women. Allison was a white British settler woman who moved with her husband to the Similkameen and Okanagan Valleys in 1867. Before Allison married her husband, he had had an Indigenous partner, Suzanne, with whom he had children. The mixed marriage relationship between Allison’s husband and Suzanne presented physical and relational spaces and opportunities for Allison to experience cross-cultural contact. She kept a diary of memoirs regarding her interactions with Indigenous women.\(^92\) Elizabeth Kate Martin Moore’s interpretation of Allison’s recollections is that they were laced with a colonial mindset demonstrating little enthusiasm to form meaningful relationships with Indigenous women in her sphere of contact.\(^93\) The following quote from Allison’s diary exemplifies the colonial social context which Moore refers:”

\[\text{I had a visit from an Indian woman, a niece of Quinisco, the ‘Bear Hunter’ and the chief of the Chu-chu-ewa Tribe. (…) I did not know my visitor seemed to think she ought to sit upright in her chair and fix her eyes on the opposite wall. I think ‘Cla-hi-ya’ was the only word she spoke. I was not used to Indians then and knew very little Chinook. I felt very glad when her visit was over. I know now that I should have offered her a cigar and cup of tea.}\(^94\)

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While Allison does state who the Indian woman was related to, she does not refer to her by name: she uses indirect references of “Indian woman” and “my visitor.” It could be suggested that this interaction demonstrates a clash in the world views of two women pitted together through their social relations to a man in common between them and the power relation imposed upon the Indigenous women by white laws and customs that dehumanize her while the process of land dispossession is occurring. By not naming her visitor, describing her relief at the conclusion of the visit, and suggesting to offer her visitor a cigar, Allison situates the Indian woman in a different cultural division from herself. The distinctions between the settler British woman and the Indigenous woman are evident in this entry of Allison’s diary. These are the distinctions and segregations that the colonial project sought to perpetuate in building the nation.

Carole Gerson and Veronica Strong-Boag’s work, “Championing the Native: E. Pauline Johnson Rejects the Squaw,” examines Johnson’s life, her experiences as an Anglo-Mohawk, and her unique position as both a writer and a performer. Johnson was born in 1861 in Chiefswood, Ontario, making both Winnipeg Manitoba and, Vancouver, British Columbia her homes during her lifetime. Her cultural duality can be used to exemplify the dichotomy between white settler women and Indigenous women. Johnson’s mother, a white settler named Emily Susanna Howells, and her Mohawk father, G.H.M. Johnson, Head Chief of Six Nations Indians, married in 1853 amidst a racially conscious environment, and lived somewhat of a fishbowl existence experiencing only partial immersion in either culture. Johnson, a poet and recitalist, accentuated her dual lineage during her popular performances by changing costumes half way through her shows. As a person with a dual ethnicity, Johnson negotiated between cultures through her acting and personifying identities as both a white and an Indigenous woman.

Johnson toured across Canada for nearly two decades, capturing the attention of her audiences. Historians such as Gerson and Strong-Boag, who have written literature on Johnson and, examined her life and its complications, have contributed to the inclusion of women’s history in British Columbia.

Sylvia Van Kirk’s work, “Many Tender Ties Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870,” contains research and analysis on both Indigenous and settler relationships during early contact between Indigenous peoples and European settlers and the fur trade era. Her work surpasses one-sided viewpoints of male-centered traditional renditions of trade economics and clarifies that the social aspects of the fur trade culture did, indeed, involve women. Van Kirk explores and analyses the role played by various groups including Indian, white, and mixed-blood women in the development and maintenance of the fur trade in Western Canada. Both Indigenous and settler women were integral actors in the growth and expansion of the fur trade economic base and met consistently within contact zones that existed within this culture. Marriages between white European men and Indigenous women became widely practiced during the fur trade era and enticed on-going debate among the Hudson’s Bay officials. The legal status of these unions mainly consisted of the absence of the clergy and were formalized according to the ‘custom of the country’ or outside of traditional British marriage laws. On one hand intimate unions between white European men and indigenous or “mixed blood” women were initially the foundation and economic stability of the fur-trade society, as they strengthened relational ties

with trading relatives and allies.\textsuperscript{98} On the other hand mixed marriages contested Victorian concepts of racial supremacy and presented as hindrances to the establishment of Euro-Canadian nationalism. However, a shift in cross-cultural relationships between white European men and indigenous women began to occur with the arrival of settler British women.\textsuperscript{99} Although emigration of white women to British Columbia was initially space, by 1870 white women made up 27 percent of the non-aboriginal population and, three decades later, white women constituted 29 percent of the non-aboriginal population.\textsuperscript{100} To eliminate concerns over the ongoing debate regarding mixed marriages, it was believed that white European women should be introduced “as objects that would shape the behaviors and identities of the true subjects of colonization – white men.”\textsuperscript{101} Aspects that influenced shifts in cross-cultural relationships became complex and required relational negotiations within the intersections of gendered and racialized systems of politics and economics.\textsuperscript{102}

Van Kirk points out several concerns. She argues that the arrival and infiltration of settler British women into the existing fur trading society resulted in a “heightened class-consciousness” and that settler women’s presences, actions, and attitudes contributed to an escalation of racial prejudice.\textsuperscript{103} British white women held limited interest in approaching Indigenous women let alone developing relations for two predominant reasons. Settler British

\textsuperscript{98} Adele Perry, “Fairer Ones of a Purer Caste:” White Women and Colonialism in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia,” Feminist Studies 23, no. 3 (Autumn,1997), 505.
\textsuperscript{99} James Flett letter from Fort Simpson 1874, Copyright to Orkney Archives. Of interest is a letter written by James Flett in 1874 to his niece back in England. This letter is from the archives in Orkney and gives insight into the ideas of the day regarding the social position of women. Flett refers to men taking Indigenous wives, keeping them for only a few years and then abandoning the wives and their children in the woods. Flett is a British subject who believes in the Victorian marital traditions of taking a white wife and being properly wed by a minister. Although Flett denounces the behavior of other men, he does ask his niece if she thinks a younger wife would be interested in him.
\textsuperscript{100} Perry, Fairer Ones of a Purer Caste, 115.
\textsuperscript{101} Perry, Fairer Ones of a Purer Caste, 508.
\textsuperscript{102} Margaret Strobel, introduction to European Women and the Second British Empire (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), xi.
\textsuperscript{103} Van Kirk, Many Tender Ties, 172-173.
women arrived to British Columbia with an existing ingrained notion of superiority and the women felt threatened by the mixed marriages of Indigenous women and European men. Although Van Kirk’s work indicates that there were cultural contact zones within the fur trade economy where both groups of women interacted, there were underlying anxieties that were not favorable to nurturing or sustaining mutual friendships or camaraderie.\(^\text{104}\)

An example that Van Kirk uses to illustrate her analysis is the scandal at the Red River Settlement. In February 1863, a mixed-blood servant girl named Maria Thomas, found herself in court testifying that Anglican minister, Griffith Owen Corbett had raped her. Corbett is said to have been an unpopular man with the head political elite of Red River because he criticized both the Anglican Church and the Hudson’s Bay Company. Even though the rape of young Indigenous girls by their masters was a common occurrence in the nineteenth century, this particular case was considered a sensational sex scandal. Although Corbett was generally disliked by his peers he was found not guilty of rape. The prosecution ignored charges of rape based on Maria’s story because what Corbett had allegedly done was not regarded a criminal act. Furthermore, testimony against Corbett was given by an Indigenous girl whose story was of little worth to the court.\(^\text{105}\) Despite the fact that Corbett was not liked by his peers, his male status was sufficient to transcend the importance and credibility of Maria’s testimony against him.

The case of Maria Thomas and Griffith Owen Corbett demonstrates all the characteristics of “sexual, racial, and class transgression” of an Anglo political system rooted in Western culture.\(^\text{106}\) The overall attitudes of white officials at Red River Settlement were inherently critical of mixed marriages between white men and Indigenous women. White European men


\(^{106}\) Bumsted, *Scandal at Red River*, 1-10.
who married “squaws” were downgraded by officials and deemed unsuitable for jobs of importance and advancement. While white British settler women enjoyed memberships to high society clubs for the wealthy and educated populace, Indigenous wives of white men were rejected and disallowed to participate, and the continuous arrival of white women to the Red River Settlement ensured this practice became fixed. When Chief Factor Colin Robertson tried to introduce his Indigenous wife to the elite club he was “met with scathing rebuff.”

Van Kirk’s critical analyses of women’s experiences in early contact and settlement periods in British Columbia is important to the contribution of literature that examines how women’s experiences were presented as peripheral to the dominant narrative and thus were deemed stories of less importance. The lived experiences and realities of women’s lives represented in Van Kirk’s work are not considered outside of their relationships and experiences with men or in direct contact with each other. The historical accounts of women’s lives documented in Van Kirk’s work are threaded within the framework of the colonial project or what Van Kirk refers to as the ‘white settler society construct’ and within the harsh realities of gendered and racist attitudes. Ethnographic research on Indigenous women who lived in the late 1800s and early 1900s in British Columbia provides important contributions and insight to women’s history in British Columbia and reflect the principles of the colonial project where major nation-building and history making themes captured center stage in documenting and writing British Columbia’s historical narrative.

Jean Barman has accomplished work on researching, analyzing, and writing about various aspects of women’s history in British Columbia. Barman’s work in uncovering and documenting women’s lived experiences has been extensive and opens up multiple perspectives on women’s lives when considered within the greater framework of Canada’s and British
Columbia’s past. Her research touches on many aspects of the history of women, but more importantly, she brings to life those historical stories of women that would otherwise be forgotten. In her work, “Sojourning Sisters,” Barman showcases the lives of two sisters, Jessie and Annie McQueen, who were born in Nova Scotia in the 1860s. The sisters were of Scottish descent and deeply rooted in the Presbyterian religious faith. Both school teachers, the sisters ventured out west to British Columbia to employ their teaching skills in the Nicola Valley where they did experience cross-cultural relationships with First Nations Peoples, Chinese immigrants, and school children of mixed ethnicities.

As Barman describes the lived experiences of these sisters the result is an analysis of life on the frontier and how women adapted, faced challenges, and negotiated their own identities and positions within the political and economic development of British Columbia. The experiences of Jessie and Annie McQueen have become part of the larger picture of British Columbia’s history and as a result of Barman’s work these ethno histories are now incorporated into the dominant historical narrative.

2.3 Recent Inclusion of Indigenous Women’s Stories to British Columbia’s Historical Archives

In the final section of this literature review, I argue for the inclusion of more women’s experiences in historical discussions in order to re-think British Columbia’s history and venture beyond the rigid thematic dichotomies referred to by Sandwell. Literature reviewed in this

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section verifies a post-colonial historiographic shift in academic literature that supports my argument.

In the past decade, there have been conceptual shifts that have resulted in a proliferation of new historiographies produced by scholars in British Columbia that are being incorporated into mainstream historical narratives. Various scholars and researchers attest to the fact that new accounts of women’s history, as told by women themselves, have been missing. Scholars indicate there is an “urgent need for new research and to discover exciting new possibilities of feminist scholarship” concerning women’s history. Leslie McCartney suggests that if oral histories were taken and transported into the dominant historical archives we would obtain a better understanding resulting in a more holistic and balanced record of our province’s past. Two scholars in particular have worked in collaboration with Indigenous women and have collected and recorded personal historiographies of their lived experiences. Erin Dolmage’s and Kathryn Elizabeth Moore Martin’s research provides literature that offers important contributions on Indigenous and settler women’s lives during the colonial and industrial development of British Columbia.

Dolmage’s work, “The Exceptional-Typical History of a Métis Elder in Fort St. John,” focuses on the collection and analysis of the oral history of May Barrette who is an elder in Fort St. John, British Columbia. Dolmage and Barrette's collaborative recording and documentation of Barrette’s personal narrative provides historians with alternative perspectives on the experiences of women who live in one of the last pioneer areas of British Columbia. Together,

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111 Reimer, Writing British Columbia History, 151.
the women created a micro-historical biography that contributes to a broader understanding of British Columbia’s history and is now included in the historical archive and will continue to be read and regarded as an indispensable piece of the area’s history, untouched by European-based interpretations.

Storytelling is one of the oldest forms of relaying historical information and “historians, novelists, playwrights, teachers, museum curators, film makers, artists, illustrators, musicians, and public historians” all benefit from new narratives which facilitate and promote a reshaping of Canadian views and perspectives on history. Barrette’s life story is not just a biography but a snapshot of what life was like for her family, the broader community, and the Métis people as an entire group. Dolmage and Barrette not only provide insight into Barrett’s life, but also into the lives of other women in Barrée’s community. Dolmage points out that Barrett’s voice is a communal voice that speaks for women in the larger community. The conversations between Dolmage and Barrette reveal much about Barrette’s positive attitudes toward pioneer life and cross-cultural relationships between Indigenous woman and settler white women.

For example, one story that Barrette relates is her memories of two groups of people, “the First Nations and white traders and how they were both pioneers.” Her story describes an occasion where Barrette and her husband were searching for a camping spot in Drumheller, Alberta. A First Nations man told them about the Ukrainian women in his community who he felt deserved honor and respect because of their hard work and friendly hospitality towards their neighbours. He referred to the Ukrainian women as having the strongest willpower and who, in

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115 Dolmage, The Exceptional-Typical History, 2
116 Dolmage, The Exceptional-Typical History, 134.
his opinion, had become the backbone of the Canadian nation. The First Nations man encouraged the Barrettes to seek out these Ukrainian women in his community because he believed they would benefit from a mutual encounter. This story represents invaluable informational nuggets regarding cross-cultural relationships between Indigenous Peoples and settler Ukrainian people that may not have been uncovered if Barrette’s unique story had not been told and subsequently documented. Moreover, Barrette’s life “serves as an allegory for broader issues affecting the cultures as a whole” and indicates that there were cross-cultural relationships between Indigenous people and settler Ukrainian people in the Canadian Prairies in the early 1900s.

Kathryn Elizabeth Moore Martin’s work, “Honouring Experience-Cross Cultural Relationships between Indigenous and Settler Women in British Columbia, 1960-2009,” is a valuable piece of literature researching and analyzing female cross-cultural relationships between Indigenous and settler women. Martin’s work gives fresh perspective and alternative insights into Indigenous historiographies in British Columbia. She examines cross-cultural relationships between Stōlō Indigenous women and settler women in the lower mainland of British Columbia and conceptualizes histories of both groups of women. By delving into historical narratives and focusing on Indigenous women’s experiences, Martin argues that academia and the public will benefit from resulting information useful for re-thinking colonialism at a macro level.

The nature of female cross-cultural relationships during British Columbia’s colonial and industrial development indicates that there were contact zones in which women negotiated their encounters. Encounters occurred at points where members of a particular community passed

117 Dolmage, The Exceptional-Typical History, 135.
118 Dolmage, The Exceptional-Typical History, 144.
through at specific times and for particular reasons.\textsuperscript{119} These encounters facilitated different levels of depth and meaningfulness in cross-cultural relationships which represented “both a product of the history of colonialism, and in more contemporary times, examples of resistance to the history of colonialism.”\textsuperscript{120} Martin’s research examines contemporary examples of cross-cultural relationships between Stōlō women and settler women from 1960 to 2009 and has revealed that these relationships are “rooted in a history of cross-cultural encounters.”\textsuperscript{121} In addition, Martin’s work suggests that the colonial project may not have been completely efficient in implementing segregation of Indigenous peoples for the purpose of assimilation into the dominant culture. Indigenous women and settler women did experience various degrees of cross-cultural relationships at multiple sites of encounter both within and without the constructed imperial institutions.\textsuperscript{122}

The literature review illustrates how British Columbia’s history was originally documented, written, and maintained to establish a historical narrative that would not only settle the colony, but settle the minds of its citizens with imperialistic mindsets and attitudes. Including women’s histories in the dominant historical narrative has been traditionally problematic. Although many stories of women have been excluded, some documentation of women in history representing the mid-1800s and early 1900s did manage to gather attention. Historical writings of women in this period included the documentation of diaries and memoirs as a result of research on the fur-trade era and frontier. The last section demonstrates recent historiographic methods that showcase women’s lives and capture Indigenous and immigrant

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\textsuperscript{120} Martin, \textit{Honoring Experience-Cross Cultural Relationships}, 2.
\textsuperscript{121} Martin, \textit{Honoring Experience-Cross Cultural Relationships}, 3.
\textsuperscript{122} Martin, \textit{Honoring Experience-Cross Cultural Relationships}, 4.
\end{flushright}
women’s histories as told by the women themselves. In light of new literature that references alternative perspectives on how women experienced the realities of frontier life during British Columbia’s colonial and industrial development, I suggest that the province’s historical narratives on political, social, and economic themes that persist in focusing on a distinct male society cannot be understood in isolation from the experiences of women. Isolation and separation lead to misleading indications of what history in British Columbia is all about. The intersections of all relationships within the political, social, and economic spheres of society provide a more holistic and balanced narrative when including women who were also active agents in British Columbia’s history-making process. Re-discovery of women’s stories offers alternatives to conceptualizing the past as a decolonizing link as new stories will allow us to re-think traditional history and serve to tell us much about women and their relationship and reaction to colonial development. The remainder of this thesis focuses on capturing, documenting, and analyzing stories of Okanagan and settler Ukrainian women who lived at Head of the Lake and Vernon BC in the early 1900s. The following section outlines the methodology and methods drawn on to capture Indigenous and Ukrainian settler women’s positions in shaping the formative years of British Columbia’s development and to facilitate a broader and more encompassing perspective regarding women’s lived experiences and personal histories both individually and in relation to each other.
3 Methodology and Methods

My work on cross-cultural relationships between Okanagan women and settler Ukrainian women is intended not only to fill a gap in the historical archives of British Columbia but also to open up new paths; to disrupt normative historiography and to challenge the historical archives as the only legitimate way to ‘read’ and understand lived experiences and voices of Okanagan and Ukrainian immigrant women. Moreover, this project seeks to decolonize selective historical narratives referred to by Silverman by retrieving women’s histories from the silence and invisibility of omission. The recorded history of cross-cultural relationships between these two groups of women is incomplete at best and their respective histories are vital to understanding the evolution of the colonial and industrial development of the province. Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues that the history of Indigenous peoples is vital because it provides them with opportunities to contest the effects of colonialism that have functioned to both stifle and skew how lived experiences of Indigenous women have been presented in Western historical recordings.

The history of settler Ukrainian women, who migrated to Vernon in the early 1900s, and lived and worked in the area, is practically non-existent. Lubomyr Luciuk and Stella Hryniuk’s edited work in “Canada’s Ukrainians Negotiating an Identity,” reveals how many Ukrainian Canadians feel about being Ukrainian in a non-Ukrainian world. Today, it is difficult for many Ukrainians born and educated in Canada to feel integrated into the host society. These Ukrainians outwardly appear as being fully Canadian because they speak English with no accent and have been educated in the same public educational facilities as all other Canadians.

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123 Silverman, Writing Canadian Women’s History, 278.
125 Lubomyr Luciuk and Stella Hryniuk, introduction to Canada’s Ukrainians Negotiating an Identity, eds. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), xiii.
However, “inwardly, they have set themselves apart.” For many Ukrainians, there is a personal and internal struggle that facilitates an ongoing negotiation of identity. Are they Canadians of Ukrainian background or are they Ukrainians who live in Canada? The identity of Ukrainians in Canada is rooted in “an abnormal political situation in the Ukrainian homeland” and for some 130 years that Ukrainians have lived on the Canadian prairies and in British Columbia their beloved homeland has been ruled by foreign empires including the Soviet Union, Poland, and Romania. Ukrainians living abroad have felt that it has been their duty to uphold their ethnic identity in Canada and attempt to practice their Ukrainian national traditions, languages, and customs within a new homeland. Because many Ukrainians struggle with belonging, maintaining ethnic traditions, and retaining an acceptable degree of traceable history, which encompasses their homeland, immigration processes, and Canadian frontier experiences, additional stories need to be told and included in the dominant historical archives of Canada and, particularly in British Columbia.

Historical marginalization is a theme that both Okanagan women and settler Ukrainian women share and a theme that threads through this project. In order to trace the impact that white settler society norms, rules, practices, and governance has had on social relations between Okanagan women and settler Ukrainian women in cross-cultural contexts and the transformative effect it has played in the lives of these women, my work relies on current Indigenous Methodology (IM) praxis. The methodologies I rely on to frame this project consider how specifically marginalized indigenous and immigrant women’s history has been traditionally problematized by conventional historical methods. They address the problems outlined in the

126 Lubomyr and Hryniuk, *Introduction to Canada’s Ukrainians*, xiii.
127 Lubomyr and Hryniuk, *Introduction to Canada’s Ukrainians*, xiii.
128 Lubomyr and Hryniuk, *Introduction to Canada’s Ukrainians*, xiv.
literature review and facilitate a process by which women can share their life’s experiences as a decolonizing exercise. IM consists of “a body of Indigenous and theoretical approaches and methods” that aims to ensure research is conducted in a respectful, ethical, and useful manner and observed from the point of view of Indigenous women and men. Utilizing IM ensures that no aspect of this project will be indicative of or related to power or control tensions but lends itself to a decolonization process ensuring that the women represented in this project benefit from the research findings, and promotes a more comprehensive understanding of cross-cultural relationships set aside from the scrutiny of male interpretation.

Housed within Indigenous Methodologies are a number of qualitative research approaches, which when utilized in conjunction with one another, “provide alternatives to dominant Western positivistic paradigms and give voice and prominence to communities previously marginalized in research practices.”

Therefore, this project utilizes the following broad research approaches: Participatory Action Research (PAR), storytelling, the Four Rs (responsibility, respect, reciprocity and relevance), researcher reflexivity, and narrative analysis. Integrating all approaches works to situate the stories of marginalized indigenous and immigrant women, whose life’s experiences are otherwise relegated to the margins of women’s studies and traditional history, in center stage as historians of their own lives. Furthermore, a fusion of these approaches works to decolonize

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traditional Western positivistic, reductionist, and objectivist paradigms traditionally used to frame research on marginalized groups as such as Indigenous and immigrant women.  

3.1 Participatory Action Research

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a collaborative approach that “combines systematic inquiry, participation, and action while working on projects with Indigenous people and Indigenous communities.” Linda T. Smith argues that Indigenous communities and other marginalized communities share “a collective and historically sustained experience of research as the ‘Object,’” and that Western research methods have been associated with “colonialism, racism, inequality, and injustice.” Indigenous communities have alternative ways of knowing who they are and what their histories are and represent: however, research has typically been conducted within Western paradigms on and about Indigenous peoples. While Ukrainian immigrants forged new lives on the Canadian prairies they were regarded by government officials as ‘undesirable’ immigrants tolerated only for their contribution to Canada’s economic growth as farmers and laborers. As a researcher utilizing PAR, I identify with and situate myself in the marginalized Ukrainian community that immigrated to Canada from Ukraine. The knowledge derived from this project is within the parameters of PAR methods in that I do not seek to study either an Indigenous community or Ukrainian community and document stories placing these communities further in the confines of inequality and injustice, but I seek to reveal

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132 Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies, 90.
personal lived experiences as “historically oppressed and colonized peoples/communities, homes, and bodies to theorize the arteries” of “colonialism, racism, inequality, and injustice.”

There are two major premises of PAR. The goal of PAR is to emphasize participant involvement in the research process. The objective of PAR is to “create knowledge rooted in the lives and perspectives and experiences of ordinary people and directed toward progressive social change.” I rely on PAR because, as with other practitioners of this method, I regard myself as forging beyond the possible barriers between researcher and participant to facilitate equal participation and to co-create new knowledge. Kristin Esterberg explains that the processes and outcomes of PAR are political in nature and the ultimate aim is “human liberation.” By utilizing PAR, the participants and I have not only created new knowledge by documenting their oral histories, we have also collaboratively participated in decolonizing traditional historical narratives through liberating these women’s stories from the interpretation and scrutiny of male Eurocentric perspective. I have met PAR’s goal by involving my participants in the research process and have fulfilled PAR’s objective by co-creating knowledge within the parameters of the participants’ personal perspectives.

An additional principle of PAR lies within the premise that we are “experts in our own experiences.” Because we have various ways of understanding ourselves we can manage control of our own information by deciding which questions to answer and which answers are included in the final distribution of information. The participants in this project were active agents wielding their individual voices in the research processes. The personal histories they

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137 Esterberg, *Qualitative Methods*, 137.
shared not only empowered each woman, but the communities they represent will also benefit from discovering how women’s stories provide alternatives to dominant historical narratives.

3.2 Storytelling

In keeping with IM principles, I have chosen storytelling as an integral part of my research process. Stories told by individuals reflect their lived experiences and serve to create personal and unique references that link both oral and written literary traditions.\textsuperscript{139} Storytelling allows participants to be experts in their own experiences. The act of storytelling inevitably reveals that stories are not merely events but experiences told from the perspective and understanding of the storyteller. Storytellers share the setting, time, and place of their narratives which gives their story a sense of realism modeled after the teller’s own life. According to Jerome Bruner stories can connect “the ordinary and exceptional” and can provide clearer understandings of the differences between what is known to be normal and departures from the normal.\textsuperscript{140}

Storytelling compliments Participatory Action Research approaches in that storytelling is a method for sharing lived experiences and the accompanying process becomes essential to the relationship between researcher and participants and fosters a collaborative mindset. Co-creating knowledge together requires mutual sharing and trust connections. Kimberley Wilde’s research on the oral traditions of the Omushkegowak of Ontario produced a constructive relationship between her and her research participant, Louis Bird. The relationship resulted in reciprocal learning and mutual understanding. As Bird and Wilde shared stories with each other trust and respect developed and positively affected the quality of the knowledge that was created in the

\textsuperscript{139} Wilde, \textit{Storytelling as a Methodology}, 88.
As the process of storytelling facilitates relationships between teller and listener, the ensuing respect invites a common ground to which difference is brought forth and recognized with open-mindedness and acceptance. Stories told by women participating in this project reveal difference but also are recognized as “both form and method [that] cross cultural divides” in positive ways. The stories told by elder Okanagan women and elder settler Ukrainian women in this project are stories of both similar and dissimilar natures that entice re-thinking and re-organizing how history has been traditionally written, relayed, and remembered. Hester Lesser, Rebecca Johnson, and Jeremy Webber explain that the juxtaposition of Indigenous and non-indigenous narratives is an exercise in “recasting and repositioning the stories that comprise our histories.”

3.3 The Four “Rs”

The qualities of storytelling naturally segue into what Indigenous researchers and scholars refer to, and were originally described by V.J. Kirkness and R. Barnhardt, as the Four Rs: respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility. The Four Rs implicitly tie into the ethical issues of conducting research with Indigenous peoples in university settings. These elements are also embedded within the Tri-Council Policy Statement with reference to ethical guidelines concerning research.

Respect

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141 Wilde, Storytelling as a Methodology, 191-222.
142 Margaret Kovach, Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 96.
Respect of Indigenous people as individuals and as members of various First Nations cultures must be practiced. Kirkness and Barnhardt discuss respect in the context of protecting Traditional Knowledge (TK). Traditional Knowledge contains the elements of meaning, value, and use and is embedded in each distinct First Nations culture. These knowledges are integrated into all aspects of life and should be regarded as a “worldview, a form of consciousness, or a reality set.” As a researcher I value, recognize, and respect the stories shared by each woman involved in this project. While the stories do not necessarily outline specific aspects of Traditional Knowledge, each woman’s story is embedded within a specific time and place and told from unique personal perspectives and ways of interpreting life’s experiences.

Relevance

Kirkness and Barnhardt explain relevance by referring to the process of knowledge creation and how the knowledge is subsequently relayed to others. This process is of utmost relevance to First Nations people. While Kirkness and Barnhardt refer to relevance in the context of First Nations peoples’ learning experiences in universities, the concept is vital to this project. It is imperative that the project design, process, and outcomes are relevant and beneficial to the women who are sharing their life’s experiences and that the knowledge created within this project is meaningful not only to each participant in positive ways but also to their respective families and communities.

Reciprocity

Traditional research is comprised of the conventional roles of the producer of knowledge, or the main researcher, and the passive giver of information, or the participant. According to Kirkness and Barnhardt, this experience can be exasperating for First Nations students or

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research participants who find themselves in unequal power relationships in learning or research settings, or simply put as “passive recipients of knowledge.”  

Reciprocity mechanisms that are set in motion foster human relationships and serve to facilitate equity in the learning and research processes. The principle of reciprocity is inherently embedded within Indigenous Methodologies and deeply significant to this project. Reciprocity is observed by engaging in an equal exchange of knowledge, information, and sharing of life’s experiences. This practice will continue after this project is completed and beyond to a lifelong relationship of commitment to continued respect and attitude of decolonization.

Reciprocity is of further interest to this project in terms of feminist theory. In Lorraine Mayer’s work, “A Return to Reciprocity,” she discusses her personal journey in coming to terms with the feminist ideology of female common struggle and feminist movement and, how her personal feelings of animosity towards the word feminism affected her relationships with women in academia. In her struggle to come to terms with the feminist notion of female common struggle, Mayer recognizes that her own narrow-mindedness and critical interpretations of feminist thought meant that she “was unable to benefit from different strategies and the many ways women of different backgrounds and ethnicities cope with discrimination.” Mayer suggests that engaging in reciprocity will bring different groups of women together rather than moving them further apart. Furthermore, reciprocity, according to Mayer, “may help bridge some of the cultural misunderstandings among all women…[and], Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, stand to gain from respectful reciprocity.”

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Responsibility

The final ‘R’ of the four “Rs” is that of responsibility. Amy Carpenter Johnson and Joannie Halas’s work, “Rec and Read Mentor Programs,” points out the importance that responsibility plays in guiding work with Aboriginal people. The role that responsibility plays is ultimately for the benefit of the individual, the community, and the overall empowerment of all people involved. As a researcher, I am responsible to facilitate awareness and accountability: awareness of all aspects of the research process is made available to the project’s participants and accountability in how knowledge is accessed, written about, and ultimately delivered as a final product of new knowledge.152

3.4 Researcher Reflexivity

After I submitted my Behavioral Research Ethics Application, (an application process required by the university to ensure research and procedures are carried out on ethical grounds for conducting research with people), I began journaling the processes of this project. Experts draw attention to the benefit of taking notes during the research process. Notes serve as reminders that can stimulate fresh and continuous thoughts, and actually serve to initialize the analysis process.153 C. Ellis and A.P. Bochner refer to reflexivity as “a tale of what [goes] on in the backstage of doing research.”154 Reflexivity is akin to a personal narrative, and I have found that the process of reflexivity runs parallel with the research process in this respect because it has kept me focused on the purpose and goals of this project. Reflexivity is of significant value

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152 Amy Carpenter Johnson and Joannie Halas, “Rec and Read Mentor Programs,” Reclaiming Children & Youth 20, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 23.
while interviews with participants are occurring, during the analysis of the resulting stories, and in the final written report.

Practicing reflexivity allows researchers to come to terms with what he or she personally infuses into the project. For instance, my prior knowledge and remembrance of the history of British Columbia that I was taught in high school during the 1970s, my long time residence in the Vernon area, and my ethnic Ukrainian background have contributed in many aspects to shaping the analysis and theory for this project. I rely on Kristen G. Esterberg’s advice which states that it is important that researchers come to a good understanding of how their personal mindsets can shape every aspect of the research project from the topics we select to the methods and methodologies we use to frame our projects.¹⁵⁵

Another benefit of the process of reflexivity is that of personal growth. Writing about and pondering over each step of the research process has inevitably affected me personally. Not only have I explored the identity of Okanagan women and of settler Ukrainian women, but I have also been nudged to examine and re-assess how I personally have been located as a researcher within this research project.

3.5 Narrative Analysis

Exactly what stories are, including their meaning and importance, has already been established in the previous section on storytelling. Stories can be related in various methods and forms, but this project contains the life stories of women that have been gathered through the process of semi-structured recorded interviews. Narrative is a form of discourse utilized for sorting human experience. Jerome Bruner contends that “whether one begins from an Indigenous or non-indigenous perspective, there seems to be widespread agreement that stories

are central to the business of constituting both communities and self.”

Narrative analysis was used to analyze the stories contained in this project because this method is effective for ethnographic researchers as it “[pays] attention to the language used to describe experiences and [focuses] on the structure of stories.”

Because I specifically searched for intersections of gender and race in the narratives that each woman told, narrative analysis served as a method to closely consider each statement. Narrative analysis presupposes that language expresses meaning and also assumes that how a story is told, including the pauses, hesitations, and particular emphasis placed on specific words and phrases, reveals information about what the storyteller is saying.

Izabela Dahl and Malin Thor deconstruct narratives by looking for intersections of race, class, gender, locality, and religion, which is useful in uncovering how individuals view themselves in relation to others and the world around them. Dahl and Thor’s project on gathering narratives from a Jewish woman living in Sweden investigates the categories the Jewish woman refers to when constructing her own and others’ identities. The concept of intersectionality is utilized to deconstruct the narratives. From this starting point, Dahl and Thor examine social divisions as a “constitutive process of both self-positioning and the positioning of others.” My project emulates this very method of analysis.

### 3.6 Personal Statement of Limitations

I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge my limitations as a non-Indigenous researcher in relying on Indigenous Methodology and Methods to design, implement, and carry out my research project. This project is based in Interdisciplinary Graduate Studies with a focus

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157 Esterberg, *Qualitative Methods*, 181.
158 Esterberg, *Qualitative Methods*, 182.
on Indigenous Studies. I have had to come to an understanding and appreciation of Indigenous Methodologies and Methods, which has been an intensive learning experience, not to mention a difficult process. I am a third-generation Ukrainian settler who sees a need to re-visit our local history by seeking stories of elder women who have lived most, if not all, of their lives in the Vernon and Head of the Lake areas. I aspire to provide women an opportunity to wield their historical voices, and to promote a decolonization and reconciliation process between two groups of women who have historically experienced relational separation and social and economic segregation.

Margaret Kovach explains that she sees research within the academy as “welding” together components of Indigenous methods to existing methods of Western knowledge. She refers to this as muddying the waters and the end result is methodological incongruency which then becomes problematic. She further states that “Indigenous methods do not flow from Western philosophy; they flow from tribal epistemologies.” If tribal epistemologies are not merged into the research process as a guiding resource to Indigenous methods and research processes then a congruency problem will exist. Herein lays my limitations in relying on Indigenous Methods. As a non-Indigenous scholar I do not possess the advantage of tribal knowledge. My research background does not lie within the parameters of Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies but rather in Western research frameworks. However, IM and Indigenous methods have been chosen for reasons already outlined above. In addition, I seek to use this project to support Indigenous epistemology and engage in respectful and reciprocal relationships with Indigenous women. I consider this project as promoting a time of trust-

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160 Kovach, Indigenous Methodologies, 36.
161 Kovach, Indigenous Methodologies, 36.
building between two groups of women who have traditionally experienced relational gaps, specifically outside of the academy.

3.7 Project Design

Four women were selected to participate in this project. Each woman was chosen who possessed specific criterion that was pre-determined before potential participants were approached. The participants had to be either an elder Okanagan woman or an elder settler Ukrainian woman with distinct experiences and memories of inter-generational knowledge from the periods in question. They had to be a long-time resident of the local area who have had traditional stories and histories passed down to them by their mother and/or grandmothers. Possessing this criterion was imperative to securing rich oral histories set in the early 1900s at Vernon and Head of the Lake. This specific criterion was also important to address the research question and determine what the significance of and the extent to which cross-cultural relationships occurred between these two groups of women during the colonial development of British Columbia.

During the initial planning and preparatory phases of this project, I began establishing contacts and subsequent relationships with the women I believed who not only possessed the pre-determined criteria, but would be interested in the project. As a third-generation Ukrainian immigrant having been born and raised in Vernon myself, I already knew which elder Ukrainian women I was interested in approaching. One woman is my aunt, Nancy Medynksi, whose family immigrated to the Canadian Prairies in 1925. The other elder Ukrainian woman, Lydia Rudiachy, is a long-time family friend with whom I have been acquainted for years who and has also lived in Vernon for the majority of her life. I contacted both of these women by phone and set up individual meetings.
The elder Okanagan women who graciously shared their life’s stories with me were approached via contacts. To speak and learn from Rosie Jack, I contacted her nephew who is known to my husband’s family. I contacted the nephew by phone and after several conversations with him I was able to access Rosie. To contact Theresa Dennis I emailed her daughter, who is also my work colleague. Theresa’s daughter and I spoke in person and exchanged numerous emails before I spoke over the telephone with her mother.

After obtaining the Behavioral Research Ethics Board approval, I organized dates, times, and locations in which to meet with each participant on an individual basis. Time was set aside to chat and develop relationship at the beginning of each meeting. In Nancy’s home we sat in the living room, Nancy in her favorite chair and I on the couch across from her. In Lydia’s home we began our visit in the kitchen where she served me tea and cookies. We then took a tour of her home before we moved to the living room where we talked about her life. My husband and I brought out Chinese food to Rosie’s home on the reserve at Head of the Lake and spent time eating and talking around the kitchen table before Rosie and I moved into the living-room and began our conversation focused on her life. One bright and early Saturday morning I called Theresa at her home and she shared life stories with me over the phone. Our conversation took place during haying season so it was more convenient for Theresa to speak over the phone.

The interviews, with the exception of the phone conversation with Theresa, were audio recorded with the permission of each woman. My personal laptop was used to record each meeting and is password protected and stored in a locked office with restricted access. Back-up files of the interviews are stored on a flash drive and also stored in a safe, locked, and secured office. Prior to the interviews, I installed the HYPEReasch Program onto my laptop which was
used specifically to code and categorize themes that were located within the stories of each woman.

The interview process was designed to be a natural, safe, and enlightening experience. All particulars surrounding interview schedules, meeting places, and protocols were decided upon in consultation with each individual participant. Each woman was given opportunity to ask any questions and receive answers both before and after they signed the Letter of Consent. The interviews were semi-structured, and I used open-ended questions simply to guide the conversation. The questions that were asked were centered on story, self, family, spirituality, and personal life’s experiences. Utilizing open-ended questions allowed for each woman to articulate her thoughts and ideas in her own words with the freedom to expand on her stories, or not. At times the conversations took on an unstructured flow where we diverted to mutual discussion about how we viewed similar experiences through different perspectives. The interview process was steered back on track with the introduction of a new question presented to the participant. Interviews structured in this fashion are more conducive to equal and balanced exchange of information thus complying with the methodology of Participatory Action Research.

After each interview I purchased gifts for each woman. Each participant was given a copy of the transcribed interview for her records. The purpose in giving Nancy, Rosie, Theresa and Lydia a copy of their interviews was twofold. Each woman would have a copy to refer to whenever they needed and their copy would allow them to share their stories with respective family and community members. In addition, if a participant disagreed with the contents of the transcript or wanted certain information changed, they had a copy for reference. Each participant was also given a copy of the final thesis.
4 Rosie’s and Nancy’s Stories

4.1 Chapter Overview

Utilizing the methodology and methods described in the preceding chapter, this chapter focuses on the stories and lives of Nancy Medynski, a Ukrainian woman who was born in 1929 immigrated to Canada in 1930 and has lived in Vernon, British Columbia for most of her life, and Rosie Jack, an Okanagan woman, who was born at Head of the Lake (O’Keefe Siting) in 1932 and has lived her entire life on the reserve. Each woman has told their personal stories revealing events in their lives that describe how they experienced life during British Columbia’s political and industrial development in the early to mid-1900s. Each woman responded to their environments uniquely and can, therefore, be regarded as experts of their own experiences. The stories of Lydia Price (Rudiachy), a Ukrainian immigrant, of Vernon, British Columbia and Theresa Dennis, an Okanagan, of Vernon, British Columbia, will be referred to after a narrative analysis of Rosie’s and Nancy’s stories. While all four life histories are remarkable in their own right, and all are honoured equally, the life experiences of Nancy Medynski and Rosie Jack are the core focus of this project. I concentrate mainly on Nancy’s and Rosie’s stories for several reasons. While working on the analysis of all the women’s oral histories, it became evident that Nancy’s and Rosie’s stories were significantly different from one another. While Lydia’s life’s experiences were similar to Nancy’s, Theresa’s stories were remarkably different from Rosie’s stories. I then decided that I would feature Lydia’s stories as collaborating with Nancy’s and showcase Theresa’s stories as the exceptions to Rosie’s.

In order to preserve each story in terms of fluidity, structure, and originality of language Rosie’s and Nancy’s stories are presented directly from the transcribed interviews. The exception to interrupting the flow of their stories is occasional insertions intended to bring clarity
for the reader and avoid any possible uncertainty in what the women are speaking about. The insertions are italicized.

4.2 Rosie’s Story

I arrived at the home of Rosie Jack on Saturday, September 8, 2012 at 5:30pm. My husband was with me and we brought a Chinese meal, two bottles of wine, and a thermos of Folgers dark roasted coffee with us. Joining us for dinner was Rosie’s nephew, and her hired hand who has been with the family for sixteen years. Also joining us for dinner was Rosie’s niece and her young son.

When we arrived, Rosie’s nephew, Terry, was outside waiting for us because we had called ahead to let him know we were only a few minutes away from his home. We were cordially escorted into the house and were introduced to everyone, and we then sat down and began digging into seven different delectable Chinese food dishes. After chatting over dinner, and getting to know one another, Rosie and I made our way into her cozy living room. Rosie took a seat on her special chair in which she always sits, and I grabbed two chairs from the kitchen: one for me and other for my laptop. After we got all settled in and comfortable, Rosie and I started talking.

Rosie Jack lives on the Okanagan Nation Indian Reserve on Westside Road near Vernon, British Columbia. She was born on May 17, 1932 at a location which she refers to as the O’Keefe Siting (O’Keefe Ranch, Vernon British Columbia). Rosie, who is the sole survivor of her immediate family, had seven brothers and three sisters who were also born at O’Keefe Siting. In addition, her mother, father, and grandfather were also born at the same location and Rosie further indicated that all of her ancestors were born in the Okanagan Valley. The following is Rosie’s story as told by her.
Rosie:

My great Grandpa came across the lake here and he had a little log house. By the time, I started remembering [traditions] we were celebrating Christmas and New Years, but before that I don’t know. We celebrated our memorials with the family.

My uncle, Tommy Gregory, he said, my papa had a first wife from Penticton and his wife died and my papa was sitting there and my mom walked by with a baby and my papa said there’s the woman I am going to marry.

My mom had to raise her baby sister. When the baby was born, their mother died. My mom was sixteen and she had to raise her baby sister and when she walked by with the baby papa said there is the girl I am going to marry.

At this point I asked Rosie about her native language. She indicated that she still speaks Okanagan and gave me examples of words such as house, family. Rosie said that her niece’s young boy attends the school on the reserve, which is immersion so the students currently learn the Okanagan language in school. This conversation segued into Rosie’s experiences at school when she was a young girl.

Ya, well, in them days, we were taken to Residential School. My brothers, Frank, Philip, and Andy were taken first. We were ordered to go. My mom and papa didn’t agree to let them go [but] they were threatened with jail time. And then they kept running away, running away and uh, my brother Frank, they just kicked him out because he was the oldest. He kept leaving. That’s a long walk from Kamloops.

But, I remember I was maybe five and I remember my mom saw the police car coming down looking for my brother…sometimes they had enough time to run and sometimes they would be sent back. Then it came our turn: my sister and I. Oh my goodness. It was such a
beautiful town I thought. I remember my mom buying us new dresses, new shoes…new stockings, new hat…we took the buggy and went to the lake at O’Keefe.

Just above there [is] where we had to wait for our ride to Kamloops a big stock truck would come. Then the first time I remember they picked up Penticton kids, then Westbank, then up and from there, from O’Keefe we went to Salmon River…we went to Enderby, Salmon Arm, and Chase. After Salmon Arm we were gone to Kamloops. Ya, in a big truck. And we don’t understand any of it. I don’t know anybody. I remember starting to cry when we got to Salmon River cuz I saw other kids crying. All our clothes…we were so excited about our new clothes but it didn’t matter anymore.

There’s one lady, she married Keith Marchand, later on and she took pity on us. I was seven and my sister was eight. She took us and hugged, us and she had a taffeta dress on like an American beauty, a taffeta dress and you should see the tears…and then when they chopped my hair off I thought…and then they were checking you for lice. They took our clothes. They put them away somewhere and they gave us bloomers, big skirts, stockings and oxfords and long black stockings…

And we worked. We went to school for, it depends like, when I first got there I went to school in the morning and worked in the afternoon. But other kids would not go to school. There were too many for everybody to go to school. We only had two hours of school. We weren’t allowed to talk to boys…we’d each have a job to do. One month, like one month I was carrying around irons for the girls from the kitchen to the laundry room carrying two irons. At the time, they were heated irons. So I carried that for one month. The next month would be all the kids. I would put away bowls in the kitchen passing bread before Mass, all kinds of crazy little jobs they’d make us do.
I didn’t think anything of it. I just thought it was expected. And you know after all that work I did through the day, they’d go and give me a bath. My sister was in the hospital the second year we were there. She had tuberculosis. She was there for six years…I didn’t see her all those years. My mom and my sister went there to visit her once a year, but I didn’t see her. And they sent her home because there was nothing more they could do.

*After several years in Residential School, Rosie returned home and attended a Catholic School that was built and operated on the reserve.*

Oh ya, we went to school in the morning and came home for lunch. I remember one [teacher] she was a nun. I can’t remember her name. I had two teachers and the third one was Mrs. Betty O’Keefe.

*At this point Rosie skips to the relationship her family had both personally and economically with the O’Keefe family.*

My papa always spoke of a Connie…could that be Cornelius [O’Keefe]? Ya cuz my papa always talked about Connie…all my brothers worked there. Right here, the golf course. That was all in hay and cows…the O’Keefe’s and us were really close. We saw each other’s families.

When I was going to, ah, Residential School, I didn’t know my last name, and I saw my mom talking about Gregory and they asked me if my last name was so I said, Gregory. They knew that was the wrong name those people at the Residential School…so they called O’Keefe’s because they had the closest phone. My mom told them that we are Jack’s not Gregory’s.

*Gathering Food and Supplying Horses*

We used to go up to Silver Star to pick berries. Then we’d go over to Woods Lake and we took buggies. But we never did camp going over and up. We’d start from here early. We made it. We would start early enough on horse and buggy. Oh ya, and then, in the summer time
my papa had a bunch of horses. And we supplied the rodeo horses to the Vernon Stampede, the Falkland Stampede, and Kelowna and Rutland. Imagine us chasing horses on the highway now to Rutland. They would all go to the rodeo. We supplied the rodeo horses so…we only lost one horse in the mountain. They wanted our horses out cuz they were doing another show, so we had to move them and it was getting dark, but we only lost one horse when we were rodeoing…a car hit it. We would put up camp there (Goose Lake Road). We would round up the horses there. We always kept our horses.

Rosie’s Mother the Entrepreneur

My mom, she was such a happy woman. She did lots of tanning hides. She would make gloves. We had a very, very good life because lots of people around us were hungry…because we were in the Depression. I don’t remember, but we had to have coupons to buy milk, sugar, and butter. The government [gave them to us]. You were only allowed so much. But there were so many of us that we were loaded with stuff. We didn’t have to wait for coffee, we didn’t have to wait, you know. We had all these coupons.

And then my mom, she tanned hides, made moccasins and gloves. She had a grocery store called the Okanagan Grocery. It (the grocery) was just where the Capital Theater was next door. We (Rosie and her sibling) went with her sometimes. It was hard for us to go, cuz that is a long buggy ride for us. My mom did lots of pies too.

When Rosie was fifteen, her 3 year old nephew was injured by run-away horses. Rosie looked after her nephew after the accident and he still lives with her to this day. Here Rosie talks about how her nephew got hurt and how, through this tragic event, Rosie met her common-law husband.
I think Terry (Rosie’s nephew) got hurt. My papa gave this place (the house Rosie currently lives in) to my brother Frank because Frank had so many kids and Frank had no home. So, my papa told him, you have your choice…6 mile, or the airport. So Frank picked…this place so we moved out. We moved to Edward’s house. So Frank moved in and we moved out. Frank changed his mind after a year because we were going to live at the airport, us guys and my papa and mom, but Frank changed his mind. He said that he would take the airport. My mom and we couldn’t move back. We were over their when Terry got hurt. My papa had a wagon and Terry was playing around with an apple box, and the horses started running and came running down the road, and Terry got run over. About thirty head of horse.

There was nobody there with a car. Somebody ran over and asked Ned to take Terry to the hospital. He was out quite a few days. He must have been three or four. Ya he had never been away from us before. Good thing we were there. That’s how I met Willy. He offered to take us to the hospital. He had a truck. And so I spent seventeen years with him.

We farmed, we raised cattle. We would sell them.

Rosie talks about what Catholicism means to her.

We have always been Catholic. Oh yes, yes. We always went to church. We prayed before every meal. My papa he, you know, was able to say grace…we always said grace. When we were having a big gathering here or when we had memorials, it was time to serve the people and put out the food I was standing there, my cousin was standing there, and he says to my cousin, “Ok you say grace.” I heard the word ‘grace’ before meals every day of my life, but saying it in a big crowd of people I just went blank. Somebody had to say grace before the big meal. So I just signed the cross and I said it in English.
My cousin said I was supposed to say it in Okanagan, and I said, well why didn’t you say grace? All my life I heard those prayers. We said them at every meal. And then I was asked to say grace and I forgot.

Well, it (the land) has always been ours. The Okanagan land starts from O’Keefe, all the way to Omak Washington. That’s all I know is that we have always been here. Us Okanagan. That’s all I know. We speak the same language. Like Shuswap, and Enderby has their own language. Just a little bit different, but us Okanagan we all speak the same language. I know lots of Shuswap. Um, hmm, cuz I went with, to school with a bunch, so I learned English and Shuswap at the same time. You know what I always say? There’s no way you can forget your language. I guess it can happen because it’s happened to a lot of girls my age after Residential School. We were not allowed to [speak] after we learned to speak English.

I asked Rosie at this point if she has talked a lot with other people about Residential School and these are her comments.

This is the first time. Oh I have heard stories, but [this is] the first time in a recording. Oh yes. You just don’t know. To be taken away from your family, your mom and papa…sent away in a big, big stock truck. You don’t know how it feels. You are just completely lost and then you got punished because you cried for your mom. It’s hard.

Like the apology, when they apologized. It was too late…too late for hundreds of kids that suffered abuse. After the apology I got a cheque. And next year I got another cheque. There are kids that went there for seventeen years. Yes, imagine the money they got. I don’t know…I had no feeling at all.

My sister, my three brothers, they kept running away. I wanted to run but I was too little and the river was too big…the Thompson River, it runs through Kamloops. And you know I
went back there about four or five years ago to the residential school. When I went in that school when I was a girl it was huge, it was so big. When I went back there a few years ago, it looked so small.

Losing all my brothers and sisters….I don’t know how my mom ever got through it, losing her children first. She was screaming until she just fell over, and the times we lost our brothers, mostly our brothers, instead of grieving for our brothers we were so worried about my mom…brother after brother, after brother. Frank, my last brother died in 1987. But, I have my sister’s boy, Terry with me. So Terry has always been with me. I feel so bad, now I can’t go with him to these powwows all over Canada, Alberta, Idaho, and Montana. They have gatherings: they have tournaments, sticking tournaments. And ah, [Terry] has always done so well. He’s a real good sticking player. So he taught my nephew and he was pretty good. But Terry is pretty good. He is there standing, see that wood carving? [Terry] is with his best buddy, Monty Marchand. Well, like ah, memorials, there’s one coming up in Omak, Washington. It’s a big powwow, $30,000.00 first prize. Mmm, yes, we used to go all over!

We wrapped up our conversation at this juncture. It seems like an abrupt ending to our conversation, but it was not. Talking about powwows brought Rosie’s life right up to the present. Attending memorials is where Rosie’s heart is; however, because of her poor health, she is uncomfortable travelling. We agreed that if either one of us had questions or concerns we would get in touch with one another. I thanked Rosie, packed up all of my things, said good night and left her in the living room. I proceeded into the kitchen where her nephew, Terry, presented me with some dried salmon. It would be another thirty minutes of talking and visiting before we left the Jack residents. I was pleased and honored to meet people who, I hope, will be my friends for a long time to come.
4.3 Nancy’s Story

I went to the home of Nancy Medynski on August 14, 2012 at 1:00 pm and her housekeeper cordially invited me inside. Nancy came out of her bedroom excited to get the interview started as she had been anticipating our meeting for a couple of weeks. She cautiously walked into the living room with her walker and carefully sat down in what was her designed chair. I sat adjacent to her on the couch. I began with asking how she was and how her husband, Stan, was. Stan is 92 years old and sat in what was his designated chair in the living room. Stan’s chair was positioned directly across from Nancy’s chair, so the two of them could easily see one another as they wile away the days and, after 60 years of marriage, communicating together in conversation, both silently and verbally.

I explained the consent form and made sure that Nancy understood what was going to happen with the stories she told me. She made a joke about ‘false information,’ and we both laughed. Nancy signed the consent form and the interview began.

Nancy was born on January 21, 1928 in Czienanow Poland and immigrated to Canada in 1929 when she was 1 ½ years old. She is 85 years old and has lived in Vernon and area for 70 years. Before moving to Vernon, Nancy’s family lived in Dalmas Saskatchewan on a section of land on which they homesteaded.

I asked Nancy why they immigrated to Canada and to describe the particulars.

[We came] because they wanted something better…a better life. We had nothing there. Well I wouldn’t call it farming. There you had two acres…and that’s what you made your living out of. There was, well, these belonged to a landlord. It was just like the caste system and ah, you would have, ah, land and you were able to plant flax, wheat, you know, so they could grind for flour, and then a vegetable garden.
Well, this is what, when we left, it was just before the war in 1939 and so we came in 1929. We got out of there ten years earlier. But, there was never a, how do you say, you call in peace, you know, it was sort of iffy. Well, see the government sent agents out there, you know, to encourage people to come to Canada because they paid the fare. The government paid the fare over, but, actually they were supposed to give the people a certain amount of money you know, to live on, but, the agents weren’t too honest.

*Nancy explains that the Ukrainian people coming from Europe did not always receive the money that was promised to them upon arrival to Canada by the Canadian government.*

As a matter of fact, my brother, well, he was eight years old, [and] he was quite upset. He understood already some of this stuff. And he remembered what had gone on and, as a matter of fact when Bill and Shirley (Nancy’s brother and sister-in-law) were out east a few years ago, about five or six years ago, they stopped at Pier 21 in Halifax; they have the records of the people that came over…and they got copies of them when Dad came over like he came over a year ahead of us. He had $10.00…but that was for him to live off of. And when Mom came a year later with three children she had $40.00…you know. It’s sort of, I guess this guy that was supposed to give the money for living, the agent, and he kept it. Well, I guess whether he was from Canada or, from the Canadian government, he must have been a [British agent]. Ya, Harry (Nancy’s brother) was trying to locate [the agent] but he didn’t. It’s a good thing because he probably would have killed him. He was so angry with him, because you know, especially, how would you like to go across overseas to a new land with three kids and $40.00?

Mind you in those days a dollar bought something, but still. Well, the fare was all included so…they came by ship to Halifax, and then there was a train there. But, we got on the
train and they had already designed where we were going to go. Dad came to Dalmas Saskatchewan.

And, so he came there and there was a settlement. I think they tried to put people in areas, you know, where there are people of their own nationality so that they’d stay put. He got a job with a farmer who had a couple of sections or a couple of quarter sections of land and he helped him work on the farm. I don’t know how much he got paid. He never said. But, ah, he lived with them and he saved the money. He used to send the money to Mom. He used to send one of those 10 cent coupons…they bought quite a bit.

_Nancy talks about why and how they made their way to Vernon, (Swan Lake) British Columbia._

This particular year Max Timmons, he was an evangelist, came out there, and he was preaching the gospel there in Saskatchewan. Dad was interested in the Bible School in Vancouver that Max Timmons told us about. Dad and Mom thought that because I was the oldest one at home [I should attend the Bible School]. This was when our family was converted…under his ministry.

And so, I went that fall after the harvest. Dad and myself and the neighbour’s girl, a friend of mine, we went, the two of us went. And we went to this Bible College for over winter, which was about six months, and, then while I was there, of course, we had, you know, Mr. Kuziw, they used to come out there to Vancouver for services and stuff like that. So, this one time, Dad came out to visit me and he met these folks and of course they were telling him about Vernon and how they, you know, like it there and how there was a Ukrainian settlement there and you know, Ukrainian people. It would be a nice place to move because, things were kind of rough out in the prairies. It was, ah, we had crop failures for years. It had just so happened that, as the Lord would have it, that that year, we had a bumper crop.
And Dad decided to sell and move to Vernon. So, I was in Vancouver yet then, so I went back and went back to help with the auction and everything else.

Nancy’s family comes to Vernon and lives at Swan Lake where they quickly got plugged into the Ukrainian community.

There was [a church], well, there was cell groups. Part of it was in Kuziw’s living room actually. But then there, there was quite a few more that came, so we built a church. Well, it was sort of across from the highway, across from Pasachnik’s they just lived up the hill a bit. They were closest to the highway, and it was right across the railroad from there to the corner. Well, Kuziw’s and Medynski’s and Pasachnik’s and Ulansky’s…they all owned their land when we came. There were several farms…Dapoura’s Daciuk’s, Pacuik’s, and Korzin’s. [There was quite a big community out there].

Nancy explains how important the Ukrainian community was to her and her family.

Well, I think it (the Ukrainian community) was the backbone of the community because, you know, they are all Pentecostal and you know, it sort of kept them together. They had the services, you know. Their main goal was to be together. [In the Old Country] we were Catholic. We had Jehovah’s Witnesses come around and some other people. I don’t remember, or know what religion they were, but, Mom said she went to the neighbors and at the neighbour’s place she saw a Bible there. Mom loved to read and all we had was the paper from Winnipeg, the Ukrainian newspaper. And like it was, Winnipeg Free Press, in Ukrainian. Anyway, while she was there (at her neighbors) she saw a kind of a book on the floor and she picked it up and it was the Gospel of John from the Bible.

The kids had been playing with it and they tore it. Anyway, she asked if she could take it home cuz the kids were just playing with it. They weren’t reading it. I don’t know how they got
a bible cuz we never had one. Course, we weren’t allowed to have one. I think the Lord had his hand in it. So, after she read it, she always kept saying, I remember she kept saying, you know, there’s gotta be more. You know, to this, about God…than we know. So it wasn’t too long after that when Max [Timmons] showed up.

He started explaining this to her and she was so happy. And that was a drawing factor that brought us here really was to have association with other Christian Ukrainians. That was a drawing factor; otherwise probably we’d still be on the Prairies. But you know the Lord just provided cuz that year I know we had a bumper crop and unfortunately the wheat board had to put restrictions on how much grain one could sell. You couldn’t sell it all, but yet we were able to get a permit to sell all our grain so we didn’t have to leave any behind, so we could move. And, we were able to sell, like we had two quarter sections of land. Our neighbor bought the one right next door the one we lived on and then a year later we sold the other one.

There were eight of us in my family. My one sister died when she was six years old when we were still in Saskatchewan. They said it was a burst bowel, course we didn’t know. Finally when we took her to the hospital, Mom and Dad laid her down and she died. When they finally did an autopsy they figured it was a ruptured bowel, but I am inclined to think more that it was a ruptured appendix.

At age fifteen Nancy went to Bible School in Vancouver for six months. It was there that she met her future husband, Stan.

Well, we came here in October of 1944. Well, the thing was, the church was the central point and so we decided in May to get married. Well, they didn’t wait in those days. They went and invited everybody from all the churches. We had about 300 for dinner. Grandpa killed, I think, a steer, and he just roasted it above ground. We baked and it all happened, well, it was on
a Sunday and it was… we had it outside on tables so we had to keep setting tables. They had a level spot there at Grandpa and Gramma’s place and so we set up all the tables there.

See, there again, it was almost like there were close knit community ties…they were just like a family, sort of, because, you know people that went to the church, they were like, well, they did everything together. We had fun sliding down the hill in the winter time at Swan Lake and we used to freeze.

We lived with Grandpa and Gramma for about six months I think, and then Stan started up a sawmill, so mind you, he had a house, a little house down at the bottom of the hill next door to Kuziw’s. So we moved there. That was our home. [Stan] started up a sawmill, so we were in a logging camp most of the time. We sold the farm and the house because we had twelve acres. We started the logging business in Trinity Valley. [We did that] for 8 years.

In 1957 we decided to, by that time we had sold the mill and Uncle Bill had went to work in Lumby and ah, we decided that we’d build a motel so Stan could get out of the logging, you know, and sawmill business, but after we opened up, two months later, Stan was asked to come for a couple months and after that the kids and I looked after the motel. He never did come back to help us.

He was back in the mill…for years we were doing this. He came back one day; the day Bob asked him to come work at this mill at Okanagan Lake. Then, he went to Blue River. [Anyway] the kids helped me (at the motel). We also hired some help. We were there for ten years. Judy (Nancy’s daughter) was eight. She was little. She made a good waitress though. Judy would do some cooking and after Bobby [Nancy’s son] would do some cooking. We just had stuff like hamburgers and fish and chips. Stuff like that…sandwiches.
Then, of course, the boys, once they turned fifteen, they took off working other jobs. They went to Vancouver. And Judy, she, well the last year we were there she didn’t want to work in the motel anymore, so she got a job in a gas station in town. She wanted to drop out of school. My sister Anne says well, why she doesn’t come to Cleveland to finish Grade 12 so she went there to do Grade 12. She graduated there. And then at the end of that year, well actually before the end of that year, we sold the motel.

*I asked Nancy if she had stories passed down to her about family traditions and life experiences they had back in Ukraine.*

They used to make their own fabric. Ya, they grew the flax and you know one time I saw on TV they had a program about it and they showed the process how the old people would make it, how they, you know would cut the flax down and they’d soak it and how they would comb it, somehow...oh it’s a long process. And how it, you, you have to comb it so much and heat it, you know, to soften it and comb it until it gets almost like fine thread. They would then weave it. They would spin it and weave it.

Well, my Dad was in the First World War. He was wounded there and would say what life was like out there during the war and how food was scarce and how their bread was made with half sawdust...sawdust, yes. They tried eating dog meat, but he says it was kind of strong, you know how a dog smells. It’s hard to eat that, but I guess when you are starving you will eat because there is no food, not like now-a-days...and Mom would look after, we had a cow in the old country. You never had any place to graze it so the kids were always allowed to take it up the road side, you know, and let them graze along the road.

And they had some chickens, but Mom said very seldom did they eat any eggs because you had to sell them in order to buy other stuff. One time she wanted an egg so bad she cooked a
couple and she ate them and she said she didn’t feel like she had anything. Then she regretted it because if she sold them she could have bought something else. But they had potatoes and cabbage.

I remember when we were going to school (Nancy is referring to school days in Saskatchewan) I know lots of times we would take lard sandwiches because we raised pigs you. Well, even in the Old Country Mom says everyone had to have a garden because that’s how you survived. In Saskatchewan we had a big garden and ah, I remember the years when there was a drought we would have to go with barrels to the creek. It was a mile and a half away and we would get water so we could water the garden. But we always had lots. We had a big potato patch, and cabbage and made lots of sauerkraut. I know we planted tomatoes but they never would ripen out there, you know, the season was too short.

Nancy talked about learning to speak English back in Saskatchewan.

Well, you know, I don’t really remember, but I know that we had an English neighbor and he was very helpful and his sister, who Mom worked with during the harvest, would help her. Mom had a hard time, but Dad seemed to pick it up not too bad. Mom had a hard time picking it up but the [neighbor’s] sister, she used to tell her something and then demonstrate it. So she would get the idea, you know, what it was all about. So Mom picked it up. She could already speak it not too bad when we got here to Swan Lake, Vernon. Where we settled on the prairies there was only one English family. The rest were all Ukrainian. Yes, I think that’s the way the government put them, settled them and made it easier for them. All the older folks, the original ones, they died on the farms.
I know in our family, a lot of the boys they either took over the farms or bought out other shares. Very few boys left. The girls were the ones that left. They’d either go to the city to find jobs or else some married and moved away.

At this point I brought the conversation back to Nancy’s life in British Columbia and asked her about contact with Okanagan First Nations people.

Well, when we were at the motel, though a lot of our customers were natives. The reserve was close by…six miles. Ya, we had some very, actually, some were especially very nice. Like the Marchand’s and Lewis’s. They were very nice people. You know, gentle people, honest. I remember I used to get my raspberries from the Marchand family and the year after we sold the motel, like we had that cabin at the Okanagan Lake, and ah, we found out where they lived, you know, and so we went out there to pick some up to see if they had any, and I saw their home and how they lived and the yard was all so neat especially this particular family. Their yard was so neat and cared for. And their house, it was an old house. It was a framed building, but inside, everything was just spotless, and I was amazed because you hear all kinds of stories how they are unkept and stuff like that. No, these people, they were really high class. She offered us tea.

I asked Nancy about her thoughts on how the government placed First Nations peoples on reserves to free up land for immigrants to purchase and live on.

No…[those kinds of things were never talked about]. We had contact with them when they came into the restaurant and you know, they’d buy a few groceries, so we really didn’t have the time to delve back into the past. Well, actually they were some of our best customers. We had a few groceries [at the motel], you know, staples…bread, milk, and canned goods.
We wrapped up our conversation with Nancy’s memories of family Christmas’s spent on the Canadian Prairies, before moving to British Columbia.

Oh, our Christmas, you know, it used to be, we’d have Christmas Eve, I remember we’d see who the first kid was to see the first star and the, we’d have our traditional Christmas Eve supper. We’d lay the table, we’d put hay over the table and we’d put a table cloth over it and set the table. Then, we would put a sheaf of wheat in the corner. Dad would always save one from our harvest so we would have it at Christmas time so we could put it in the corner because it was tradition. It meant that the hay was Christ being born in the stable and the sheaf was God. And then we had the traditional twelve dishes. The first one we would have was wheat cooked with poppy seeds. Cabbage rolls, pyrogies and dishes like that. And for dessert, our favorite dessert was we could buy these dried frozen apples so Mom would cook those up and we’d have those for dessert.

We concluded our time together at this point and Nancy thanked me for giving her the opportunity to reminisce by listening to the stories of her lived experiences.
5 Analysis – Exploring Narratives

There is a remarkable contrast in the oral histories of an elder Okanagan and an elder settler Ukrainian women who lived (and continue to live) in the same geographical location only six miles apart from one another. Rosie has lived on the Okanagan Reserve at the Head of the Lake for 80 years. Although Nancy lived her first 14 years in Dalmas Saskatchewan she migrated to a modest farm site at Swan Lake, British Columbia and retired in Vernon, British Columbia. Nancy has lived in this area for over 70 years. Together these women have 150 years of lived experiences in the Okanagan Valley. Although the women’s stories represent different life trajectories and experiences both reveal common themes that flow through each narrative. These themes include references to geographical locations, religion (Catholic versus the Protestant Church), school and education, and labour, work and food acquisition. The inner workings of the colonial and industrial development of British Columbia during the late 1800s and early 1900s played important roles in each of these areas, which predominantly influenced not only the trajectory of the women’s individual lives, but also impacted their opportunities to experience and develop meaningful cross-cultural relationships with one another.

Understanding that race and gender hierarchies were complicit in the extension of the colonial and industrial development of British Columbia is foundational to the study of cross-cultural relationships because these power hierarchies form the dynamics under which cross-cultural relationships developed and in many cases continue to be experienced today. The concept of an intersectionality perspective is a major tenant of feminist thought that illuminates how race and gender are discussed in relation to one another when describing lived experiences of women. Examining how the structured concepts of race and gender intersect provides insight into the social identities of individuals and takes their meanings from one another offering
explanations as to how individuals lived their lives within their social locations. Moreover, by
examining how the structured concepts of race and gender intersect to influence the formation of
group’s identities we can gather explanations as to why individuals respond to others within
the broad spectrums and spaces of their social locations. Shields argues that “intersectionality
first and foremost reflects the reality of lives.”162 In the narrative analysis of Rosie’s and
Nancy’s stories I consider that there is “no single identity category that satisfactorily describes
how [people] respond to their social environment.”163 In other words there are various
contributing categories and factors that influence the reality of Indigenous and settler Ukrainian
women’s lives both individually and in relation to one another.

This project is premised on the following research question: What was the significance
of and the extent to which cross-cultural relationships occurred between Okanagan women and
settler, immigrant Ukrainian women in the areas of Vernon and the Head of the Lake during
British Columbia’s colonial and industrial development in the early 1900s? Adele Perry explains
that the colonial encounter between Indigenous peoples and white settlers was “an exercise in
gender and race.”164 Meetings between men and women rarely occurred in terms of relative
equals; rather they were complicated meetings and produced both support and conflict embedded
in the social constructions of gender and race.165 Colonial interactions were entrenched in power
relations “upon which Europe’s colonizing project was premised, nourished, and maintained.”166

Nation building in Canada and British Columbia introduced European standards and ideals on

162 Stephanie A Shields, “Gender: An Intersectionality Perspective,” Springer Science +Business Media, 59,
163 Shields, Gender, 304.
164 Adele Perry, “Metropolitan Knowledge, Colonial Practice, and Indigenous Womanhood: Missions in
Nineteenth Century British Columbia,” in Contact Zones, ed. Katie Pickles and Myra Rutherdale (Vancouver: UBC
165 Perry, Metropolitan Knowledge, 109.
166 Perry, Metropolitan Knowledge, 109.
shaping civil society by attempting to force character and behaviors of women into submission to Canadian citizenship.\textsuperscript{167}

Colonial relations and structures could not exist without the domination of Indigenous peoples, both male and female, and marginalized immigrant men and women. The encounters between Indigenous women and immigrant Ukrainian women were enveloped in power relations played out in a variety of places, spaces, and times where these women lived their ordinary, everyday lives.\textsuperscript{168} Their interactions, or lack thereof, assume further complexity in terms of determining if, how, and why Indigenous women and Ukrainian immigrant women experienced cross-cultural encounters in which to form meaningful relationships.

The approach used to address and answer the research question utilizes a narrative analysis of Rosie’s and Nancy’s oral histories (with closing references to Theresa and Lydia’s stories) and their lived experiences during British Columbia’s development and integration into Canadian nationalism. By interrogating the dominant history-making processes of British Columbia, it became evident that government officials and their political activities contributed to developing structures of race while using gender-specific ways of marking both differences and similarities between Indigenous women and Ukrainian immigrant women.

The narrative analysis examines the linkages between race and gender and how they reflect and reinforce hierarchies of power. The complex intersections between race and gender have impacted the lives of both groups of women in that their opportunities to develop cross-cultural relationships were remarkably inhibited. Okanagan and Ukrainian immigrant women were subjected to both structured divisions of race and gender, which ultimately influenced the significance of and extent to which they could pursue cross-cultural relationships within the

\textsuperscript{167} Stasiulis and Jhappan, \textit{The Fractious Politics of Settler Society}, 97.
social locations that both women refer to in their stories. Because Okanagan and Ukrainian immigrant women endeavored to experience life within the realms of their respective traditions and customs, they disturbed Anglo-Canadian race and gender systems. How the colonial government dealt with these perceived disturbances was specific to distinct groups undergoing assimilative processes, yet intrusive into the lived experiences for both Okanagan and Ukrainian immigrant women.

To understand how colonialism affected each woman’s lived experiences, and ultimately their ability to experience meaningful cross-cultural relationships, it is necessary to look into the social locations in which the women lived their lives. Rosie and Nancy refer to four key categories, which represent possible or potential contact zones that were central to their family and community interactions. These categories include:

- geographical locations
- religion and church
- education
- work sites and food acquisition.

5.1 Geographical Location

Rosie’s geographical location in which she lived was determined by the colonial government. The Federal Indian Act, which was established in 1876, was responsible for placing all Indigenous peoples in British Columbia on selected parcels of land set apart for reserves by the government.169 The Indian Act was specified to outline the consolidation of legislation that pertained to Indigenous peoples and their associations with the Canadian government. It specified who qualified for legal Indian status and who was eligible for

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government support. Moreover, the Indian Act demanded that status Indians live in bands on designated reserves. The major premise of the Indian Act was to assimilate Indigenous peoples into white settler society and to accomplish assimilation required government control of all aspects of life for the Okanagan peoples on their reserve at the Head of the Lake.170 Government authorities and missionaries believed that Indigenous peoples must abandon mobility if civilization was to be successful.171

Rosie’s story reveals that her family, as many generations as she can remember, lived in the Okanagan Valley. Before European arrival to British Columbia and the establishment of the colonial and industrial development of British Columbia, Okanagan people lived as one “in a number of matrilineal groups of Salish speaking people of the Western Plateau” and depended on all the resources of the land for their livelihood and shared trading practices with neighboring indigenous groups.172 Rosie’s ancestors, grand-parents, and parents were born in the area and lived according to their traditions of gathering food from various locations and trading with neighboring indigenous groups. By 1861 miners, freighters, and settlers further encroached on Okanagan traditional lands slowly consuming prime grazing lands and areas where existing lakes supplied water for their own crops and animals. In response to settler encroachment, and in the interest of protecting their traditional lands and rights, the Okanagan peoples expressed their deep concerns and threatened war. The colonial government’s response was to re-structure the existing reserves of land that had been previously determined by the colonial government. Geographical boundaries of the Okanagan Reserve were re-structured to include the incorporation of “good bottom land, village sites, fishing locations, garden sites and winter stock

171 Perry, Metropolitan Knowledge, 113.
ranges.” The government increased the reserve to 25,000 acres; however, in order to access Okanagan traditional lands with reduced tension, white settler European men would collaborate with Okanagan women by establishing marital relationships and producing first generations of mixed blood children. Among them were Colonel Houghton and Sophie, Charles Forbes Vernon and Katherine, and Cornelius O’Keefe and Rosie (not Rosie Jack).

Rosie grew up within the borders of the new reserve largely restricted and segregated from white people. She explains, the only white people she knew were the O’Keefe family who established their ranch at the Head of the Lake in 1867. Her papa and her brothers were all employed by the O’Keefe family, and Rosie maintains they had good relationships with one another. However, the pre-emption of Okanagan land at the Head of the Lake is a critical event in Okanagan history because it represented white settler control of not only the land, but also of economic and social expansion of settler wealth and privilege. The pre-emption of land also signified the transitions of the incorporation of the area into the regional and national economy via cattle ranching. In the process of transitioning land ownership and economic control of the Head of the Lake to himself, Cornelius O’Keefe invited an Okanagan woman named Rosie (not the Rosie Jack of this project) to live with him as his common-law wife. Together O’Keefe and Rosie had a son and a daughter and Rosie developed and utilized domestic skills and offered her extensive knowledge of native medicine. However, when O’Keefe’s social standing and affluence increased, he married a white Irish wife displacing Rosie and her two children. The combination of these events represent colonialism at its ultimate in that O’Keefe was the example of the white male European entrepreneurial class “destroying the political effectiveness

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173 Louis, Q’sappi, 12.
174 Louis, Q’sappi, 12.
175 Carstens, The Queen’s People, 71.
of the Okanagan and reducing the size of their land” marking the confinement of the Okanagan people to the designated area of the reserve.\textsuperscript{176}

The effects of geographical re-structuring influenced the trajectory of Rosie Jack’s lived experiences. Rosie’s life story is reflected in her long time residence on the reserve at the Head of the Lake. Prior to Rosie’s birth on the Okanagan Reserve, and during her lived experiences on the reserve and in Residential School, the response of the provincial government toward Indigenous women was laced with racist and gendered underpinnings. These were evidenced in the actions and discourse of the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) regarding the management of Indigenous women’s gender and sexuality.\textsuperscript{177} For example, the DIA considered the “squalid, immoral, and sexually corrupt ways” of Indigenous women destabilizing to European gender and race systems.\textsuperscript{178} Indigenous women were viewed as “shameless, lascivious, lacking in maternal instincts” and by profiling Indigenous women with these kinds of derogatory connotations, it was hoped that white European men would be discouraged from seeking out marital relationships.\textsuperscript{179} The colonial discourse did also influence some Indigenous men and is evidenced in the story of Peace River Joe, a trapper living in Lillooet, British Columbia in the early 1900s. When Peace River Joe married a white woman he proudly announced that his “racial status [had] been transformed.” He declared he was once a “squaw man like his father…but he doesn’t want his klootch (aboriginal woman) anymore.”\textsuperscript{180} The active management of constructing disparaging images of Indigenous women by the DIA occurred before Rosie was born but set the course for

\textsuperscript{176} Carstens, \textit{The Queen’s People}, 74.
\textsuperscript{178} Carter, \textit{Categories and Terrains} (Toronto: Copp Clark Ltd., 1996), 32.
\textsuperscript{179} Carter, \textit{Categories and Terrains}, 42.
\textsuperscript{180} Perry, \textit{Fairer Ones of a Purer Caste}, 519.
how Okanagan women were perceived and considered and was manifested in the economic, religious, and domestic objectives determined by the government to subjugate indigenous women.

The government of British Columbia considered all aspects of Indigenous women’s lives negatively when compared with the preferred behaviors and mannerisms of white settler British women. Between 1880 and 1930, the DIA “deliberately promoted a negative image of Indian women” and made great efforts to create boundaries between newcomers and the host population.¹⁸¹ Sarah Carter refers to these efforts regarding the Carrier Nation women; however, the same racist undertakings forced Okanagan people to a particular geographical location on the Okanagan Reserve and women were limited in their ability to move about off of the reserve.¹⁸² The DIA was specifically concerned about marital and sexual habits of both men and women, but women were more likely to be scrutinized for their sexual behavior. If they were considered incompliant with Euro-Canadian sexual customs, measures were taken to correct unwanted behaviors. For example, as DIA agents had the power to enforce obedience to “Euro-Canadian models of correct gender expression,” the agents could refuse grant relief, delay treaty payments, or even take away their children.¹⁸³ Not only were Indigenous women viewed as sexually immoral but their domesticity came into question, as it was believed Indigenous women who purported undesirable sexual practices did not possess settled habits to adequately care for their children.¹⁸⁴

Nancy’s geographical location on the Canadian Prairies and her family’s experience reaching their homestead was determined by the federal government’s immigration system.

¹⁸¹ Carter, Categories and Terrains, 56.
¹⁸² Carter, Categories and Terrains, 56.
¹⁸³ Brownlie, Intimate Survival, 160.
¹⁸⁴ Brownlie, Intimate Survival, 165.
Nancy speaks of the immigration process her family experienced, and it is clear that the processes they encountered both in Europe and in Canada greatly affected their lives. She explains that her parents chose to leave a politically and economically charged Ukraine in search of a better life that would offer unrestricted freedoms and renewed hopes for their future children. After WWI, Europe’s geographical and political map changed drastically, and in 1919 the Soviet, Polish, Romanian, and Czech governments each seized land portions of Ukraine resulting in border divisions. Although Nancy immigrated ten years later, the effects of constant political turmoil back in the homeland remained etched in the memories of not only Nancy’s family, but of many Ukrainian settlers to Canada. Because Ukrainian peasants experienced alienation of property by nobility, severely decreased employment opportunities, poor wages, high taxes, and unstable border changes, they saw Canada as a nation offering free lands, opportunity, and peace. These notions originated with Ivan Pylypow and Wasyl Eleniak who were the first two documented Ukrainians to immigrate to Canada and homestead in Alberta. Pylypow and Eleniak had heard about free lands from German-speaking neighbours who had settled near Medicine Hat, Alberta in 1891. Pylypow and Eleniak sent the news back to their Ukrainian friends and family that 160 acre homesteads could be purchased for $10.00. This information led Osyp Oleskiew to write about free lands in Canada in 1895.185

However, eager Ukrainian immigrants arrived in Canada unaware of the “racial discord [and] intolerance of minority groups who did not share the values and standards of the Anglo-Protestant middle class” that existed in Canada.186 Few Ukrainians who entered Canada after 1891 understood the implications and complications of the strained relationships between the

federal government and the Indigenous people or the “struggle between capital and labor, or the country’s disconcerting circumstances that incessantly arose between English-speaking and French-speaking citizens.”

Nancy and her family immigrated to a country in the throes of nation building that involved strained negotiations and ever changing strategies to appropriate land from Indigenous peoples to enable European settlers to homestead on large sections of prairie land.

In 1919, prior to Nancy’s arrival to Canada, Ukrainian immigration was highly contested by government and immigration officials. After the First World War, the country of origin for potential immigrants became an important factor in determining who the government allowed entry into Canada. Beginning in 1919 to 1922, racist attitudes flanked Canadian immigration policies and restrictions for Ukrainians entering Canada were in continuous flux. British and American white immigrants were welcomed with unrestricted entry while Ukrainians were considered “non-preferred people.”

To determine which races were suitable for immigration, Canada drew a line across Europe separating the more advanced and progressive countries from the countries considered unskilled and backward. People who were considered to belong to any race deemed unsuited to the advancement of the Canadian nation were prohibited from immigrating. Even though preferred groups were not immigrating quick enough to fill the urgent need for agricultural laborers, biased attitudes and public outcries existed to ban the “influx of garlic-smelling Catholic immigrants” and by 1930 immigration to Canada came to a virtual stop for Ukrainians.

Nancy’s family immigrated to Canada in 1929 narrowly missing the 1930 immigration changes. Ukrainian immigrants were considered “Reds” or communists and Ottawa

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187 Martynowych, Sympathy for the Devil, 45.
188 Brian Osborne, “‘Non-Preferred’ People: Inter-war Ukrainian Immigration to Canada,” in Canada’s Ukrainians Negotiating an Identity ed. Lubomyr Luciuk and Stella Hryniuk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 84.
189 Osborne, Non-Preferred People, 101.
was less than welcoming towards Ukrainians who were scrutinized under racist concerns to establish “suitability for assimilation, absorption and compatibility with the Canadian polity.”

Further evidence of the racial bias towards Ukrainian immigrants was demonstrated by Frank Oliver, Clifford Sifton’s successor, who argued that Galicians and other East European settlers were excellent farmers, but their cultural peculiarities were “a drag on Canadian civilization and progress. The foreigner may be a better man, but he is not one of us…he is not helping us develop along those lines providence has chosen for us.” In other words, the behaviors and traditional language of Ukrainians did not readily conform to the Anglo-Saxon’s civilized and progressive ways as in contrast to the Englishman, Irishman, and Scotsman, who presented themselves as “ready-made [citizens].”

Perhaps one of the most discouraging and devastating events that disappointed Ukrainian immigrants, was the establishment of internment camps. In 1914, the Canadian government set up the Internment Operations Branch to deal with over 80,000 immigrant persons deemed as possible “enemy aliens.” The Internment Operations Branch was empowered to determine whether or not an “enemy alien” was a threat to public safety and to give the Canadian Military and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police the ability to make arrests and intern prisoners. As a result, Canada interned approximately 8,579 people, including men, women, and children, in twenty-four different locations across the nation. Vernon, British Columbia, was among those

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190 Osborne, Non-Preferred People, 102.
191 Martynowych, Sympathy for the Devil, 43.
twenty-four locations and housed one of the internment camps. The internment camp located in Vernon, opened in September, 1914, and closed February 20, 1920.\footnote{The Barbed Wire Solution Exhibit, created 1995. Vernon Museum, 3009-32 Avenue, Vernon, British Columbia.}

According to John Stanton, there was a particular concern regarding Ukrainian immigrants, resulting in more Ukrainians being interred than any other ethnicity. Stanton’s analysis of this heavy emphasis on Ukrainians considers the Canadian government’s interest in re-directing the political interests of Ukrainians. Stanton suggests that the Canadian government may have been intent on using internment as an instrument of intimidation to discourage Ukrainians from supporting the Old Communist Party and shed “their rich, left-wing cultural heritage.”\footnote{John Stanton, “Government Internment Policy, 1939-1945,” Labour/LeTravail 31, (Spring 1993): 210.}

For those Ukrainians interned in Vernon, British Columbia, as well as the thousands of Germans, Italians, Japanese, and other Canadians interned across Canada, the experience of imprisonment was devastating. The conditions in the camps were harsh. Little food, overcrowding, forced heavy labour, and restrictions on freedom of speech and movement, all resulted in great loss for interned individuals and families. “For Ukrainian immigrants, who had been caught in Canada’s first interment operation, the immediate loss was emotional, financial, medical, and social. It took generations for the Ukrainian community to get over the feeling of deep injustice, humiliation, denial, and fear.”\footnote{The Barbed Wire Solution Exhibit.}

The adventure to eke out a new life began when Nancy arrived in 1929 as a baby with her family to Canada. Upon disembarking their ship, government agents presented Nancy’s mother with $40.00 and put them on the CPR train for Dalmas, Saskatchewan, were they would meet Nancy’s father who had arrived earlier to work on an established homestead. The family readily
congregated to the familiarity of other Ukrainian immigrants who had previously settled on 160-acre plots of land. As Ukrainian immigrants were dropped off at their designated locations on the prairies, they embarked on a journey to establish social ties and economic sustainability in a country with a less than welcoming political environment.197

5.2 School and Education

Various church denominations and missionaries played vital roles in the lives of Rosie and Nancy. When asked what the Catholic Church meant to Rosie, she indicated that it was very important to her. Catholic traditions and observances that Rosie became familiar with on the Okanagan Reserve continue to remain central to her personal life today. But for Rosie, the social location of the church was inextricably linked to the social location of the Residential School. The two were not separable in Rosie’s mind when she spoke of her lived experiences regarding school and religion.

Government officials focused on two major activities which involved administering handouts to Indigenous peoples on reserves and encouraging churches to set up and operate Residential Schools located off reserves and away from Indigenous communities.198 Rosie attended the Residential School in Kamloops, British Columbia and describes her experiences at Residential School, but just as extraordinary as her story is, her experiences move beyond herself and encompass her entire family, including her mother, brothers, and sisters. Her mother found it traumatizing to send her children to Kamloops. Because Rosie’s siblings were different ages, their departures to Residential School were staggered over several years. Some of Rosie’s brothers would run away from the school and end up back at home on the reserve only to have

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the police come to take them back. Rosie still remained at home and remembers witnessing numerous captures of her brothers by the police. She herself had a difficult time in Residential School dealing with her own discomfort and longing for her family and worrying about the well-being of her siblings.

Residential Schools emerged at the same time as reserves were established for Indigenous peoples throughout British Columbia. The Catholic Church ran the Residential School in Kamloops and adopted the educational strategy of all provincial Residential Schools, which was to rely on appropriating education in isolation from Indigenous and Euro-Canadian communities. Missionary educators were intent on reforming Okanagan females and introducing new relationships to domesticity and work. Federal and provincial governments along with the Catholic Church regarded Residential Schools as the most essential social location in which to obstruct the transmission of traditional culture and language and to shape students for “life in a segregate community dependent upon subsistence agriculture.” Sarah DeLeeuw argues that the physical site of the Residential School “transmitted a colonial narrative, which included the superiority over First Nations peoples and each moment the students were in these buildings they were reminded that their lives were un-superior and subordinate to European colonists.”

Evidence of physical, emotional, and psychological abuses are evident in many testimonies of people who attended Residential Schools. The students were constructed as deviant through the practice of confiscating their belongings, shaving their heads, and re-enforcing the thought that if they ran away they would become poor unproductive citizens straying from the standards of accepted behaviors. As the bodies of Residential School students represented “sites where the

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199 Perry, Metropolitan Knowledge, 125.
material and ideological converged through what they were taught,” the colonial project became deeply entrenched in the thoughts and memories of both Indigenous males and females.\footnote{DeLeeuw, Intimate colonialism, 345.}

Rosie describes her experiences in Residential School as harrowing. Her accumulative experiences in Residential School were designed to assimilate Indigenous girls to Canadian citizenry. Rosie remembers being young and vulnerable and missing her mother as she cried in the arms of a white woman upon her first-time arrival at the Residential School. A cattle truck picked up Rosie and the other children and drove them to Kamloops where they were stripped of their traditional language and traditions and exposed to an education based on Eurocentric standards and ideals. Jo-Anne Fiske explores how gender differences developed and maintained by education providers in Residential Schools were calculably intended to train female students as Catholic wives and mothers of nuclear households upon returning to their respective reserves.\footnote{Fiske, Spirited Subjects and Wounded Souls, 168.} Although Fiske’s research concerns women of other Indigenous groups in British Columbia, Okanagan women were subjected to the same projected outcomes in the Residential Schools they attended in Kamloops.

Rosie discusses what her domestic chores were during a day in the life of Residential School and explains that she actually did very little school work. She remembers doing domestic chores including carrying hot irons from the kitchen stove to the students who would do the ironing. Rosie cleaned, gardened, and participated in Catholic Mass rituals and activities. Rosie also remembers being separated from the boys because they were given industrial training, which the girls did not receive. The key to educating Indigenous girls rested in the control of their destinies within the planned and confined outcomes of the church and government to domesticate the girls in gendered activities.
Of particular interest is the fact that the girls did not receive the same education and training as white-settler girls did. For example, although both white settler girls and Indigenous girls were educated in chastity, continence, and sexual purity, greater emphasis of these issues was directed toward Indigenous young women, considering their perceived reputations as “fallen women.” As a result aspirations for future employment were seriously restricted. Employment opportunities for girls leaving Residential School focused specifically on cooking, canning, gardening, knitting and sewing. Indigenous girls were placed under patriarchal authority by both church and DIA government officials that subjected them to gendered restrictions and Christian morals. Educating the girls in Christian morals was considered essential and crucial to the girls’ training because of the negative assumptions regarding their behaviors and characters created and sustained earlier by the actions of DIA male officials.

Gender specific ways of marking difference between Indigenous females and white British domestic behaviors were intended to reform Indigenous women and their relationship to domesticity and labor. The government, along with missionaries, held an intense unease with the distinct ways that Okanagan women viewed manliness and womanliness and masculinity and femininity. Government and church officials were obsessively concerned with regulating the “matrilineal households, the mixed race families and undesirable consensual relationships [that] represented dangerous [differences] that threatened the very fabric of the desired Euro-Canadian society.”

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205 Fiske, Spirited Subjects and Wounded Souls, 176.
206 Fiske, Spirited Subjects and Wounded Souls, 171.
207 Perry, Metropolitan Knowledge, 124.
208 Perry, Metropolitan Knowledge, 125.
While Rosie, her siblings, and neighbors were forced to attend Residential School, the Ukrainians who settled on the prairies faced educational difficulty and confinement stemming from both language and religious barriers. Nancy talks about her school days, and how she and her siblings were required to learn English. It was difficult arriving at the schoolhouse every morning not knowing English very well. Where Nancy lived in Dalmas, Saskatchewan, there was only one English-speaking family that tried to help her family learn English by saying something in English and then demonstrating it. Nancy and her siblings did not have the help of their parents to learn English; rather the children acted as a linguistic bridge between the Ukrainian community and English community. It was difficult for Ukrainian immigrant children not only to learn the language but to assimilate into the educational system already established on the Prairies.

The social location of public schools was the single most revered space whereby Ukrainian immigrants could be assimilated and Canadianized. It was believed that in order to strip young Ukrainians of their traditions and customs, they would have to begin school at a young age.\(^2^0^9\) However, many Ukrainians resisted full assimilation for themselves and their children. This resistance created considerable anxiety in the Anglo-Canadian community as Ukrainians were also proving themselves to be hard workers, entrepreneurial, and family-centric furthering their economic and political position in the west. These factors along with their resistances to Anglo-sphere domination and pressure to assimilate also made them a threat to Canadian Anglo nation-building schemes. By 1921, Ukrainians were the largest and most visible ethnic group on the prairies with a population of approximately 106,721;\(^2^1^0\) however,

\(^{2^1^0}\) Gerus and Rea, *The Ukrainians in Canada*, 8.
instead of becoming Canadianized in language and religion they tended to minimize assimilation to include labor and economic sectors only.

Ukrainians were fierce about protecting their language, as it was revered as “the sacred key, treasured through the centuries to the soul of the old country [and] the best of Ukrainian culture, history, traditions and ideals.” They demanded the right to have their mother tongue taught in the public schools. They pressured provincial governments to incorporate bilingualism in the schools for their children and in the process established the Ukrainian Teachers Association. The federal government was deeply suspicious and determined that any “concrete manifestation of Ukrainian power could undermine conformity to British norms.” Ukrainian wishes clashed drastically with assimilated Canadians who saw the public schools as the instrument of Anglo-Celtic conformity. The dilemma intensified for the Canadian government regarding Ukrainian resistance to assimilation: would the West be culturally homogenous and English-speaking or would it be “dragged down” in development and progression by resistant and autonomous Ukrainians?

5.3 Church and Religion

Not only did Ukrainians cause anxiety for the federal and provincial governments in the areas of resisting cultural homogeneity, they also resisted the proselytizing efforts of Anglo-Canadian Protestants. Apart from pressure to assimilate into Canadian society according to British standards and norms, Ukrainians struggled with their precarious associations with the Roman Catholic Church. For Nancy and her family, the church was the most important and influential social structure and location whereby the family would center every aspect of their

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211 Petryshun, Peasants in a Promised Land, 170.
212 Petryshun, Peasants in a Promised Land, 180.
213 Petryshun, Peasants in a Promised Land, 170.
214 Petryshun, Peasants in a Promised Land, 170.
lives. Social ties among Ukrainian immigrants were exceptional and the desire to locate near friends and relatives and attend the same church overrode any other possible social attachments. It was a Ukrainian Pentecostal missionary who initiated relationships with certain Ukrainian people on the prairies in Saskatchewan and shared what Nancy refers to, as the gospel. The missionary encouraged Nancy’s family to move further west to Vernon, British Columbia, where there was an established Ukrainian community, which would offer the stability of community ties, formal and informal church gatherings, and new employment opportunities.

Nancy’s family was Greek Orthodox Catholic in Ukraine. Upon arriving to Canada there were no similar churches with priests who spoke Ukrainian and understood the Ukrainian Catholic rites. The Presbyterians tried to incorporate the Independent Greek Church into their Christian fold but eventually failed because Protestantism was too dissimilar from the Ukrainian traditions. The Canadian government was adamant that national unity and social stability relied upon Ukrainians abandoning their language and culture and surrendering to evangelization by Protestant missionaries.\(^{215}\) Presbyterians set up a medical hospital, a post office, grist mill and the justice of peace in Sifton, Saskatchewan. Boarding homes were established to educate young boys and girls in work ethics and loosen them from the control of Catholicism. Girls were taught sewing, cooking, laundry, waiting on tables and general housekeeping skills, activities embedded within the efforts of the Presbyterian Church.\(^{216}\)

The Roman Catholics did endeavor to incorporate bilingual education but that also proved unsuccessful in assimilating Ukrainian immigrants. The Greek Catholic Church that did exist also attempted to incorporate Ukrainian settlers into their congregations; however, the

Ukrainians viewed their attempts as asserting “traditional hegemony” over them. Eventually the Ukrainians on the prairies rejected all denominations, both Catholic and Protestant, and formed their own leadership: The Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church. Ukrainians were caught in the middle between the Roman Catholics and Protestants but in the end many Ukrainians turned to their own religious preferences and Nancy’s family represents a prime example of altering religious ties.

Nancy’s family, along with other Ukrainian families, rejected both Catholic and numerous Protestant sects in exchange for Pentacostalism. Following the tug at their hearts to move further west to British Columbia opportunity arose for Nancy to attend Bible School in Vancouver for six months at the request of her father. This experience introduced Nancy to a deeper relationship with both Pentecostal church doctrine and the Ukrainian community of which she would be part of for the next 70 years (and still remains loyal to this community). The church and the Ukrainian community at Swan Lake would be the backbone and support of every aspect of Nancy’s life, which included her family, friends, work, and social events.

5.4 Work and Food Acquisition

Finally the social locations that facilitated work opportunities and food acquisition for both Rosie and Nancy proved to be different. As Rosie lived on the Okanagan Indian Reserve at the Head of the Lake, she found her means of economic sustenance there which mainly consisted of cattle ranching with her common-law husband and in deriving certain benefits from extended kinship networks. After Nancy came to British Columbia and married, her and her husband’s labor and employment circumstances relied on self-employment opportunities, which included owning and operating a motel/restaurant and laboring in the logging industry. Both Rosie’s and

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217 Martynowych, Sympathy for the Devil, 225.
218 Petryshun, Peasants in a Promised Land, 211.
Nancy’s opportunity to cross paths in work locations and in areas where transference of food commodities occurred were varied. Indigenous people came in from the reserve to eat at Nancy’s restaurant and buy staples such as bread, milk, and eggs, while Nancy, at times, visited the reserve to buy strawberries and other fruits and vegetables from Indigenous families. They crossed paths in acquiring food, but Rosie and her husband could not purchase lands outside of the reserve for residence or self-employment purposes, nor were Nancy and her husband involved in cattle ranching.

While cattle ranching, motel/restaurant ownership, and logging were industries that provided economic sustainability, agriculture and fruit farming were developing into a thriving and vibrant economy in the late 1800s and early 1900s. As early settlers to British Columbia were predominantly British, their arrival and presence accounted for major infusions of capital into agricultural and cattle industries resulting in ownership of land, resources (water, irrigation), and economic dominance. In the late 1890s, Lord Aberdeen’s fruit-growing orchards and crops had become so vast and lucrative that he exported his produce from Vernon, British Columbia, to Central and Southern Okanagan Valley locations. This promotion, along with increased immigration to British Columbia, transformed the Okanagan from a cattle ranching community to a fruit-growing haven. Moreover, these developments created “a land boom in the Okanagan where some land values increased [significantly].” With the British having dominated land purchases and the fruit market, Indigenous peoples’ and Ukrainian immigrants’ participation in the Okanagan’s economy occurred from the fringes of British Columbia’s economy in terms of both work sites and food acquisition.

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In analyzing the narratives of Rosie and Nancy, it becomes clear that power structures embedded within the colonial project constructed concepts of race and gender that impacted the lives of both women and the experience of class stratification. Even though colonial governments and churches sought to assimilate Indigenous groups and non-preferred Ukrainian immigrants into Euro-Canadian cultural norms and ideals, the methods used set Rosie’s and Nancy’s experiences on differing trajectories. Their geographical locations, relationships with their respective affiliate churches, educational experiences and work lives took them on distinct journeys marked by the regulating forces specific to Anglo Canadian settler domination of land, markets, and law systems whereby the possibility of contact in these social locations was drastically minimized.

Rosie lived and continues to live on the reserve and Nancy lived at Swan Lake and now resides in Vernon. While the Indian Act greatly affected Rosie’s geographical location the Immigration policies and procedures enacted in the late 1800s and early 1900s affected where Nancy lived in both the Prairies and upon her arrival in British Columbia. Because Okanagan people mainly dwelled and made their living within the borders of reserve lands, and Ukrainians were adamant about staying close to their families and Ukrainian communities, there was little opportunity to develop deeper cross-cultural relationships of mutual support and affinity within each other’s geographical locations other than in the inter-stitial spaces of food acquisition. Meeting in these spaces was a key driver that brought them into close contact. Language barriers also shaped their contact, as both groups resisted English and did not know each other’s language to develop deeper meaning in their relationship around food acquisition.
Communities represent central locations whereby people experience intimate relationships, interactions, and express cultural practices and traditions. Rosie and Nancy belonged to different communities that were significantly shaped not only by political activity but also by colonialist and survivalist resistance. Because of the complex interplay of “domination, subordination, and resistance to colonial development” racialized Indigenous people on the reserve and racialized Ukrainians who settled in Vernon were incorporated differently into the state. The boundaries and criteria for inclusion and exclusion and the consequences of belonging or not were different for Okanagan and Ukrainian women and as a result both women experienced different relationships with the state. Peter Carstens argues that a significant historical reason that there existed limited interaction between Okanagan people and settler European people is because the government authorities, who created reserves via the Indian Act policies, never intended the reserves to become fully integrated communities. However, these women’s interactions demonstrated that human agency disrupted those plans in specific spaces, places, and times and challenged the dominant historical narrative that Okanagan and Ukrainian peoples were ever completely conquered or colonized.

The social locations of school and church were not locations in which Rosie and Nancy would have had many opportunities to develop cross-cultural relationships. Educational and religious aspects of Rosie’s life were fixed and linked and the two were not separate. Education and the church were ever-changing, tension-filled, and fluid social locations for Nancy. Immigrating to Canada posed challenges in which the government intervened in attempts to control Ukrainian assimilation and at the same time individual church groups attempted to bring

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222 Carstens, The Queen’s People, 140.
224 Carstens, The Queen’s People, 140.
Ukrainian immigrants into their respective folds. Later on the Pentecostal Church did influence Nancy’s post-secondary education in that her father sent her to Bible School to further her knowledge in the denomination as well as her continued involvement with and commitment to the Ukrainian community.

Employment and work sectors represent social locations where Indigenous Okanagan women and Ukrainian immigrant women did not find significant opportunities to cross paths. From the beginning of the history-making process in British Columbia colonial officials focused intently on shaping the province into a white race working community and promoting uneven opportunities for whites while operating under the British European ideologies of morality, hard work, and domesticity.225 With such an intense focus employment and work supported “enormous symbolic and economic meaning in the nineteenth century world.”226 Working class implicated regulatory systems that enforced the submissions of Indigenous Okanagan and immigrant Ukrainians to compartmentalization, separation, and submission. The meaning of working class was embedded in European standards and ideals that demanded all Canadian citizenry to adopt to a strict work ethic that government officials endeavored to sustain within the province’s economic development.

Indigenous female labor was appropriated under the umbrella of Christian transformation that outlined what labor and work should be. With the confinement to reserves came limited work opportunities that consisted of mainly farming, gardening, and domestic work experiences pertaining to food, sewing, and child-rearing. In this sense, labor was necessarily gendered and represented the hallmark of reform for Indigenous women. While Ukrainian immigrant women


226 Perry, Metropolitan Knowledge, 122.
were considered backward foreigners who represented a class below British English-speaking
immigrants and who were not necessarily welcome in the Okanagan, they were still considered
adequate laborers who espoused the much lauded hard-working habits of the labor industry.\textsuperscript{227}
Rosie’s working and labor opportunities were afforded on the reserve while Nancy’s work was
obtained and secured through self-employment opportunities. Nancy remembers that the
Okanagan were some of her best customers implying that the success of the restaurant did rely
upon Okanagan peoples’ participation in the cash economy and commodity market system and
where they selected to spend their money. Even though Nancy recalled Okanagan people
frequenting the restaurant in her motel the encounters did not result in relationships that were
consistent and meaningful. Both Okanagan and Ukrainian peoples were aware of one another.
Yet impeded efforts to pursue cross-cultural connections on more significant and relational levels
may have been marks of stereotyping and ill-conceived ideas of difference on the part of both
groups.

The racialized and gendered experiences of Okanagan women and Ukrainian immigrant
women were embedded within the categories of geographical locations, religion and church,
education, and labor, work and food acquisition. Because the ‘races’ of Indian and Ukrainian
were “othered,” due to perceived inferiorities, government officials insisted on managing them
in order to assimilate each group into social locations that upheld Anglo-Canadian norms and
standards and that would not disturb the processes required to build a nation based on European
industrial and colonial development.\textsuperscript{228} Essential to the construction of femininity in British
Columbia was the dissemination of the domestic. “The image of the domesticated European
woman was animated by a set of overlapping corresponding images generated in and through

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{227} Douglas Belshaw, “The West We Have Lost: British Columbia’s Demographic Past and an Agenda for
\textsuperscript{228} Perry, \textit{Metropolitan Knowledge}, 110.
\end{footnotesize}
Europe’s encounter with its many “other.” In British Columbia, the perceived rootless Indian was the anti-thesis to the description of the domestic European British woman and a hindrance to colonialism. The solution was to fix Indigenous women on permanent locations and import sedentary peoples. Among those imported sedentary people were Ukrainian immigrants who did provide the work ethic to establish Canadian economic systems but also posed hindrances to British colonial development. Consequently the government of British Columbia consistently maneuvered to manage different racial groupings and did so within predominant social locations. Renisa Mawani argues that government officials continuously dealt with the province’s disrupted racial topography and refers to Chinese immigration to British Columbia. Increasing Chinese immigration sparked “calculated responses to promote racial purity” and “re-drawing boundaries between aboriginal peoples and Euro-Canadians in ways that generated new meanings of racial difference.”

5.5 Collaboration and Exception

Although the historiographies of Rosie and Nancy have been highlighted, Lydia and Theresa’s stories are equally important. Lydia’s oral history collaborates with Nancy’s in that Lydia had similar experiences regarding the geographical locations of the Canadian prairies and Vernon, British Columbia, school, religious and church experiences, and labor opportunities. Theresa’s story contains elements of exception to Rosie’s story. Like Rosie, Theresa was born and grew up on the Okanagan Reserve and was forced to attend Residential School in Kamloops. Theresa’s life trajectory became the exception to Rosie’s when she moved off the reserve. Theresa attended university both in Saskatchewan and British Columbia opening up doors for

230 Perry, Metropolitan Knowledge, 113.
231 Renisa Mawani, Cross Racial Encounters, 167.
her in the field of education. In addition, Theresa also experienced a meaningful cross-cultural relationship with a Ukrainian immigrant girl. The two developed a close, mutual friendship that transcended the realities of community segregation between Indigenous peoples and European immigrants and any preconceived notions each may have held regarding the other.

5.6 **Lydia’s Story**

Lydia talked about the politics of Ukraine and made reference to changing European political borders. “Like my sisters say, well we came from Poland. [I say] no, anything we done had to go through the Polish, but we were not Polish. We are Ukrainian.” Lydia was born in Ukraine and immigrated to Canada with her family as a young girl. Before they immigrated her Greek Orthodox father met a Christian man named Mr. Kristinsky who was Balkan. Mr. Kristinsky was responsible for encouraging Lydia’s family to explore the Baptist/Pentecostal religion and when Kristinsky immigrated to Canada, Lydia’s father pursued the same adventure in 1930. The major motivation for Lydia’s family immigrating to Canada was the fact that her father resented Soviet political and economic imposition on his native homeland of Ukraine and how oppressive Soviet control resulted in poverty, degradation, and limited economic opportunity.

Lydia’s family homesteaded on the prairies but eventually came further west to Vernon, British Columbia. Lydia’s parents struggled with learning English and Lydia explains that, “my mother never did speak English…and if us kids were sitting around talking, she kind of got some of it but she could never really speak it. I spoke Ukrainian to her all the time.” Lydia’s father bought a few acres at Swan Lake and built a little two-room house. The family quickly became immersed in the Ukrainian community at Swan Lake with families including the Kuziws, Kososkys, Paciuks, and Medynskis.
Lydia attended school in Vernon at the beginning of second grade and all the Ukrainian children attended the same school. When asked if she recalled any schoolmates who were from the Okanagan Indian Reserve Lydia said, “No, not at all.” When asked if she remembered meeting any people from the Okanagan Indian Reserve, Lydia replied, “No, but I worked…for Chinese people. This land, where our house is on (referring to the home Lydia currently lives in), the Chinese people used to rent it out. They used to grow onions and vegetables right here and I worked on this land. [Also] they would pick us up and drive us up to the Indian reserve because the Chinese would rent land on the Okanagan reserve and so we worked there.”

Lydia found paid labour opportunities working for Chinese immigrants who rented land from the Okanagan peoples in order to grow produce and sell it. The historical documentation of ethnic labour in British Columbia indicates that agriculture in the Okanagan in the past one hundred years relied heavily on ethnic labour. While most Italian, German, Chinese, and Ukrainian immigrants were not able to acquire the same opportunities to fund fruit growing operations many of them became the workers in orchards and farm industries largely dominated by British owners.\(^{232}\)

Lydia explained that she did not have direct contact with any Okanagan people. “Well, they were out there. Nobody had cars. If it was anything, it was a man thing. The women didn’t drive. And, ah, we stuck around our own areas. I do remember we used to have bible studies in one of the houses. It was a Pentecostal Church where we had our bible studies…and there was an Indian girl who used to come, and I remember giving her a ride home.” Lydia also mentioned that they did not talk about the Okanagan people. “You know my parents were Ukrainians and to them it was like, yes, there are some Indians living way out there on the reserve.”

\(^{232}\) Living Landscapes, *Ethnic Agricultural Labour*, 100-102.
There was social and relational separation between the specific group of immigrant Ukrainians that Nancy and Lydia represent and other Ukrainians who came to Vernon from the prairies. Lydia refers to the disconnect between her Ukrainian community and the immigrant Ukrainians in Vernon who remained connected in the Greek Orthodox Church. “We had nothing to do with them (the Greek Orthodox Ukrainians). They had their own hall. They had their own dances. I think because Swan Lake had the Swan Lake Hall and that was all Ukrainian, but they were, like you know, we were Christians and we didn’t associate with them.”

5.7 Theresa’s Story

Theresa is from a large family which includes immediate and extended family members. She has cultural roots in Okanagan, Shuswap, and Thompson. She grew up in Vernon at the Head of the Lake Reserve. Her grandmother is a descendant from Chief Joseph’s line who came to Penticton to hunt deer. This is where Theresa’s grandparents met. Her Grandfather is Shuswap from the Chase area and his grandfather was French Native. Theresa’s father was Thompson and married her mother who was Okanagan and they lived in Vernon.

I asked Theresa about her lineage and she explained that lineage was passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth, but she has been writing and documenting her family’s history. Theresa’s grandmother said that their people were always here and that it is very important that you know who you are and where you came from. Whether you are from this group or that group, they are cultures and you should never forget your culture. Equally important was to never lose your language because your language is a big part of your culture. Theresa shared that her grandmother also warned her to never forget who you are because the government will try to change you. She believed that the reason why kids are lost is because they do not know who they are.
Theresa also said that when her grandmother was asked where the white people came from she explained that they came from the wagons and the trail – from the Hudson Bay Fur Trading Company. Métis worked for the Hudson Bay and travelled to Kamloops to trade. The only white people that Theresa’s grandmother’s generation knew were the traders.

Theresa shared that there was a lot of stuff going on at the reserve. Growing up was hard for the people. Her grandfather was well to do and owned cattle and pigs. He would show great generosity to people who had less. People would come to church and Theresa’s grandfather would feed them and sometimes provide them with staples such as flour. People would also come to Theresa’s grandfather’s house and he would show them kindness.

Life was, at times, rough for Theresa’s parents. Theresa worked for and helped her parents seven days a week. Her father worked for O’Keefe and at the Douglas Lake Ranch.

Theresa talked about her school life and shared that she did attend Residential School in Kamloops. The government sent authorities to the reserve with a cattle truck and loaded the kids up and drove them all to Kamloops. Theresa said they did not go to school on a bus, but on a cattle truck which was ironic because there were buses in those days that took the white kids to school.

A typical day in Residential School included going to church, having breakfast and then work. They would do chores like scrubbing the halls and washing the dishes. In the afternoon they would do school for a couple of hours and then be in bed by 8:00 pm. The students also had to go to church in the evening, and the intention here was to keep the students in line. They would play games on the weekend such as basketball and have fun days, but Theresa said it seemed like they were always in church.
When asked about Native cultural traditions, Theresa spoke very briefly about the importance of spirituality and spiritual beliefs which were condemned years ago by the government. As a result people, would have hidden ceremonies as they feared jail if they were found out by government officials. The people would get together and have secret ceremonies away from the reserve that would consist of two to three day quests.233

Theresa’s life’s experiences living on the reserve and attending Residential School are similar to Rosie’s stories; however, Theresa’s life embarked on a different trajectory when she left the reserve. After spending a few years in Residential School, Theresa eventually attended school at W.L. Seaton School in Vernon where she completed Grade 10 education. She talked about the prejudiced attitudes that they experienced when she and other Native students were made fun of because their skin was dark. Theresa said that it really didn’t bother them because after you’ve gone through Residential School you were used to prejudiced attitudes.

Although Theresa completed Grade ten in the public school system, she later continued her education and obtained her teacher’s certification through the University of British Columbia and at the University of Saskatchewan. Theresa used her credentials and training to teach the Okanagan language and to develop curriculum, and she has been involved in the En’owkin Center in Penticton, British Columbia.

Theresa’s story is an exception to Rosie’s story because Theresa developed a meaningful relationship with a Ukrainian girl. Theresa spoke about a Ukrainian friend that she remembers

233 Arthur J. Ray, I Have Lived Here Since the World Began: An Illustrated History of Canada’s Native People (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2005), 233-234. The move to ban potlatches began before 1885 and was intended to expedite the conversions of Indigenous peoples to Anglo-Canadian ways of behaving. Government efforts to stamp out potlatches, traditional dances, and ceremonies sustained numerous revisions. In 1889 Ottawa worked out an arrangement whereby the Province of British Columbia agreed to provide policing and jails as needed to punishment those Natives who participated in these events. By 1927 Duncan Campbell Scott drafted a revision to the Indian Act which banned these activities in four western provinces. If caught offenders were subject to a $25.00 fine and one month in prison. However, enforcement was uneven because of some public backlash and those who wanted to see a more lenient attitude toward Natives practicing their traditional potlatches, ceremonies, and dances.
having in school. They met years ago while working in the vegetable gardens on the reserve. They developed a friendship that existed both at work and at school. The friendship continued with her Ukrainian traditions but she was interested in Native Indian culture. Theresa shared that the two of them embarked on a mutual and meaningful relationship as they worked together, visited, and exchange recipes. Theresa remembers her Ukrainian friend telling her about the hardships the Ukrainians experienced in Alberta.
6 Concluding Chapter and Recommendations for Future Work

My grandparents were among those Ukrainian immigrants to Canada seeking new opportunities and freedoms from the unemployment, political and social oppression, and starvation that they faced in Ukraine: a “precarious existence [that] triggered the forces of emigration.”234 As a third generation Ukrainian, I grew up in Vernon, British Columbia during the 1970s and attended elementary, junior, secondary, and senior secondary schools. In grade nine, I remember seeing students being bused into Vernon from the Okanagan Indian Reserve. Though I was aware these students lived “out of town,” I was not certain who they were. I remember experiencing a particular curiosity and desire to interact, but as high school students typically do I stuck close to my group of close friends whom I identified with outside of school and at church related activities. It was not until I was an adult that I met and worked with an Okanagan woman. For almost ten years, we were bankers, and side-by-side we served customers. Through our friendship and conversations I realized that there was much I did not know about the history of our local area regarding Okanagan peoples and Ukrainian immigrants who lived and worked only six miles apart from one another. There was much I did not know or understand about the Okanagan and Ukrainian social relations that stemmed from the colonial and industrial development of British Columbia. While the central focus of this thesis is on the significance of and the extent to which cross-cultural relationships between Okanagan and Ukrainian immigrant women occurred during the early development of British Columbia my inspiration for this research has been grounded in my experiences and reflections about growing up and working in Vernon.

This project commenced with a brief explanation of the beginnings of my research interests. Working on a prior research project that explored relationships and relational gaps

234 Petryshun, Peasants in the Promised Land, 27.
between Indigenous women and white settler women during British Columbia’s early colonial and industrial development I discovered an absence of information regarding the existence of cross-cultural relationships between Okanagan women from the Head of the Lake and Ukrainian immigrant women living in Vernon, British Columbia. To understand how and why this absence exists an exploration of the history of history making in British Columbia facilitated insight.

The history of history making in British Columbia indicates several key characteristics that contributed to a distorted understanding of British Columbia’s dominant historical narrative and how these biased narratives have been problematic in terms of women’s history in the province. Literature indicates that while there are accounts of women’s lives that have been included in our historical archives and while there has been a recent proclivity toward female feminist historians chronicling women’s lives, the Eurocentric and male dominant nature of traditional representation of British Colombia’s history has resulted in a selective, conventional, and partial vision of history. This study created theoretical linkages to Jan Jindy Pettman’s investigation regarding colonial development in Australia. Pettman argues that Australia is a product of two interlocking processes: colonization and immigration. The state played crucial roles in establishing the status and the inclusion or exclusion of different groups of people who were defined in terms of race or country of origin. Canada also relied on colonization and immigration processes to manage the treatment of Indigenous peoples, incoming Ukrainian immigrants, and more specifically, marginalized women’s groups.

By analyzing the stories of Rosie and Nancy through the lens of colonial development, this study elevated how colonization and immigration processes affected their lives. The effects of colonization and immigration are reflected in their everyday lived experiences. Rosie and her family lived on the Okanagan Indian Reserve as a result of the inner workings of the colonial

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235 Pettman, Race, Ethnicity, and Gender, 67.
project to obtain land, water rights and resources, and secure economic dominance for the benefit of the Oblate missionaries, British elite setters, prospectors, and ranchers. Nancy, her family, and all European immigrants contributed to the expansion of the immigrant population and pioneering lifestyle on the Canadian Prairie lands, displacing various Indigenous peoples, including the Métis in Manitoba, the Ojibwas in the Eastern Prairie Woodlands, the Cree in the Plains, and the Blackfoot of the Rocky Mountain Foothills.\textsuperscript{236} The Ukrainians became incorporated into market systems and private property. Incorporation into these systems occurred as Ukrainians bought lands for homesteading or became immersed in employment opportunities in trades or as general labourers.\textsuperscript{237} As a result the trajectories of the women’s lives assumed different directions within the social locations of geographical spaces, schools and education, church and religion, sustainable employment opportunities and food acquisitions.

Adele Perry explains that en route to establishing Canadian nationalism, there existed “the masculinity of European white males that was sketched over top of the existing landscape of British Columbia.”\textsuperscript{238} As far as women’s everyday lived experiences (experiences that did offer consistent but largely overlooked contributions to the official story of British Columbia’s past) were concerned, they were given little attention and were superseded by the documentation and interpretation of male European elites and histories in subjects regarding politics, economics, and industrial development.

Focusing on decolonizing the traditional and partial vision of British Columbia’s history, this project investigates and documents the oral histories of elder Okanagan and immigrant Ukrainian women and considers their stories as more than minimal experiences. By showing that colonial intervention influenced, structured, and shaped Rosie’s and Nancy’s lives in

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{236} Gerald Friesen, \textit{The Canadian Prairies} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 129, 146.
\item \textsuperscript{237} Lehr, \textit{Peopling the Prairies with Ukrainians}, 34.
\item \textsuperscript{238} Perry, \textit{Metropolitan Knowledge}, 110.
\end{enumerate}
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multiple social locations of gender, language, family ties, education, church, and economic class we can understand why cross-cultural relationships were not entirely possible or supported, and were often constrained in the sense of unobstructed opportunity. It is also evident that unobstructed opportunities were impacted by the structured concepts of race, gender, and class influencing where Okanagan women and Ukrainian immigrant women lived, went to school, attended church, worked, purchased food, and communicated.

Race and gender differences that were manifested through colonization are crucial to understanding the development of cross-cultural relationships because they were organizing principles in geographically locating groups of people and positioning them within Canada’s and British Columbia’s opportunity structures. The racialized and gendered imaginings describing the lives of Indigenous and Ukrainian immigrant women are of consequence because they marginalized women into raced and gendered categories. Jackie Hogan argues that women’s equality based on race, ethnicity, gender or class also marginalized them within Canada’s historical contributions. By telling the stories of women who have been molded into these groupings, their marginalized status becomes subverted and their stories made visible within the historical process of the construction of colonialist British Columbia. Focusing on decolonizing the popular consciousness with visible stories reveals the key to addressing and answering the research question. The significance of and the extent to which Okanagan and Ukrainian immigrant women developed cross-cultural relationships lies in the relationship of colonial elites to subordinated ethnic groups including Indigenous women and Ukrainian immigrant women.

Because the recorded history of cross-cultural relationships between these two groups of women is incomplete and their respective histories are important to understanding the evolution

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240 Hogan, *Gender, Race, and National Identity*, 1.
of the colonial and industrial development of the province, methodologies and methods specific
to considering marginalized, racialized, and ethnicized women’s histories were selected to
facilitate this project. Indigenous Methodologies ensured that all aspects of the project resulted
in respectful, ethical, and positive treatment toward the women. Participatory Action Research
methods allowed me to work collaboratively with Rosie, Nancy, Lydia, and Theresa thereby
valuing their lives, experiences, and perspectives. Listening to the stories of these women was
an insightful experience in that their lives reflected the economic and political goings-on around
them. Their oral histories spoke to the residential school experience, dependence on government
handouts, and seclusion on the reserve. They spoke of the realities of learning English in an
expansive unfamiliar territory, pressure to assimilate into Euro-Canadian culture, and journeys in
pursuing new church affiliations and community connections. Participatory Action Research
methods allowed for the women to tell their stories and assume the role of active agent in the
research process by telling their stories from their point of view, thus, making a radical departure
from traditional methods of research in this subject area of the Okanagan peoples at the Head of
the Lake.

The methodology, feminist theoretical framework, and methods of gathering and
analyzing oral histories and lived experiences of Indigenous and immigrant women pose
concerns for some historians. J. R. Miller conveys apprehension regarding the emergence of
recent methodologies that have been utilized over the last several decades within the Humanities.
Miller reflects on, what he believes, are the particularly worrisome scholarly historical
investigations of cultural history that rely on feminist methodology. He argues that “feminist
theory and feminist interpretations in history have a profoundly unsettling, if also dramatically
energizing, impact on the practice of history.”

His concern focuses on the methodology used by Canadian historians of women because it challenges tradition modes of inquiry resulting in valorizing lived female experiences. Miller is accurate when he describes the goals and visions of feminist historians and explains that the reason women’s oral histories are given importance and significance is because their stories and inclusion in the dominant historical narrative have largely been overlooked. One of Miller’s questions that expresses his disquieting apprehension is, “If the most privileged evidence is lived experience, can there be any evidentiary bedrock, any foundation against which to measure other phenomenon for their validity and representations?”

A feminist response to Miller’s criticism is Janice Forsyth’s support and argument for the inclusion of women’s oral histories in the dominant historical narrative. Forsyth reasons that indigenous women’s histories and experiences have not been extensively documented in historical texts regarding significant political events that deeply affected their lives. Some of these events include the Pass System in 1885, the Indian Act in 1876, and forced Residential Schooling beginning in the 1920s. The years spanning between 1850 and 1950 brought important changes including “treaties and the establishment of reserves…and was also a time where women were systematically oppressed through the historical construction and manipulation of ideas about their sexuality.”

Recovering stories told by racialized Indigenous and Ukrainian women whose lived experiences were significantly affected by these events and

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241 J. R. Miller, Reflections on Native Newcomer Relations (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 68.
242 Miller, Reflections on Native Newcomer Relations, 69.
told from their perspective “helps to deconstruct the racist, classist, and gendered dimensions embedded in federal Indian policies and legislation” created and written by men.”

Respectfully, the answer to Miller’s question is evidenced throughout this project. Documented history has been researched and referenced beginning with an exploration on literature concerning the history of the history making process in British Columbia that demonstrates the absence of women’s testimony and lived historical experiences. While there has been excellent work done by women scholars on women’s history on early contact and British Columbia’s frontier, there remains many stories of women today still needing serious attention. By foregrounding the voices of marginalized Indigenous and Ukrainian women as actors and producers of knowledge, I am positioning them as knowledge keepers who possess insight on and experience with social, political, and economic events that occurred in conjunction with the colonial project during British Columbia’s early development.

The women’s oral histories represented in this project act as a buttress to British Columbia’s historical archives. The Indian Act which outlined and facilitated many goings-on of colonization affected Rosie’s life in multiple ways. Her life’s story is an indicator of the affects of social segregation and the Residential School experience. Canadian immigration policies and procedures dictated answers to if, how, when, where, and why Nancy’s family was able to immigrate to the Canada. The inner workings of colonization and immigration overlapped and, in tandem, affected women’s lived experiences on an individual basis and in terms of seizing unobstructed opportunities to develop cross-cultural relationships. The Indian Act and Immigration policies are but two foundations against which to measure and validate Rosie’s and Nancy’s stories. Written history is used to juxtapose the lives of Okanagan and Ukrainian

Forsyth, After the Fur Trade, 79.
immigrant women and demonstrate how the effects of colonization affected their opportunities and abilities to negotiate and develop cross-cultural relationships.

Recovering the stories of these wonderful women who willingly shared their life histories has facilitated in answering the research question. Katie Pickles and Myra Rutherford add to my conclusion by succinctly stating that, “in varied sites of encounter, [indigenous] women, white women travelers, missionaries, and settlers were all integral to the colonial project.” Another laconic statement describing the significance of and the extent to which Okanagan women and Ukrainian immigrant women experienced cross-cultural relationships is made by Adele Perry: “Women crossed cultures but did not culturally cross into meaningful relationships.” Both Okanagan and Ukrainian immigrant women negotiated and moved through colonial social locations. The degree of engagement within social locations was greatly determined by the availability of meeting places and opportunities. Meeting places in school did not occur for Rosie and Nancy; however Theresa was able to meet a Ukrainian immigrant girl and develop a meaningful cross-cultural relationship. The exception in this case was that Theresa left the reserve and came into Vernon and attended the same school as did her Ukrainian friend. Nor were Rosie and Nancy able to find opportunity to meet in church. Rosie attended Residential School where the Catholic Church became influential in her life. Nancy’s family abandoned the Catholic Church for the Pentecostal Church. Lydia’s story collaborates with Nancy’s in that she also found community and connection in the Pentecostal Church.

The geographical locations in which the women lived were the greatest determinant that hindered meeting opportunities. Cole Harris sums up the creation of geographical locations during the colonial development of British Columbia well. He refers to the usurpation of land by

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246 Perry, *Metropolitan Knowledge*, 56.
the colonial government from Native groups as an intentional strategy resulting in the formation of a new human geography where “lives and land boundaries, roads and railroads, the farms, the industrial camps, and the towns became…the most pervasive disciplinary technology of all.”247

In other words, these divisions defined where people, native and non-native, could and could not go. Harris borrows from Frantz Fanon’s reasoning in that the colonial project segregated the people, Indigenous and settler into compartments and re-created geographic borders and spaces.248 Land in British Columbia gave opportunity to many and in turn rendered the Okanagan superfluous.249

The oral histories and stories of Rosie, Nancy, Lydia and Theresa are reflected in Harris’s statements. Why then would their stories not be of significance in understanding women’s history in British Columbia? It is remarkable that an Okanagan woman and a Ukrainian immigrant woman living only six miles apart from one another would experience such limited opportunities to cross paths and develop meaningful cross-cultural relationship during the colonial and industrial development of British Columbia. The women’s stories are viewed against the backdrop of the dominant historical narrative and the process of colonization, and in Nancy’s and Lydia’s case the political and economic circumstances they fled in Ukraine. The combination of these stories offers not only unique views into racialized Indigenous and Ukrainian women’s singular lives but when considered collectively they also inform, teach, fill in historical gaps, and demonstrate how pervasive the colonial project was in their lives.

The results of this project are relevant to today’s world because they represent a step towards decolonizing the history of history making process in British Columbia that produced

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248 Harris, *How Did Colonialism Dispossess?*, 166.
249 Harris, *How Did Colonialism Dispossess?*, 170.
the dominant historical narrative by which British Columbians have held their historical beliefs. Illuminating stories of Okanagan and immigrant Ukrainian women who lived their lives in communities that were situated in the outskirts and peripheries of mainstream society has provided alternative stories. The results derived from the analysis also open up further questions, that if investigated, would continue to broaden our collective understanding of not only cross-cultural relationships between Okanagan and immigrant Ukrainian women, but also of cross-cultural relationships between other immigrant women, including the Chinese, Dukkabours, Germans, Scots, Irish, and Italian immigrants who also lived and worked in the Okanagan.

The research question introduced in this thesis provides a guide to future research. Further research would offer a more comprehensive insight into answering the question of how significant cross-cultural relationships were during the colonial and industrial development of British Columbia. Uncovering additional oral histories of both Okanagan and Ukrainian women would provide a broader indication of women’s lived experiences and reveal additional areas of contact that may have been highly significant.

Investigating and researching local archives by delving into vital statistics, immigration records, births, deaths, church, and school records to determine how many Ukrainian families moved to the Okanagan, and for what reasons, would add to a future project by providing important demographic information. More thorough research into the local economy and how, when, and where Okanagan peoples and immigrant Ukrainians interacted in the areas of fruit and vegetable produce and food acquisition might reveal other relationships that existed on a deeper relational level.

Further research would require broadening and nurturing relationships with women in both Okanagan and Ukrainian communities at the Head of the Lake and Vernon. Most of the
Ukrainian women, like Nancy and Lydia, who still live in Vernon, are among those who are elderly. They are the only remaining “keepers” of the Ukrainian language and of the memories of immigration to this specific area of Canada. As a third generation Ukrainian I am concerned that the experiences, stories, and oral histories of Ukrainian immigrants will be forever lost if they are not sought out, told, documented, honored, and respected. I am also concerned that if we fail to investigate women’s relationships that were significantly influenced by the colonization process, and if we neglect attempts to understand these relationships, we may continue on a trajectory that sidesteps the decolonization process.

I am reminded of my personal investment in this project. Reflecting on my initial determination to investigate why, as a young person with distinct memories of “Indians” out on the reserve, I could never accurately pinpoint why there existed a relational disconnect. For me, this was discomforting, puzzling, and awkward, yet I possessed an internal idea that the separation and distinction between “us” and “them” was somehow normal. I believe that if more stories of Okanagan and Ukrainian women are uncovered there will be an improved understanding of one another’s personal locations and circumstances during the colonial project in British Columbia. A more empathetic and reflective understanding will facilitate the decolonization of ill-perceived perceptions and beliefs about each other thereby initiating a process of relational change resulting in acceptance and respect for others’ traditions, beliefs, and backgrounds.
Figure 6.1 Map of British Columbia
Figure 6.2 Map of Vernon and Area
Bibliography


Flett, James. Letter written to Flett’s niece June 24, 1874. Orkney Archives. Permission to use granted by Dr. Roberta Robin Dods, Associate Professor of University of British Columbia.


