

BACK TO BATOCHE

A CULTURAL CENTRE FOR
THE METIS NATION OF SASKATCHEWAN

by

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Abstract

The village of Batoche lies at the junction of the South Saskatchewan River and the Carleton Trail, important trade routes for the North-West before the advent of the railway. French-speaking Métis from Manitoba settled the area in 1871, enjoying a high degree of political autonomy. The collapse of the plains buffalo, successive crop failures, and long-standing fears over land titles in the face of encroaching settlement led to an armed uprising in 1885. After initial success in skirmish attacks against federal troops, the outnumbered Métis were besieged at Batoche, where they were defeated after four days. Their leader Louis Riel—who had led a previous uprising in Manitoba—was captured, convicted of treason, and hanged at Regina. Gabriel Dumont received amnesty and returned to Batoche, where he lies buried. After the uprising some reparations were paid by Ottawa and the village was rebuilt, but Batoche was abandoned in the first decades of this century.

Today Batoche is a National Historic Site, a designation which once again brings the Métis Nation into conflict with federal policy. The Métis claim ownership of their ancestral capitol, and gather each summer in the tens of thousands for the *Back to Batoche* festival. The first priority of Parks Canada, however, is preservation of Batoche's archaeological remains. When a new national museum was built in 1985, the Métis were awarded an adjacent parcel of land which they have since been trying to develop. Chronic fiscal problems have delayed their plans for a large multi-purpose cultural facility. This

design thesis proposes a strategy for development which is economically sustainable and culturally appropriate, with emphasis on co-operation between Métis and museum.

Precedent studies of historic parks in Saskatchewan include Wanuskewin Heritage Park and Batoche Museum. A brief cultural investigation follows the development of the Métis Nation and the history of settlement at Batoche. Three sites—alternatives to the Métis' existing land allocation—are examined as possible locations for a cultural centre. These include: Gabriel's Crossing, at Dumont's former home; Batoche East Village, site of the siege; and the historic Caron Farm, overlooking the river valley at the Park's southern boundary. An incremental building programme is proposed, including, by priority: Elders' cabins, a multi-purpose meeting hall with café and gift-shop, a stable and corral, an outdoor amphitheatre, seasonal artists' live-work studios, and a cultural archive.

The proposed design, on the Caron Farm site, responds to existing contours and vegetation. In an isolated location, it accommodates large seasonal gatherings as well as small groups. It promotes an appropriate building technology which revives the traditional *corvée*, or building bee, to encourage community involvement. It complements the existing museum by providing new amenities.

The completed drawings are intended to provoke discussion by Métis and Parks Canada, in the hope that increased co-operation will encourage more Canadians to come back to Batoche.

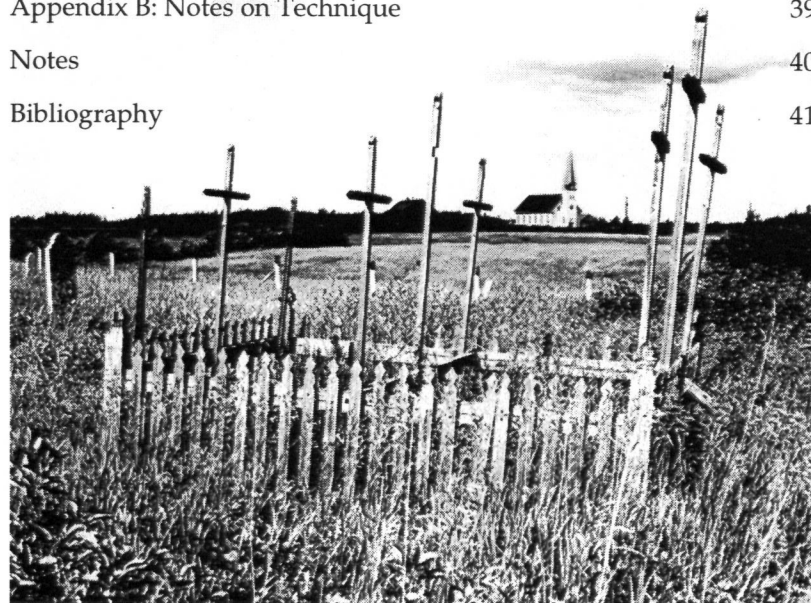
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Progressivist historians do not write much about the losers of history, because belief in progress often implies the base assumption that to lose is to have failed to grasp the evolving truth. Nevertheless, the losers existed and they are well worth reading now that we see what kind of society the winners have made.

George Grant, *Technology and Empire*

We don't need another hero

Introduction

When Esau came in from his hunting, he too made a savory dish and brought it to his father, saying, "Come, father, and eat of my venison, that you may give me your blessing." Isaac said, "Who are you?" "I am Esau, your elder son." Then Isaac became greatly agitated and said, "Who was it that hunted and brought me venison? I ate it all and I blessed him, and the blessing will stand."...

Esau cried bitterly: "Had you then only one blessing, father? Bless me, too..." Then his father Isaac answered:

*"Your dwelling shall be far from the richness of the earth,
far from the dew of heaven above.
By your sword shall you live,
and you shall serve your brother;
but the time will come when you will grow restive
and break off his yoke from your neck."*

Genesis 27:30-40.

The North-West Rebellion of 1885 was an effort by two indigenous prairie peoples—the Métis and their Plains Indian neighbours—to preserve a traditional lifestyle in the face of rapid development. The distinct culture of the Métis emerged in the Red River Valley in the early 19th century, sustained by the spoils of migratory buffalo hunts. As this resource dwindled and settlement increased following the creation of Manitoba in 1870, many Métis families moved further west to the Saskatchewan River Valley. By 1880 Batoche was the administrative center of a community numbering several thousand, with its own laws based on time-honoured hunting traditions. In 1885, threatened once again by encroaching settlement, the Métis declared territorial independence under the leadership of Louis Riel. Troops sent West by the federal government overthrew the rebellion at Batoche,

and Riel was hanged for treason after a spectacular trial. The Métis were restored to their farms with some financial reparations, but they were extinguished as a political force on the prairies. Batoche gradually dwindled until the last store burned in 1923, and the village was abandoned.

The remains of the battlefield and village are now a National Historic Site, administered by Parks Canada from a small museum. The Saskatchewan Métis are experiencing a cultural revival and would like to re-establish a presence at Batoche. Although they have been allocated some adjacent land, they are hampered by geographic isolation and lack of funds. The Métis are negotiating a co-management review with Parks Canada, but because the site is archaeologically sensitive, Parks Canada must weigh the Métis' development plans against its own conservation mandate.

This thesis proposes a strategy for co-operation, both to identify a site which can sustain long-term development, and to develop a program which meets the Métis' needs while promoting the museum's commemorative efforts.



1. Precedent Studies

In attempting to design for an unfamiliar ethnic group, the architect's task resembles that of the anthropologist. Anthropologists disagree on the value of museums as containers for culture, but as a point of departure we will examine two Saskatchewan museums devoted to Native and Métis life. The first, Saskatoon's Wanuskewin Heritage Park, represents a radical departure from conventional ethnography. The second, Batoche Visitor Centre, is a disappointing reminder of the *status quo* but is the context and counterpoint to any further study of that site.

i.) Wanuskewin Heritage Park, Saskatoon

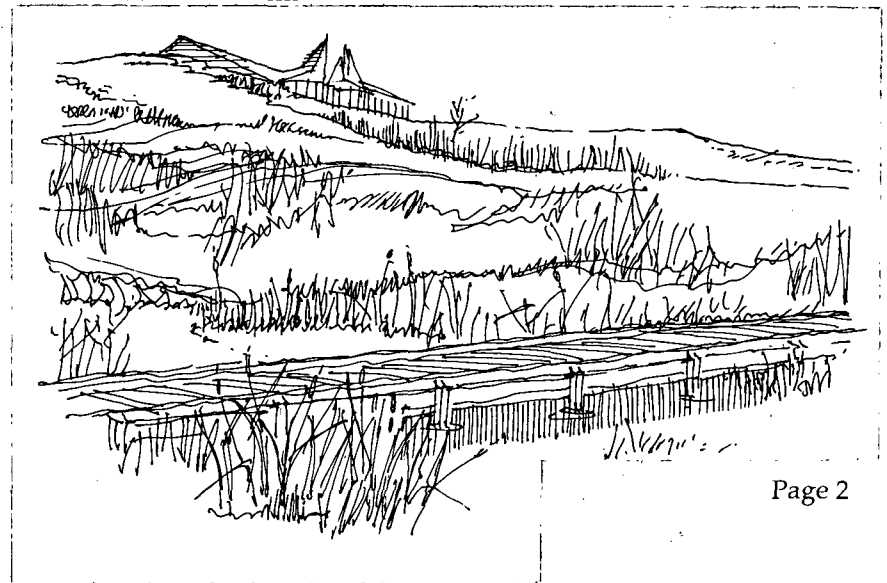
*There's a Cree word 'e-wani-askeyin' meaning 'lost land', or 'lost place'...
It's an old word, so old it has fallen into disuse... Many Native young
people don't recognize it. ...Wanuskewin is loosely translated as
'seeking peace of mind'...*

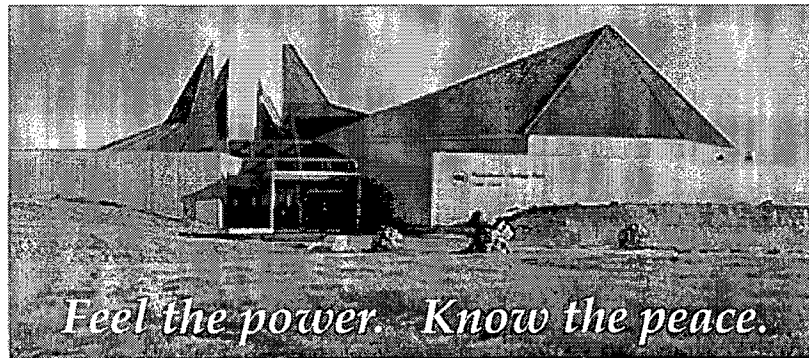
Cree Senator Ernest Mike

Three kilometers north of Saskatoon, Tipperary Creek empties into the South Saskatchewan River. Its steep banks cut through the prairie uplands, giving year-round shelter to a wide variety of plant and animal life. The record of continuous human inhabitation here dates back more than six thousand years. When the Meewasin Valley Authority was created in 1983, Tipperary Creek figured prominently in its 100-year plan for development of the river valley. Toronto Master Planner Raymond Moriyama described his emotion on visit-

ing one of the major archaeological finds: "When we were adjacent to the medicine wheel, we stood still and tried to just absorb it, not talk about it... Every stone pebble seemed to have some meaning to us. We felt sure there was a wonderful human story to it... It was a magical moment, almost a religious feeling."¹

As more archeological treasures were unearthed, the MVA decided to protect the creek as a cultural park. Wanuskewin received designation as a National Historic Site in 1986, and a major interpretive center was inaugurated in 1992. It now receives more than 150,000 visitors annually, and has become an important link between Native and non-Native people in the region. Also linking modern Natives to their prehistoric past, Wanuskewin is a model of scientific and cultural co-management. Archaeologists and anthropologists from the University of Saskatchewan sit on the board, but the overall policy-making group is a Native non-profit corporation which includes elders from the five linguistic groups in Saskatchewan and seven district tribal councils.²





The park's designers had a dual agenda: to accurately represent Native life while preserving a wealth of archaeological resources. Planning was done in close collaboration with Native groups, which is revealed, for example, in the arrangement of exhibition spaces: Visitors move clockwise through the building, like the sun through the sky or a pipe passed round a campfire. Great care was taken to preserve richly-stratified sites, including two buffalo jumps, a buffalo pound, tipi rings, and a 1500 year-old medicine wheel.

The visitor centre, which resembles a tipi split along the cardinal axes, is built of glu-lam timbers clad with glass curtain walls and cedar shingles. A straight path leads past a gift shop and reception area toward a reconstructed buffalo pound, orientation gallery and dining room. The visit begins with a multi-media slide presentation, followed by a trip to the exhibition hall. Here, low glass cases display traditional lore: a series of teepees exhibit Native artifacts; a storytelling tent relates oral tradition; interactive computer stations allow interactive investigation. On leaving the hall, one passes a working field laboratory where staff archaeologists can be viewed through

plate glass. An archaeological theatre explains scientific procedure and promotes respect for the park's resources.

The visitor centre is perched on the lip of a prehistoric buffalo jump. Its spire can be seen from the valley floor, providing a point of reference without dominating the natural setting. Trails are thematically organized to provide a quantity and variety of visitor experiences—amphitheatre, teepee sites, medicine wheel—in keeping with the site's sacred nature. Local landscape architects have applied Xeriscape principles which emphasize the use of drought-resistant native flora. The 100-vehicle parking lot drains into a settling pond whose water is re-used for irrigation and prevented from polluting the bone-beds below.

At the introductory slide show, the visitor is asked: "What does *wa-nus-KE-win* mean to you?" In this case, it means giving ear to our aboriginal ancestors, and seeing how cultural and natural threads are interwoven in this special place.

ii.) Batoche Visitor Center

What can a building say about bush and battle? How can a commemorative center recall a conflict of frightened men, creeping through the woods to shoot each other?

What is the essential symbol of fear?

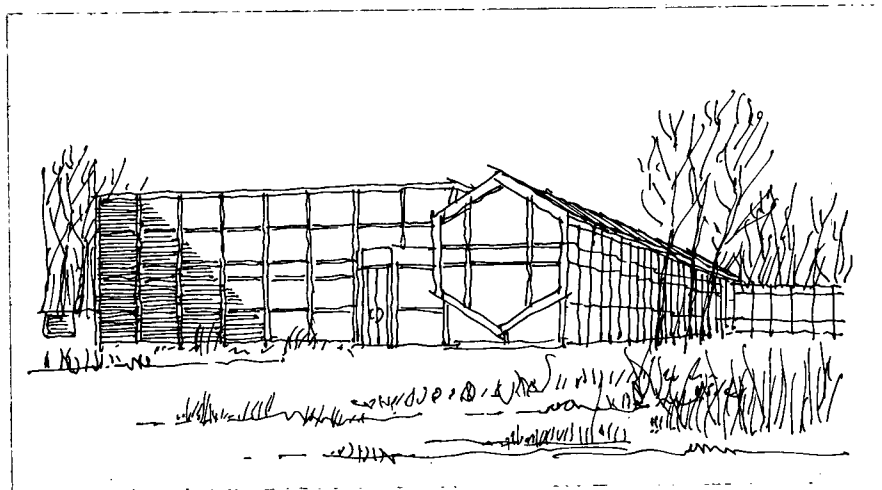
Forrest Wilson, IKOY Partnership

Batoche was the nickname of Xavier Letendre, who opened a store in 1880 at the junction of the Carlton and Humboldt trails. These trails

were important trade routes, and Batoche soon became the administrative centre of a Métis community stretching twenty miles from Gabriel's Crossing to the St. Laurent Mission. Batoche eventually boasted several stores, a "stopping place", fine houses, and a church and rectory.

Batoche's historic importance, however, stems from its role in the North-West Rebellion. In 1985, on the centenary of the uprising, Batoche Visitor Center was inaugurated by Parks Canada. It receives 25,000 visitors annually from May through October, and features a small office block, 80-seat theatre, and exhibition hall. A glazed gallery opens onto a series of self-guided trails. These lead to three historical areas: the restored church and rectory, the Métis cemetery, and the grave of Gabriel Dumont; General Middleton's fortified encampment; and the ruined East Village where Riel was headquartered.

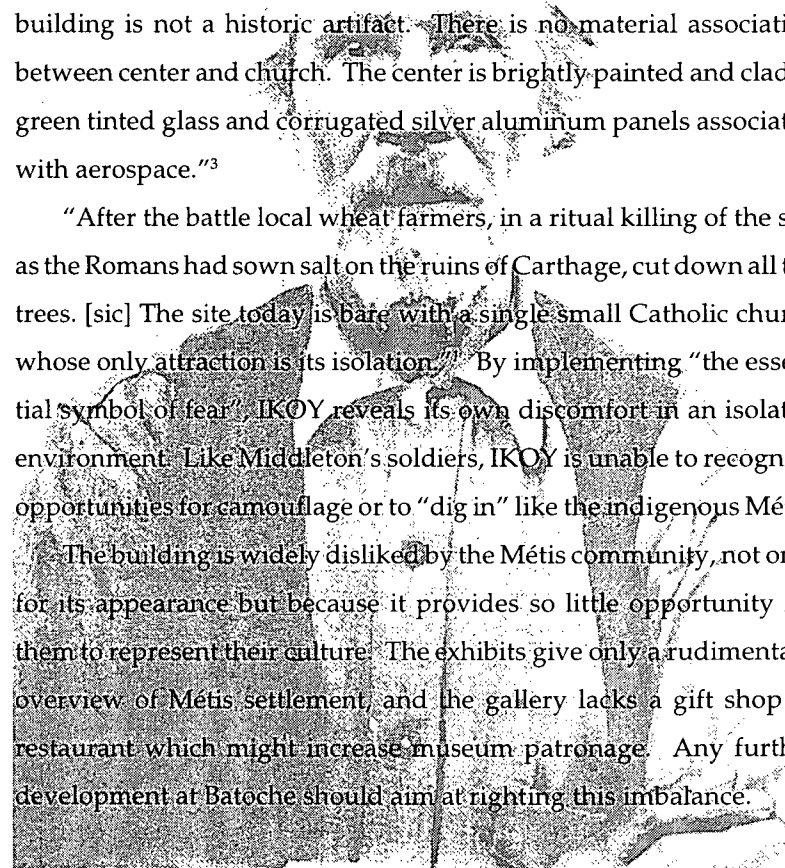
The museum was commissioned from IKOY Partnership with two briefs in mind: to interpret the history of Métis settlement in the region



and to portray the Northwest Resistance of 1885. Tectonically, IKOY seems to have responded to the latter, with a glass and steel box commemorating the imposition of white rule by the imposition of white technology. "Nineteenth century gunsmiths often fashioned hexagonal barrels", reads a description of the glass gallery whose curtain wall was shipped from Winnipeg. "In the tube corridor the visitor spies on the church in the bore of a rifle and walks down it like a projectile aimed at the church... There can be no mistake. This building is not a historic artifact. There is no material association between center and church. The center is brightly painted and clad in green tinted glass and corrugated silver aluminum panels associated with aerospace."³

"After the battle local wheat farmers, in a ritual killing of the site as the Romans had sown salt on the ruins of Carthage, cut down all the trees. [sic] The site today is bare with a single small Catholic church whose only attraction is its isolation." By implementing "the essential symbol of fear", IKOY reveals its own discomfort in an isolated environment. Like Middleton's soldiers, IKOY is unable to recognize opportunities for camouflage or to "dig in" like the indigenous Métis.

The building is widely disliked by the Métis community, not only for its appearance but because it provides so little opportunity for them to represent their culture. The exhibits give only a rudimentary overview of Métis settlement, and the gallery lacks a gift shop or restaurant which might increase museum patronage. Any further development at Batoche should aim at righting this imbalance.



iii.) The Politics of Preservation: Métis Agenda and Parks Canada Policy

*Who controls the past controls the future;
Who controls the present controls the past.*

George Orwell, 1984.

Parks Canada's mandate for historic preservation is in conflict with the Métis' plans to re-establish a community on their homeland. Back to Batoche, their annual festival, already attracts thousands of Métis from across Western Canada. A flat, marshy area of park land has been reserved for this three-day event, which includes softball tournaments, chuck-wagon races, Red River jigging competitions, and memorial services at Gabriel Dumont's grave. Although an annual general meeting is held in November on Louis Riel Day, the summer festival is an important forum for decision-making. Little has been built so far to accommodate these diverse activities: a racetrack, some outhouses, and four ball diamonds have been set out, surrounded by new saplings.

Nearby, the One Arrow Indian Band has signed a land claim settlement worth about \$20 million. Embarking on a campaign of land purchase, it is planning to expand westwards towards the highway adjoining the Back to Batoche site. A water-line right-of-way has been extended from the grid road to the valley floor. There is talk of a casino or other profitable enterprise.

The Métis want to develop their land in a similar way, but because of poor financial controls, their operating grants have been frozen by

the government [for 1993]. Murray Hamilton of the Batoche Planning Committee claims that "a major conference centre" is being commissioned from Douglas Cardinal, but has been unwilling to provide any specific information.

Such sweeping plans have been tabled since the mid-1980's, when Batoche Visitor Center was conceived. Although Parks Canada policy encourages co-operative events like *Back to Batoche*, more substantial development is hampered by conservation guidelines, as outlined below:

To a degree unforeseen even ten years ago, historic sites are increasingly viewed as an integral part of the human environment, rather than as enclaves where the past is separated from the present....

Special programs and events offer important opportunities to integrate the presentation of cultural resources at national historic sites with related activities in their surrounding communities and to develop partnership with others.⁵

[However]... in the interest of long-term public benefit, new uses that threaten cultural resources of national historic significance will not be considered, and existing uses which threaten them will be discontinued or modified to remove the threat.⁶

These conflicting standards explain why the Métis Land Area has been pushed to the edge of the site. Its further development is considered incompatible with preservation of archaeological resources. A compromise must be reached before the Métis can re-settle Batoche.

2. Cultural Investigations

Webster's Third Dictionary defines *hybrid* as "1: an offspring of two animals or plants of different races, breeds, varieties, species, or

genera...; 2: a person or group produced by the blending of two diverse cultures or traditions..." Implicit in this definition is the theory of *heterosis*: "a greater vigour or capacity for growth frequently displayed by crossbred animals or plants as compared with those resulting from inbreeding". A successful hybrid is expected to exhibit the best characteristics of both parents. Can this explain the Métis' remarkable adaptiveness, and their strong sense of identity? In an effort to answer this question and to develop a more meaningful program, conventional design theory has been eschewed in favour of cultural investigation. Although drawn from published sources, it is essential to a thorough understanding of the original work to follow.

i.) The Plains Métis to 1885

Then Abraham fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: "As for me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations..."

Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

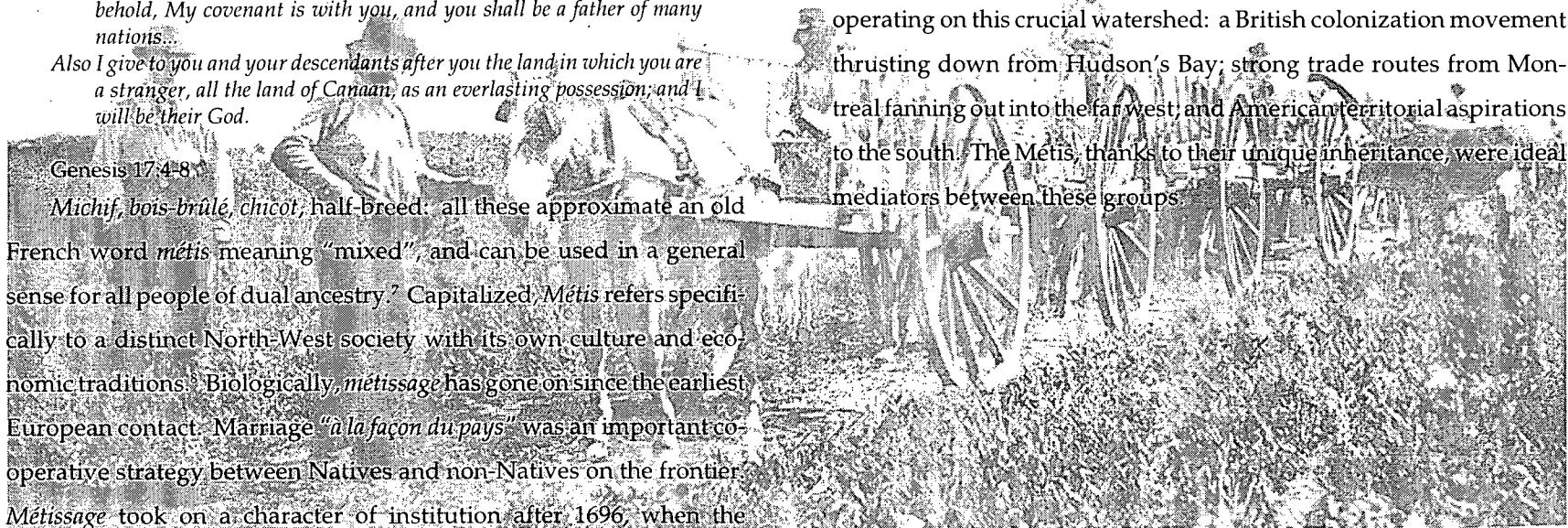
Genesis 17:4-8

Michif, bois-brûlé, chicot, half-breed: all these approximate an old French word *métis* meaning "mixed", and can be used in a general sense for all people of dual ancestry.⁷ Capitalized, *Métis* refers specifically to a distinct North-West society with its own culture and economic traditions. Biologically, *métissage* has gone on since the earliest European contact. Marriage "*à la façon du pays*" was an important cooperative strategy between Natives and non-Natives on the frontier. *Métissage* took on a character of institution after 1696, when the

government of New France, faced with an oversupply of furs, recalled its *coureurs de bois* from the back country.⁹ Many of them refused to return, gradually migrating toward the prairies where they fathered French-speaking Catholic Métis descendants by their Cree wives along the Red River. From the beginning, Métis character was marked by this fiercely independent spirit.

The Red River Métis were sustained by buffalo hunting, freight, and the sale of pemmican to canoe brigades. Systematic farming of the valley began after the Selkirk colonists arrived in 1812.¹⁰ The Métis' emerging sense of identity, sparked by friction with these colonists, caught fire at the battle of Seven Oaks where Governor Robert Semple was killed in 1816.¹¹

The Red River system stretched from Lake Winnipeg to the Mississippi near St. Paul. Three versions of Manifest Destiny were operating on this crucial watershed: a British colonization movement thrusting down from Hudson's Bay; strong trade routes from Montreal fanning out into the far west; and American territorial aspirations to the south. The Métis, thanks to their unique inheritance, were ideal mediators between these groups.



Annual hunting expeditions into Sioux territory were organized with para-military discipline. Outriders and dogs accompanied hundreds of covered carts which traveled in rows of four so that they could instantly be wheeled into a defensive quadrangle in case of attack. At night, these *carrâchetêhounes* would be drawn up in a circle, lashed wheel-to-wheel with the cart-poles pointing upwards. The bristling enclosure provided shelter behind which whole families could cook their meals of meat, tea, and a special bread called a *galette*. A tent heaped with wildflowers would be set up by the missionary whose bell would summon everyone to evening adoration of the Virgin.

Daily marches were animated by displays of trick-riding and skill with the *cabresse*, or lasso. When buffalo were sighted, any slaughter was followed by a skinning bee. Hides would be scraped and meat pounded into pemmican, until the carts were fully stocked with this essential food.



Rebuilding the pilgrimage church at St. Laurent

These buffalo hunts sharpened the Métis' fighting skills and established their code of justice. The hunting council's authority was absolute, but its punishments surprisingly lenient: for a first trespass, the offender to have his saddle cut up; for the second offense, the offender to have his coat cut up; for the third, the offender to be flogged. "Reliance seems to have been placed on the moral effect of public ridicule among a proud people who found losing face more difficult to endure than losing possessions."¹³

The Métis' success as hunters contributed to the sudden collapse of the buffalo population—their use of wheeled carts instead of travois, for example, enabled them to harvest many more buffalo than subsistence required. Louis Goulet recalled that "the disappearance of the buffalo from the Red River Valley in 1868 resulted in nothing less than a complete revolution in the life and economy of our country. The Métis turned their dreams for the future, and their energies, to cultivating the soil. They did it readily, though some of the less enterprising were not very happy about it."¹⁴

The St. Laurent settlement was founded in 1871 to promote this sedentary lifestyle. At St. Laurent, a system of self-government was established under Gabriel Dumont, with its own laws and constitution based on the old rules of the buffalo hunt. The North West Mounted Police would not arrive until 1875, and the local territorial council ruled in name alone, so the first Métis of Saskatchewan enjoyed a degree of independence denied them further east.

The hundreds of Métis families emigrating from Manitoba became increasingly dependent on agriculture. They planted potatoes,

carrots, cabbage, turnips, and onions. They cultivated small fruit trees, including Saskatoon berries and currants. Most families had a cereal crop, although this was seldom a full-time occupation. Some of the wealthier Métis had upwards of 50 head of cattle. "Batoche" Letendre was one of the richest men in the North-West and owned one of its finest houses. Traditional Métis dwellings and attendant technology, then, are the next subject to examine.

ii.) The Built Tradition

"I always thought the Red River Cart was a magnificent invention. It was a good wagon and didn't cost anything. Any man could make one in a week ... All he had to do was walk into the bush and get to work."

Louis Goulet.

BEN: Why, boys, when I was seventeen I walked into the jungle, and when I was twenty-one I walked out. He laughs. And by God I was rich!

Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, Act One.

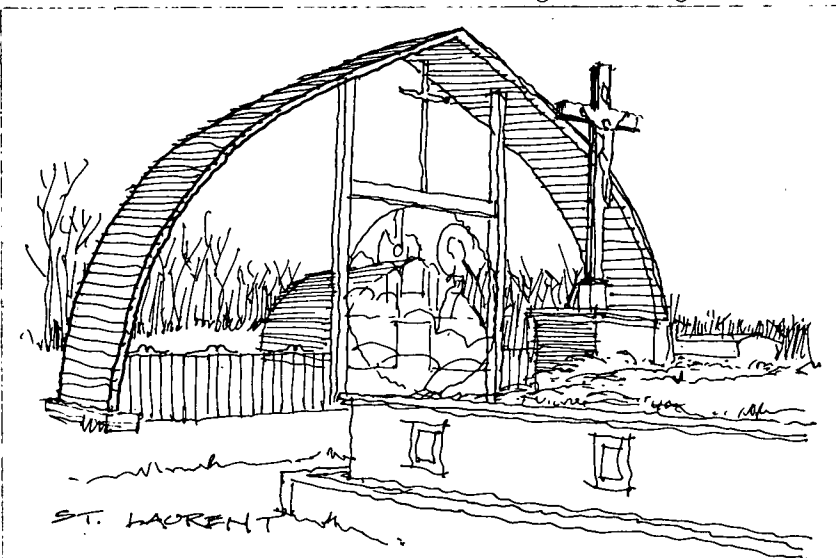
Métis technology relied on a wealth natural resources, perhaps best illustrated by the Red River cart. Originating in both French and Scottish traditions, this cart was ideally suited to prairie conditions. It was constructed entirely of wood and was tied together with rawhide. Two shafts were strapped to a single pony or ox. Its two deeply-dished wheels made it exceptionally stable. It was strong enough to carry thousand-pound loads, yet buoyant enough to be floated across streams.¹⁵ If no other timber were available, it could be dismantled and transformed into a dwelling, becoming the frame and ridge-pole for a tent or dugout.

Although any adult male could repair a cart, its construction was usually the fruit of group effort. Work parties of ten or twenty men would gather around an experienced cartwright to pool their resources and share their skills. White poplars were felled, squared on two parallel faces, and sawed into three-foot logs. Each log was then shaped with an adze, yielding a curved timber four inches thick and thirty inches long. These were then sawed into thin strips, each pierced with an augur and fitted with a tenon. The curved strips were joined by spokes to an eighteen-inch hub, mounted on an axle, and lashed with leather thongs. Unlike European wheels, these ones were saucer-shaped to accommodate the side-to-side gait of an ox. The dished wheels would not fail on rough terrain or under shifting loads.¹⁶ With few tools and materials, the Métis were able to transform existing technology into something specific to their needs.



Before the advent of milled lumber, White settlers on the open prairie were often obliged to live in sod huts. The Métis' riverbank settlements, on the other hand, guaranteed a good supply of timber, so log cabins were the first dwellings at Batoche. Poplar logs were squared by hand and joined at the corners with dovetails. The joists of the *plancher de haut* ran right through the walls. Even the best-cut logs would let in drafts, so the joints were caulked with moss or buffalo hair. As additional insulation, the houses were "mudded" each winter: diagonal lathes of diamond willow were fastened to the exterior and plastered with a mixture of mud and fibre. When the wall dried, it was whitewashed. The first roofs were thatched, but these were later replaced by spruce shingles, with thatch being confined to stables and outbuildings. These early cabins were more durable than the balloon-frame houses of White settlers. Many are still standing at Batoche, in surprisingly good repair.

More elaborate buildings were the work of skilled tradesmen. By 1885, Xavier Letendre's commercial buildings and neo-gothic house



were "the most finished you could find in all the North-West".¹⁷ His carpenters were skilled artisans building in the style of the "Red River Frame". This was a variation of *Poteaux en coulisse* construction imported from France in the mid-17th century.¹⁸ The technique consists of dropping tenoned horizontal planks into a series of grooved vertical posts. Eight feet on center, these squared posts stand on a dovetailed bottom plate which is often strengthened at the corners with wrought iron. The bents are raised, joined with a top plate, and the squared infill planks are slid into place and secured with wooden pegs. At Batoche, these buildings were usually clad with clapboard siding, but at nearby Fort Carlton and Last Mountain House the infill planks can still be seen in their original state.

Community involvement was an important aspect of Métis building. If a job was too much for one man's strength or talents, a *corvée* would be organized. "The idea was to get a roof over the heads of the family," Coulet recalled. "Once that was done, the rest could usually wait to be finished as time allowed. I mean, the head of the house would have to look after the details himself as the need arose."¹⁹ This incremental approach perpetuated shared skills while encouraging individual improvisation.

Today, traditional building techniques have been replaced by a received inventory of industrial forms. The Quonset Hut and Butler Barn have replaced timber sheds; the new church at Batoche is a refitted bungalow. The Métis continue to improvise, however. Steel portal frames have been transformed into an outdoor worship space at St. Laurent, where a truncated plywood barn poignantly imitates a

Gothic arch. The shrine's century-old log church, however—recently destroyed by fire—is being rebuilt stick-for-stick as a reminder that the old ways may be gone, but not forgotten.

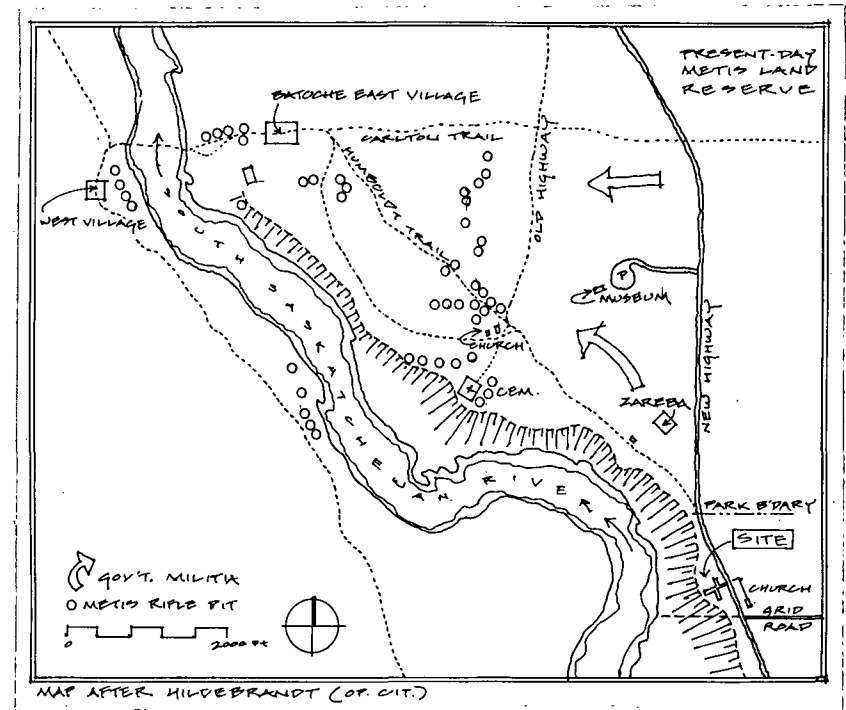
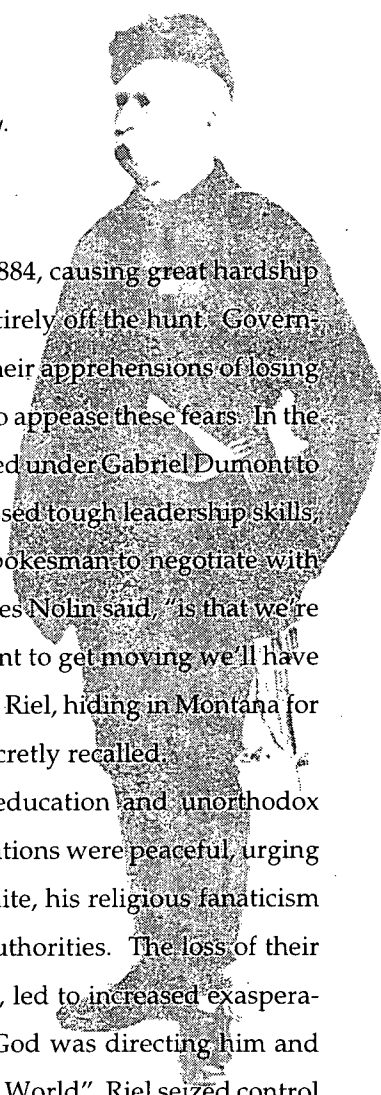
iv.) The Battle of Batoche

If we must die by violence, let us do it quickly.

Cree Proverb

Crops failed at Batoche in 1882 and 1884, causing great hardship since even poor Métis no longer lived entirely off the hunt. Government surveys about this time rekindled their apprehensions of losing title to land, although efforts were made to appease these fears. In the fall of 1884, a secret assembly was convened under Gabriel Dumont to consider a plan of action. Dumont possessed tough leadership skills, but the Métis needed a more eloquent spokesman to negotiate with Ottawa. "The problem right now", Charles Nolin said, "is that we're like a cart with only one wheel. If we want to get moving we'll have to go find the other one we need."²⁰ Louis Riel, hiding in Montana for his role in the Manitoba uprising, was secretly recalled.

Riel was a demagogue of eastern education and unorthodox religious views. Although his initial agitations were peaceful, urging all dissatisfied people in the region to unite, his religious fanaticism brought opposition from local Church authorities. The loss of their support, along with silence from Ottawa, led to increased exasperation. In March of 1885, convinced that God was directing him and proclaiming himself "Prophet of the New World", Riel seized control



of the parish church at Batoche, forming a provisional government and demanding the surrender of Fort Carlton.²¹

Dumont was asked to lead the armed Métis, who won an early skirmish with police at Duck Lake. If Dumont had hoped by this to win easy political concessions, he had not reckoned on the intransigence of both Ottawa and Riel. In less than a month, the government placed 5000 troops under the command of Frederick Middleton, who marched them north from the railway in three columns. Riel, meanwhile, ordered that Batoche be fortified in preparation for a siege.

Encouraged by the Duck Lake victory, militant plains Indians joined the conflict and besieged Fort Battleford and Fort Pitt. Middleton

detailed troops to relieve these forts, but his own advance was stopped by a Métis ambush at Fish Creek. Dumont and Riel could not agree on where to make their next stand. Dumont advocated a more forward position, but Riel demanded that the Métis await divine assistance in a final confrontation at Batoche. The ensuing battle was an uneven match between a large, cumbersome attacker and a more mobile but hopelessly-outnumbered defender. Unaware that his opponents were critically short of ammunition, Middleton staged ineffective diversions in an attempt to outflank the entrenched Métis.

On the morning of 9 May, the steamer *Northcote*—which had been fitted out as an improvised gunboat—was deployed to create the second front of a two-pronged attack. The *Northcote* drew heavy fire from the Métis, who finally toppled her smokestacks by lowering the ferry cable. She sailed too early, however, and passed Batoche before Middleton could reach the village overland. His 900 troops were repelled from Mission Ridge when the Métis regrouped. Middleton's troops fired on the rectory, but a white flag revealed that it sheltered only non-combatant priests.



Entrenched Métis soldiers in rifle pits (Battlefield sketch)

The Métis were well concealed by vegetation and a series of rifle pits behind which they could move with ease. In the early afternoon a rush was organized in an attempt to drive the Métis from their pits, but this failed. The Métis, in their turn, set a grass fire and attempted, under the cover of its smoke, to cut Middleton off from his supply train. This too failed, but to protect his supplies Middleton ordered a retreat. The rest of the day was spent circling 160 wagons into a defensive zereba which provided cover that night.

The second day's fighting was limited to sporadic shooting, but on the 11 May Middleton identified a weakness in the Métis' defense. Their pits were so thinly-manned that a reconnaissance expedition eastward past Jolie Prairie drew much of their strength away from Mission Ridge. Middleton planned a feigned attack for the next morning.

On 12 May, Middleton led a second diversion to Jolie Prairie. His main forces were to attack the weakened southern flank upon hearing gunfire, but due to a strong wind this was inaudible and the troops did not advance. Middleton was furious and retreated back to his original position. By this time, however, the Métis' ammunition was exhausted—they were shooting stones and nails from their Winchesters. Upon this discovery the North West Volunteer Field force led an unplanned charge through the weakened Métis lines, causing a rout and the capture of the east village.²²

Riel's 350 men scattered, although only a handful were killed. Dumont sought political asylum in the United States, where he would later join Sitting Bull and other tragic heroes in Buffalo Bill's Wild West

Show. Riel was eventually captured. Although he was hanged for treason, other Métis were treated more leniently. A policy of appeasement followed the battle. Restitution was paid to those non-combatants who had suffered financial loss; riverlot farms were restored; and their legitimate title registration was encouraged. Their rights as an indigenous people to more extensive guarantees of land, however, were traded away in exchange for scrip. Scrip certificates entitled every family to 240 acres of land or \$240. In the economic chaos following their defeat, many Métis opted for cash, concluding too late "that they had not received their due and that their birth-right was sold for a mess of *potage*."²³

iv.) Brothers in Arms—Dumont and Riel

*And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way,
and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and
night.*

Exodus 13: 21.

By entrenching themselves at Batoche rather than relying on their superior mobility and local knowledge, the Métis sowed the seeds of their own defeat. In later life, Dumont admitted that if he had not followed Riel's orders, he might have led his men to victory. "We were 350 men all told, of whom 200 were armed. I proposed we go ahead of the troops, harass them by night, and above all prevent them from sleeping... But Riel did not agree, saying that this was too much like the Indians..."²⁴ Ambivalent strategy reveals something of the Métis

leaders' conflicting characters.

Dumont was an illiterate but charismatic leader, the natural man *par excellence*. His little government at St. Laurent was established on the precedent of the buffalo hunt, and as long as the hunt endured, his people were in full command of their world.

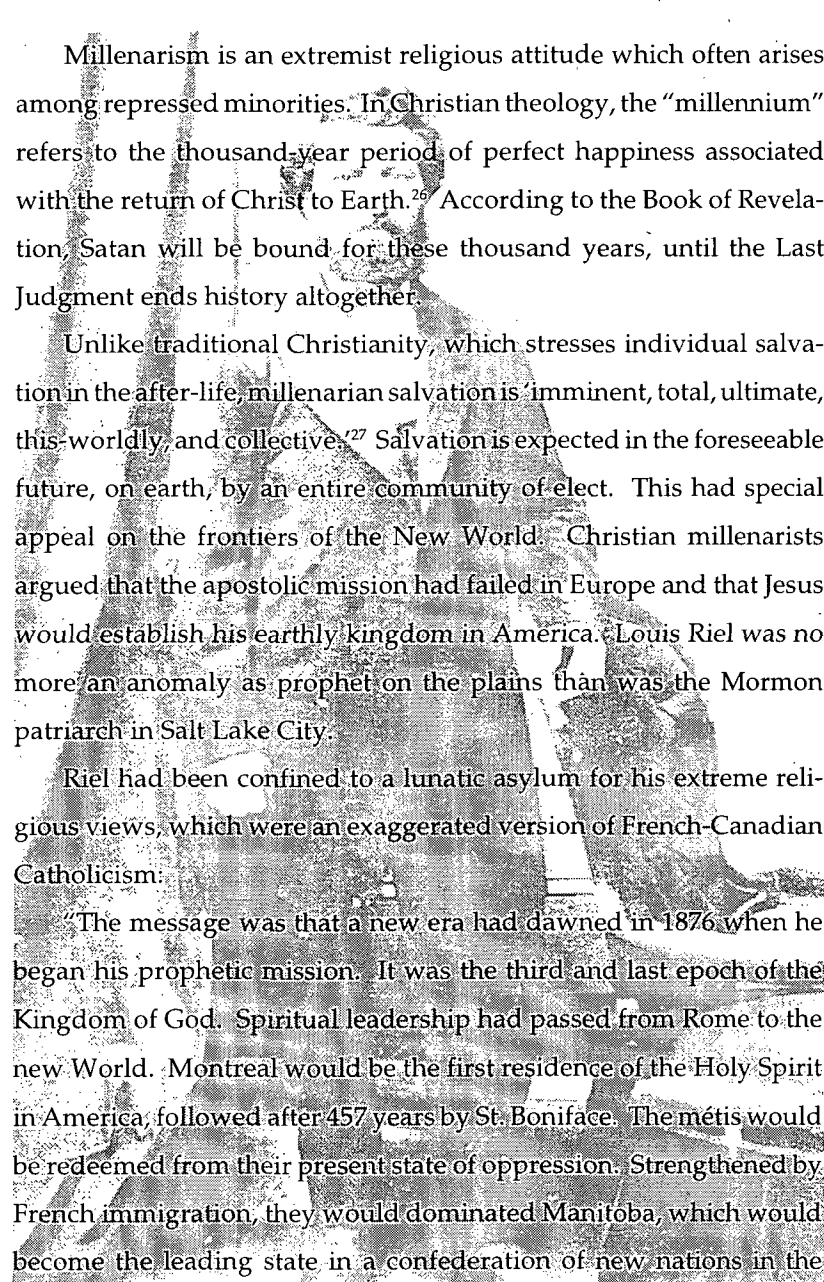
Riel, by contrast, was a classically-trained scholar and eloquent politician, alienated from wilderness life. He knew that traditional self-government could not endure in the face of encroaching settlement, but was convinced that within the constraints of political convention, it might preserve the splendid freedom of the prairie.²⁵

Dumont's lack of political acumen obliged him to defer to Riel, but he knew that total victory was impossible even if he prevailed over Middleton. Instead, Dumont hoped to force a stalemate so as to bargain with the government from a position of strength. Riel, on the other hand, was essentially a pacifist forced by government intransigence into crossing the Rubicon. Once war was declared, however, he made no plans for escape or retreat. His religious convictions, outlined below, persuaded him that defeat was impossible.

v.) Millenarism—The Religion of Resistance

*The same spirit that appeared to Moses in the midst of clouds of flame
appeared to me in the same manner. I was astonished. I was
dumbfounded. It was said to me: 'Rise, Louis David Riel, you have a
mission to accomplish for the benefit of humanity.... I received my
divine notification with uplifted arms and bowed head.*

Louis Riel, 1875.



Millenarism is an extremist religious attitude which often arises among repressed minorities. In Christian theology, the "millennium" refers to the thousand-year period of perfect happiness associated with the return of Christ to Earth.²⁶ According to the Book of Revelation, Satan will be bound for these thousand years, until the Last Judgment ends history altogether.

Unlike traditional Christianity, which stresses individual salvation in the after-life, millenarian salvation is 'imminent, total, ultimate, this-worldly, and collective.'²⁷ Salvation is expected in the foreseeable future, on earth, by an entire community of elect. This had special appeal on the frontiers of the New World. Christian millenarists argued that the apostolic mission had failed in Europe and that Jesus would establish his earthly kingdom in America. Louis Riel was no more an anomaly as prophet on the plains than was the Mormon patriarch in Salt Lake City.

Riel had been confined to a lunatic asylum for his extreme religious views, which were an exaggerated version of French-Canadian Catholicism.

"The message was that a new era had dawned in 1876 when he began his prophetic mission. It was the third and last epoch of the Kingdom of God. Spiritual leadership had passed from Rome to the new World. Montreal would be the first residence of the Holy Spirit in America, followed after 457 years by St. Boniface. The métis would be redeemed from their present state of oppression. Strengthened by French immigration, they would dominated Manitoba, which would become the leading state in a confederation of new nations in the

North-West... As the culmination of these happy events, Christ would return to earth after 457 plus 1876 years."²⁸

He sometimes signed his name "Louis 'David' Riel: Prophet, Priest-King, Infallible Pontiff." He felt a special attachment to the biblical King David—from whom Christ, too, was descended—and subscribed to a popular belief that the American Indians were actually descended from a lost tribe of Israel. "By the Indian blood which flows in your veins, you are Jewish", he wrote of himself.²⁹

By assuring poor Métis of their divine right to victory in the Promised Land, Riel ensured their total allegiance. When victory eluded him, he surrendered himself to execution and eventually recanted his "new religion". However: by sacrificing his life, he transcended the pontificate to gain the status of a martyr.

Woodcock suggests that both heroes and martyrs succeed through their power of *shaming* other men, of making them lose face with themselves. Loss of face is the Métis' legacy; shame was their salvation. Riel's execution resulted in widespread public outrage and a sense of national guilt which the government tried to assuage by conceding to many of the Métis' demands. If Dumont had fought the government to a stalemate, history might have been less sympathetic.

The Métis' rule of the prairie endured less than the span of a single life, doomed by a Canadian version of manifest destiny. If it were not for our shame over the outcome of the North-West Rebellion, Batoche might today be just another abandoned village, instead of a valuable historic preserve.

3. Strategy: Site Analysis

The art of war is usually divided into two parts—strategy and tactics.... Broadly speaking ... strategy is concerned with the movement of troops before they come into actual collision, while tactics deal with the leading of troops in battle, or when battle is imminent. Strategy, moreover, seeks to derive from victory greater advantage than is to be obtained simply from defeating the enemy; it tries to place the victor in a position before the battle to gain the greatest effect possible from his tactical success when won.

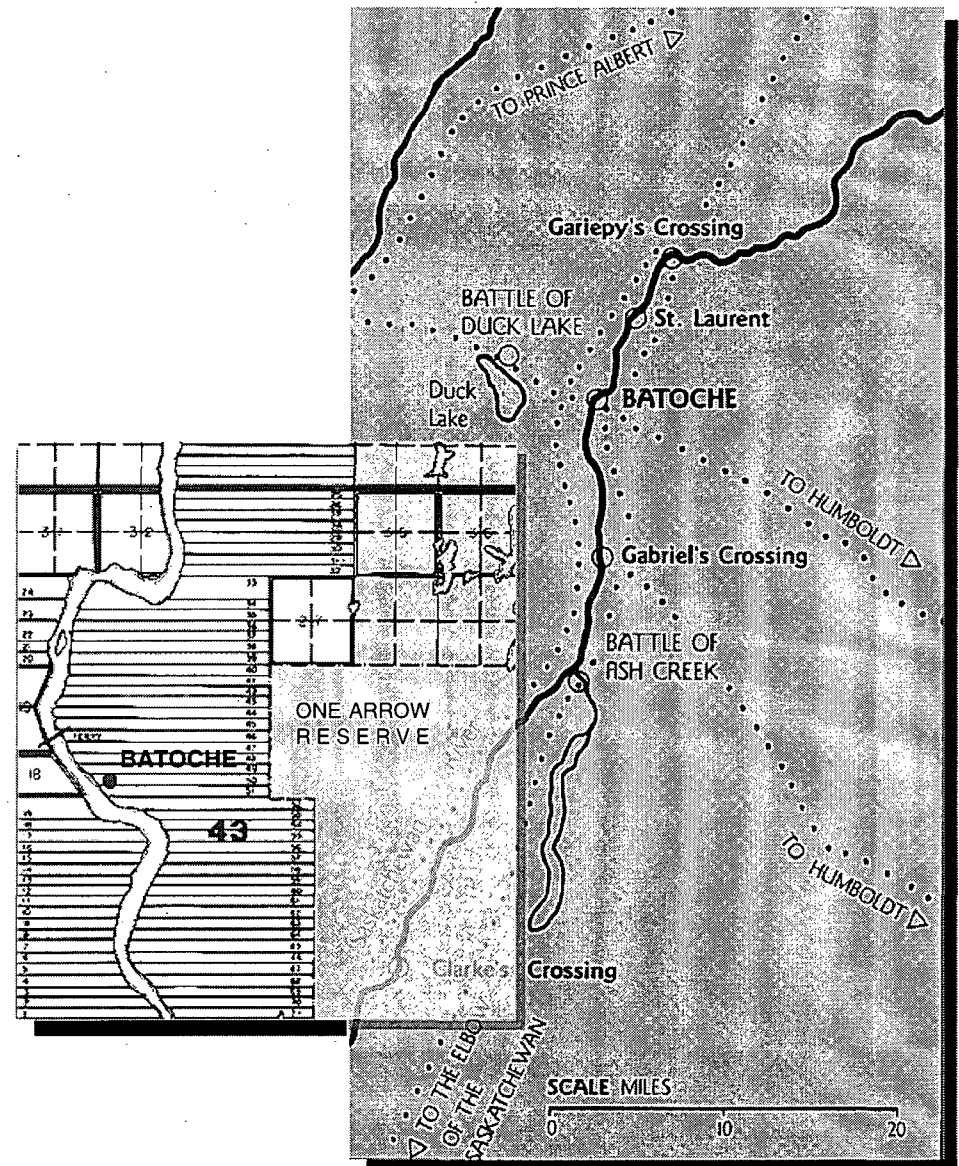
Lieutenant Colonel Walter H. James, 1903.

Over a century since its capitulation, Batoche is still a battleground. Military analogy is harmful if it carries implications of cultural control; that the weaker of two interests must succumb to the stronger; that preservation and development are irreconcilable mandates. On a battlefield site, however, a comparison of strategy and tactics to architecture is inevitable: the best site strategy ensures that maneuvers are deployed from the strongest position, to greatest effect. Three sites were investigated in an effort to intervene close to disputed territory without bringing the antagonists into direct confrontation.

i) Gabriel's Crossing

Gabriel Dumont's house was reached about noon. It is a double affair, two comfortable storey and a half houses being connected by a short passage. ... The front of the house is painted blue, but this is about the only mark of bad taste shown. Across the road is the store, and therein the first object to attract attention was a well-worn pool table. ... Here as elsewhere the observers were impressed with the substantial comfort of the habitations of these mixed bloods. Among the articles taken away from Dumont's were a couple of violins, a concertina and a well-thumbed copy of Shakespeare...

Reporter E.R. Johnston, *St. Paul Pioneer-Press*, 1885.



Maps from Payment (op. cit.) & Wiebe (op.cit.)

Gabriel's Crossing is the first major landmark on the highway to Batoche, near the southern boundary of riverlot settlement. Established by Dumont in 1880, it was a working ferry until the middle of this century when it was replaced by a steel bridge—painted blue. A steep descent to the river valley establishes dramatic tension between the bridge and its levee, where a ruined cabin approximates the site of Dumont's original house.

The land is owned by one of his descendants, a teacher in British Columbia who has offered to donate it should suitable development be proposed. The riverbend site is emotionally appealing, historically rich, and publicly accessible. The powerful presence of ferry and bridge would enrich any architectural program.

Gabriel's Crossing is fifteen minutes' drive south of Batoche, however, and this distance is its greatest weakness. General Middleton built his zareba at Batoche to avoid retreating this far each night. The

Métis, too, would see development here as a retreat of sorts: the site is too far south to complement either the existing museum or current festival site. Mr. Hamilton discouraged use of the crossing, proposing instead an equally-historic site nearer Batoche: the East Village.

ii) East Village

Three years ago, a young man wrapped himself inside a steaming hot skin he had just taken from the animal he had killed, when he realized that he would perish. The poor chap had not foreseen that, once the skin had frozen on him, he would be entombed within it, unable ever to get out of it.

Father Belcourt, Métis Missionary, 1857.

The East Village was Riel's headquarters and the primary built area at Batoche. The Carlton and Humboldt trails merged here at a crossing operated by Xavier Letendré, whose substantial house and

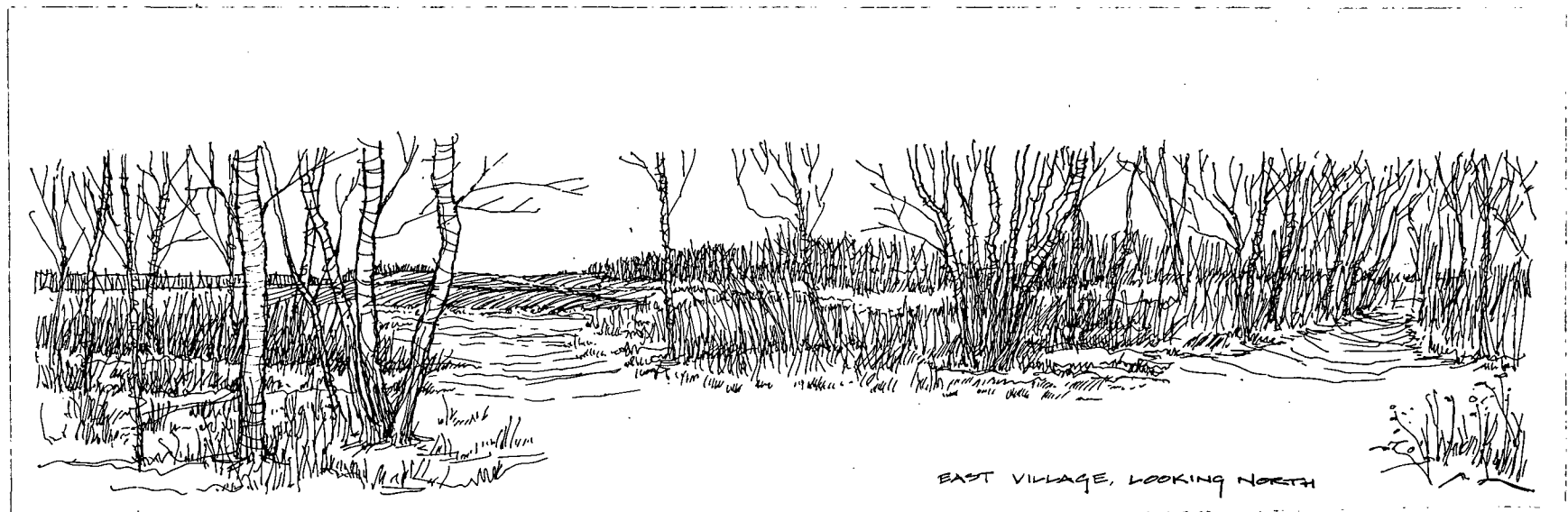


store stood nearby. Like the blacksmith's shop and "stopping place", their remains are invisible today, protected by fenced enclosures adjoining heavily-wooded trails. The West Village across the river can only be reached after freeze-up, when the museum is closed, so its trails are almost unused.

The East Village is not visually connected to either museum or highway, both twenty-five minutes' walk away. Motor vehicles are served by a gravel road and independent parking lot. Initially, this grassy riverside site seems ideal for development: it is culturally symbolic, historically rich, and immediately accessible to the Métis' land. A wide range of uses recommend themselves: meaningful presentation of archaeological resources; a reconstructed ferry crossing; period transportation improving public access to the museum—

co-operative strategies which would showcase traditional Métis skills.

Museum director Irwin Wilson, however, discourages these plans. The site is hard to reach by school groups and casual museum visitors. It cannot be seen from the highway, in fact, and would be a poor location for a gift shop or restaurant. If these were to be run independently by the Métis, moreover, park security would exclude their use outside of museum hours. Period transportation, too, while a long-term museum goal, poses a dilemma: although horse and carriage rides might attract more visitors, the high insurance premiums required by Parks Canada would outstrip any profits. Finally, since the East Village lot is surrounded by undocumented archaeological resources, its long-range development would always be hampered by conservation policy.



iii) Caron Farm

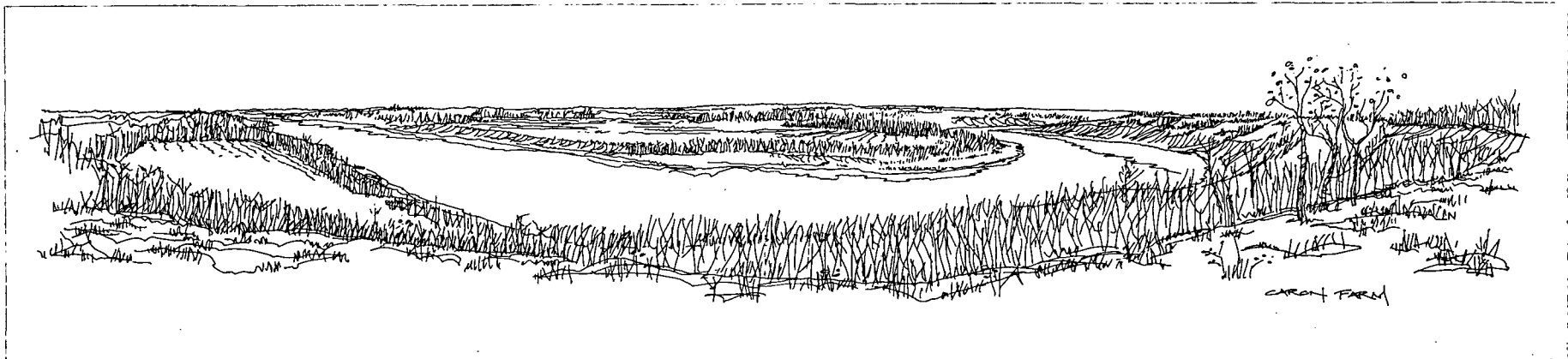
Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah which is across from Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead as far as Dan, all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Western Sea, the South and the plain of the Valley of Jericho, the city of the palm trees, as far as Zoar. Then the Lord said to him, "This is the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying: 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have caused you to see it with your own eyes, but you shall not cross over it there."

Deuteronomy 34:1-4

The Caron Farm site is a sliver of land between river and highway, outside the park on the main approach from Saskatoon. Middleton's troops first sighted Batoche here on their march north from Fish Creek. They set up their forward encampment here and first exchanged shots with the entrenched Métis. Although poetic justice is served in suggesting that the Métis recapture Batoche from Middleton's fox-holes, historic association is less important than this site's outstanding natural attributes.

The river runs nearer the highway here than anywhere else on the site, but one drives by without noticing. Not only is one's attention distracted by a series of ruined Métis dwellings to the east, but to the west a screen of poplars shelters the river from view. A dirt track winds through this band of trees, which opens onto a Pisgah view of incomparable beauty: from hundred-foot cliffs, so nearly overlooked, one overlooks the whole of the Métis domain, from Gabriel's Crossing to St. Laurent, from Gabriel's grave to Batoche itself.

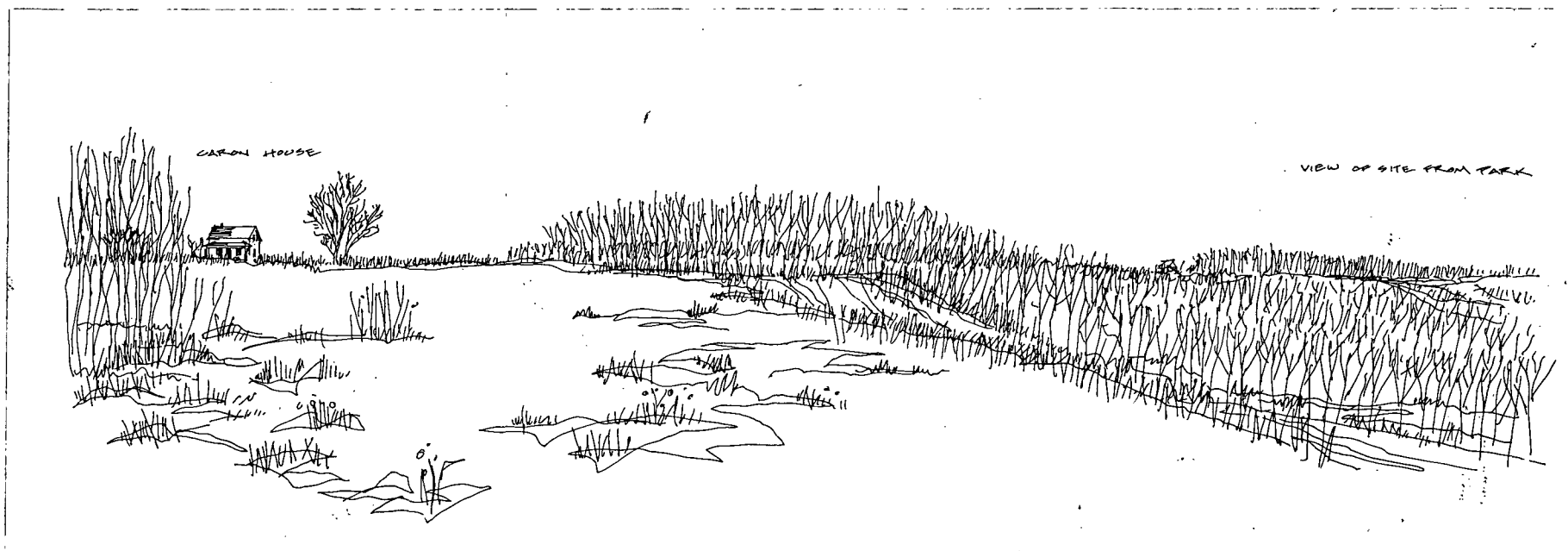
Although the Caron Farm is as far from the church and museum as is the East Village, its position offers several advantages. Firstly, it is near the highway on the main museum approach. The public will certainly notice any building here; in fact, to the casual visitor, this site may be more accessible than the museum itself. Secondly, the Caron Farm is visually linked to the park's major features. The museum, church, and graveyard can all be seen in the distance along the Humboldt Trail. The restored Caron House—one of only three period buildings at Batoche—occupies the middle distance. All of these



would become stations on an itinerary anchored by development of this south site. Thirdly, the Caron Farm is suited to the automobile. It can accommodate three dozen vehicles without requiring the public to cross the highway to reach the museum. Seasonal overflow during *Back to Batoche* could easily be absorbed by the church parking lot across the road. Proximity to this little-used Métis church could establish dramatic tension between permanent southerly settlement

and seasonal leisure development to the north.

In fact, the site has already been earmarked for development. The One Arrow Indian Band is negotiating to buy land opposite. They have leased a water-line along the provincial grid road leading to their land. When the One Arrow Band does build, it may be here. The Caron Farm site may become Batoche's new crossroads, a threshold for three cultures.



4. Tactics: Program Synopsis

The houses were a series of rooms stuck together, built one after the other.

Justine Caron, Batoche, 1981.

The Métis have little money with which to build, and it is unlikely that they can afford a single, all-encompassing "cultural centre". Traditional Métis farms grew incrementally, as need required and resources permitted. Programmatic investigations will proceed on that model, in hopes that the whole may grow to exceed the sum of its parts.

Their three most urgent requirements are: small cabins for elders' use, a large meeting hall, and a horse barn, all needed at the summer festival. A further three facilities would prolong residency on-site and promote wider public use: an amphitheater, artists' live-work studios, and an archive.

The first three projects—hut, hall, and barn—will be designed as independent *objets types* for several reasons: firstly, to explore appropriate building technologies from the onset of design; secondly, to offer a solid vocabulary of forms to the Métis community, who may deploy them where they choose; thirdly, to build a strong armature for later design moves.

i.) Elders' Cabins

Sleeping in a tent on the wide open prairie has charms and pleasures the average person knows nothing about. A night in open, unspoiled nature is bustling with life, so much so that anyone who isn't used to it has trouble getting to sleep. Prick up your ears, listen to the night:... How can I describe the song flung back and forth between two whippoorwills?

Louis Goulet.

This warm-up exercise will explore the prairie dwelling in its most basic form: a cabin. While primarily intended for use by Métis elders during *Back to Batoche*, these cabins might also be used as a ski chalets if Batoche develops a winter sports area. It should be easy to build, since its construction will likely involve the free labour of students from Saskatoon. The cabins may stand alone or in a cluster, but in both situations should exhibit the simple elegance of traditional Métis dwellings.

ii.) Stable

Farmers no longer build barns.... Barns turned into garages when farm animals were traded in for combustion engines. Today's barn equivalent is the all-metal "Butler Building". This is a metal mechanical shed that serves as protection and repair shop for farm machinery. No working farmer has built a heavy timber barn for the past half century.

IKOY Partnership.

The second project will house horses, which are still kept by many Métis in the region. Horsemanship is one of their proudest traditions, which may explain why the first thing they have re-built at Batoche is

a racetrack. This barn, needed now to stable horses at the festival, may become a base for revenue-generating period transportation at the museum. The barn should include a dozen twin stalls, hayloft, tack room, workshop, and space for at least two drays.

iii.) Community Hall

If the house had a wood floor, it would be creaking under the steady rhythm of dancing feet. If there was no floor, as was usually the case with those winter houses, the bare ground took all the stamping from our moccasins and the spectators were forced out many times in the evening for a breath of air because the dust inside would be suffocating.... They sat on the ground all around the room with their backs to the wall, almost completely invisible because of the dust and pipe smoke.... I often think the Red River Jig was invented on evenings like that when sometimes the only instrument was an Indian drum.

Louis Goulet.

The elder's cabin houses an individual and could be realized by a single craftsman. The hall will house a large group and will be realized by a *corvée*. The Métis have a tradition of communal building, of coming together to raise large structures without the aid of heavy equipment. Heavy frame construction is especially suited to this, since stiff, prefabricated bents can be raised by group effort, "to be furnished as time allows". Finished, a building's frame is the reflection of community involvement, lending poetry of execution to any prosaic activities it may later accommodate. In this instance, provision will be made for a foyer, kitchen, storage, and conference room. The hall may occasionally function as a café or as a winter sports station. The hall should seat about three hundred people.

iv.) Amphitheatre

*Now I must ask you to concede reality,
to be a momentary bird above those men
and to watch their filings gather round
the rumour of a conference until
magnetic grapevines bind them close.*

*From a low angle the Army looks oval, whitish centred,
split at one end, prised slightly open, and,
opposite to the opening, Achilles
(whom they had come to hear) with hard-faced veterans
on either side, lance butts struck down,
and here and there a flag.*

Christopher Logue, *Pax: A Retelling of Book VI of the Iliad*, 1969.

The Stations of the Cross at St. Laurent culminate in a devotional grotto which opens onto the river. The worship space is now sheltered by a steel shed, but is still primarily an outdoor space. Many Métis make an annual pilgrimage to this grotto, which they would like to recreate in more secular form at Batoche.

This amphitheatre might sometimes be used for outdoor masses. It should serve both a large group and more intimate gatherings. Like Hadrian's Maritime Amphitheatre, it should be a hinge around which other buildings revolve.

v) Atelier: The Artifact as Idea

Material culture does not just exist. It is made by someone. It is produced to do something. Therefore it does not passively reflect society—rather, it creates society through the actions of individuals.

Ian Hodder: "The Active Individual", from *Reading the Past*

The remaining two projects—"atelier" and "archive"—will focus on two aspects of culture: its material production and mnemonic preservation. Although it may be argued that Métis culture is not defined by material artifacts, a built object such as the Red River Cart is culturally significant in its evolution, manufacture, and use.

Museums are increasingly aware of their responsibility not only to exhibit material artifacts, but to encourage their production. "Re-enactment", "reproduction", and "re-creation" are all sustained by a mimetic process of manufacture.

Batoche museum lacks a gift-shop, losing an opportunity for the Métis to display their traditional handiwork: snowshoes, saddles, moccasins, *ceintures fléchées*. Contemporary artwork can be added to this list. A healthy re-settlement strategy should allot space not only for the sale of such items, but also for their manufacture. Two or three ateliers, near a building yard and retail space, could accommodate artists-in-residence. As part of the process, this project will examine the production of a specific artifact—a cart-wheel, for example—so as to integrate space for its manufacture into a wider scheme of development.

vi) Archive: The Idea as Artifact

It's a poor sort of memory that only works backwards.

Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*.

An archive is devoted less to the dissemination of knowledge than to its preservation in material form. It houses collective experience and

embodies cultural memory. To a young nation in particular, memory is essential to self-definition. (The Mormons, for example, maintain their huge genealogical archive in Salt Lake City as a religious duty.) Historians such as Diane Payment advocate a central collection of Métis manuscripts, which are now widely scattered. She gives examples:

Museum of Civilization, Ottawa: recordings of Métis songs, 1957.

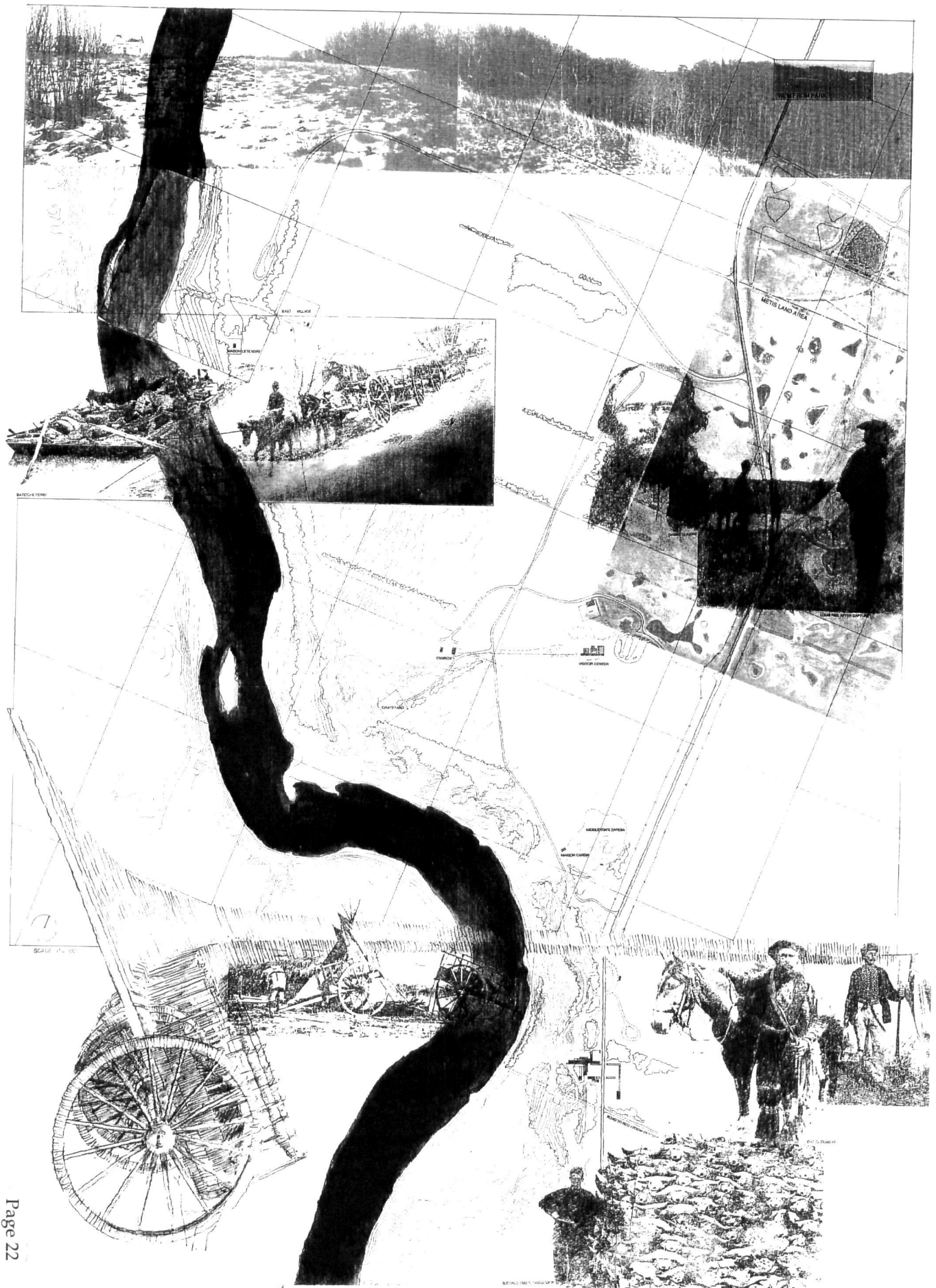
Canadian Archives, Ottawa: The Laws of St. Laurent, 1873.

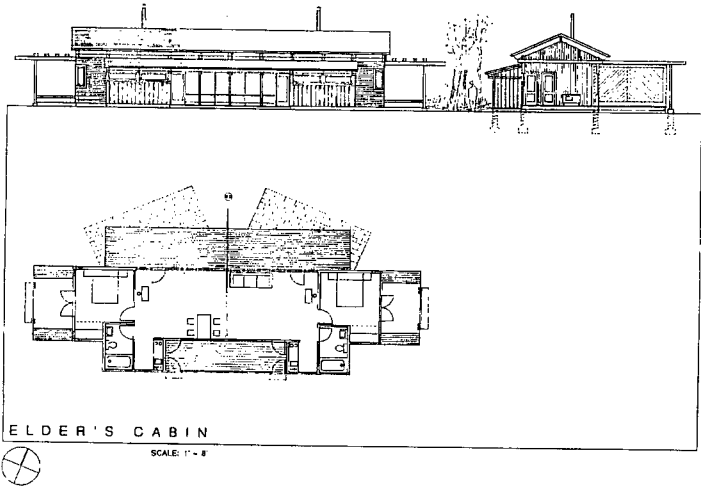
Société historique de Saint-Boniface, Winnipeg: Louis Riel papers.

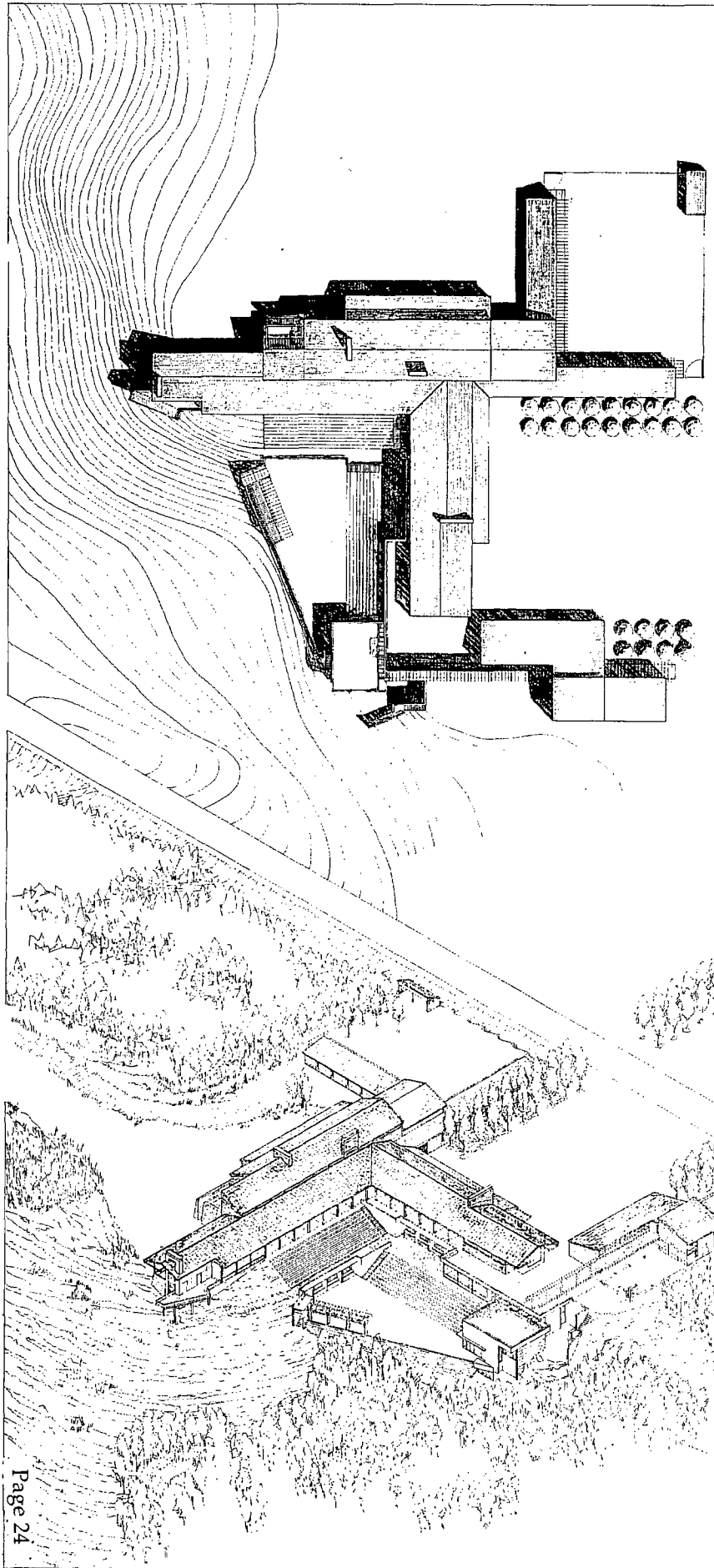
Many papers remain in private hands, awaiting a suitable repository. A small archive at Batoche would house permanent staff and provide facilities for the acquisition, storage and retrieval of historical materials: compact shelving, darkroom, bindery, consultation and display areas. Since it is a workshop of sorts, "archive" is programmatically related to "atelier", and should enter into a dialectic relationship with it.



Louis Riel shortly after his surrender.

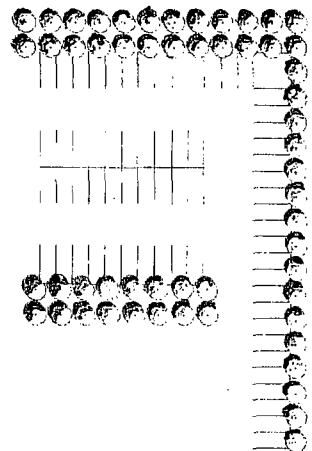


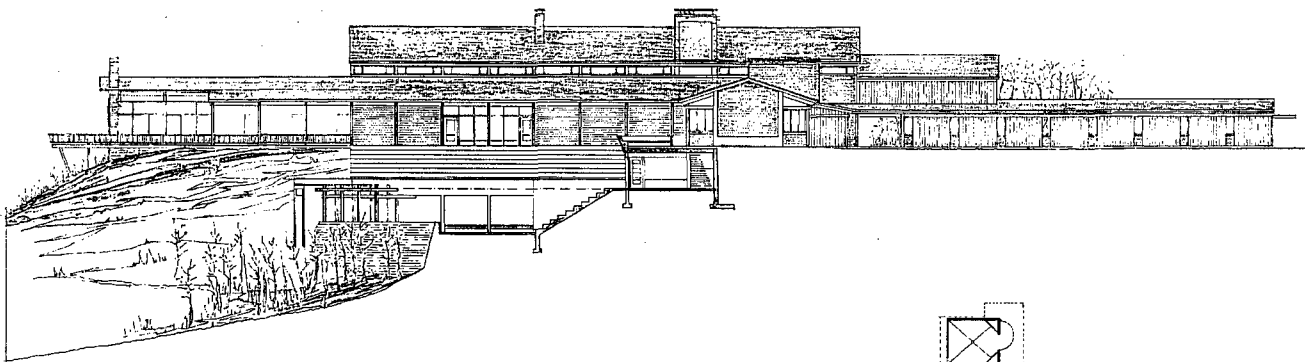




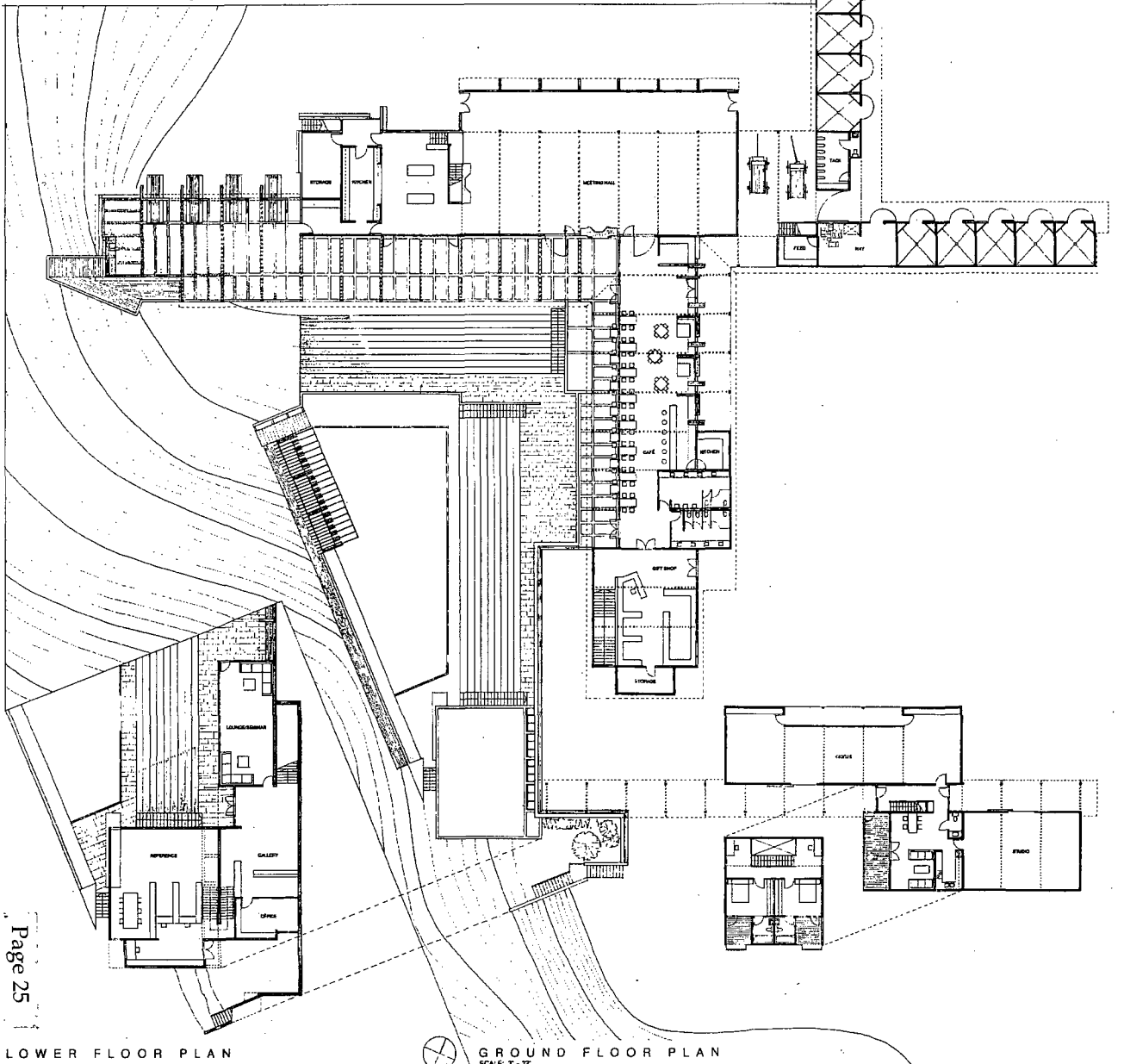
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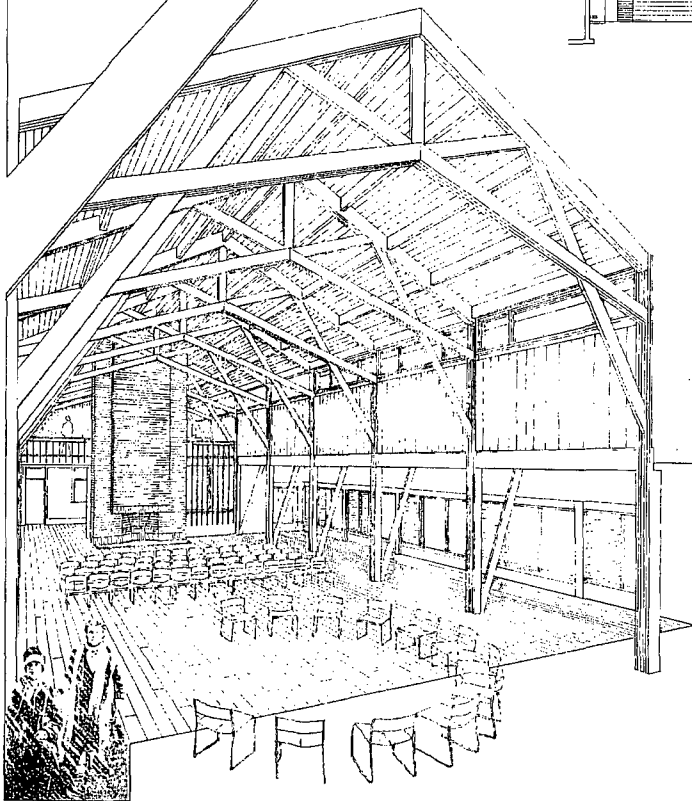
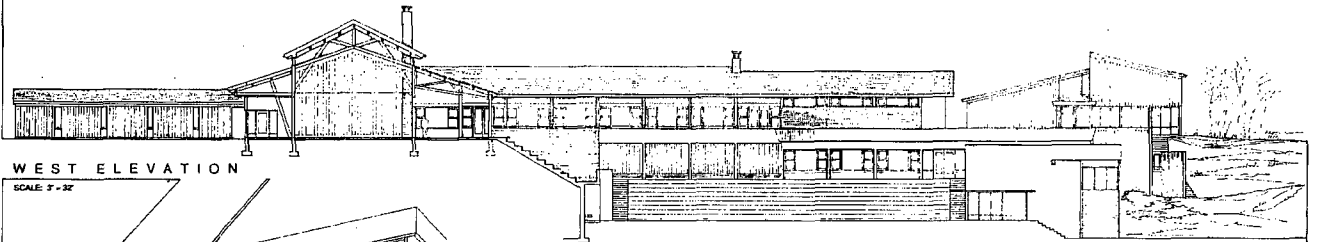
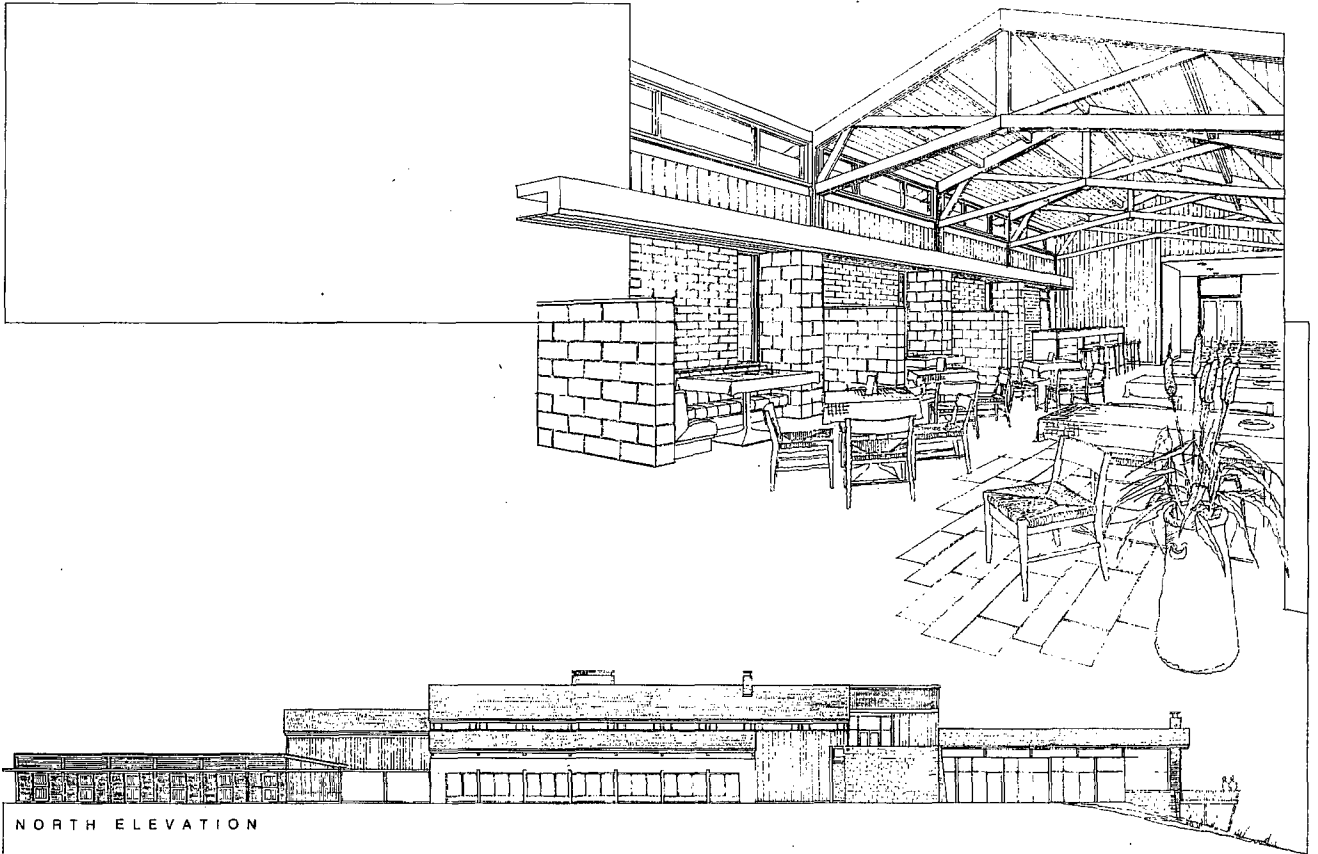
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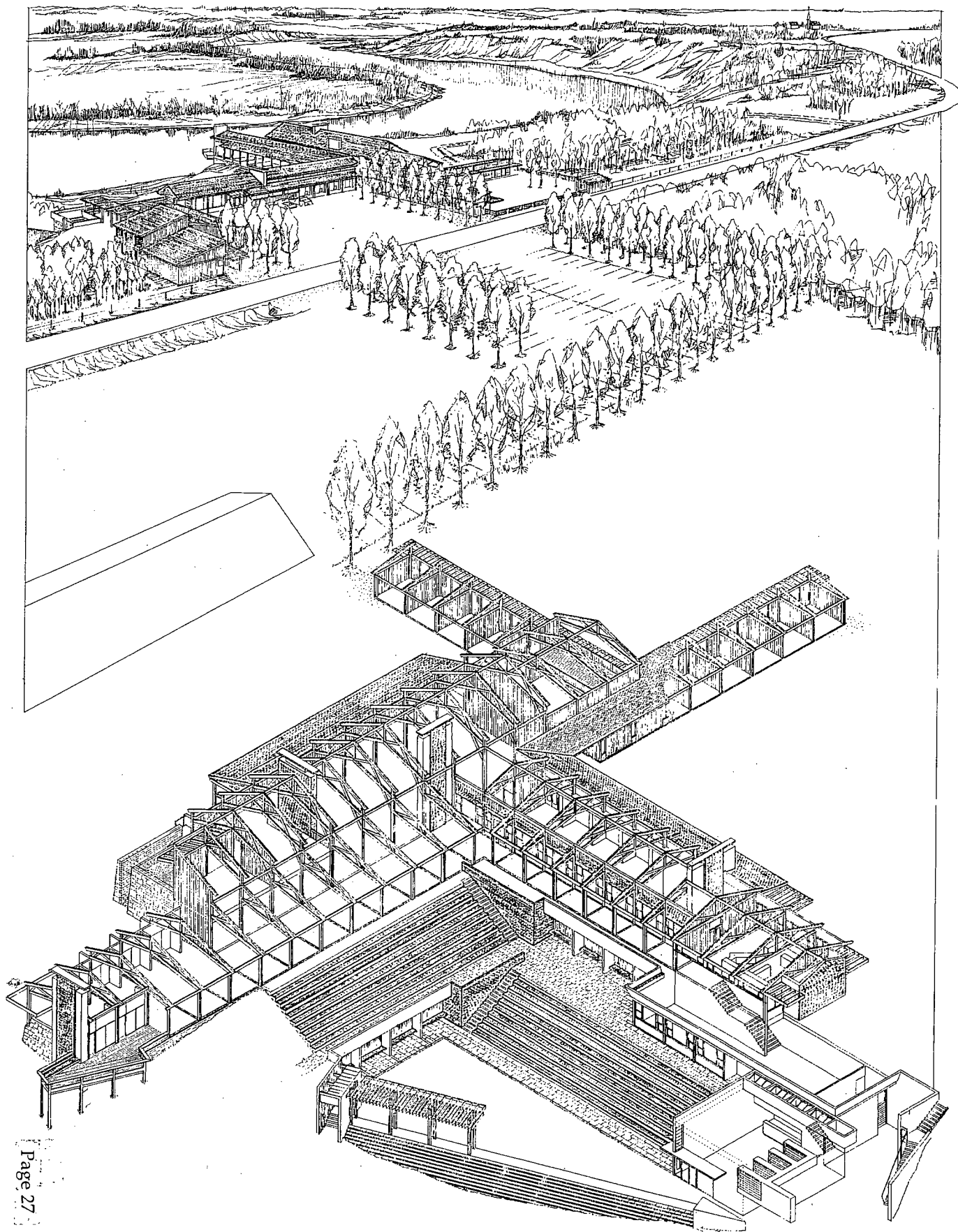


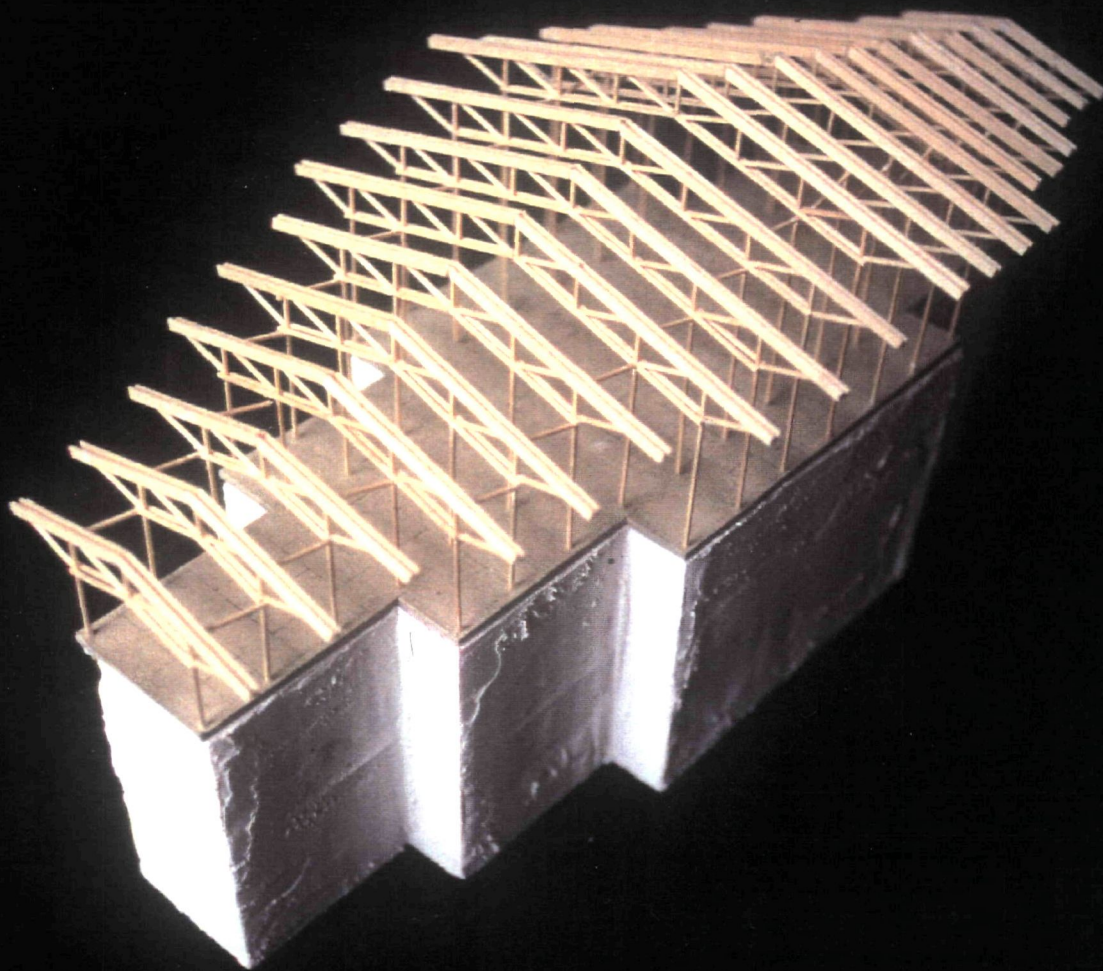
SOUTH ELEVATION



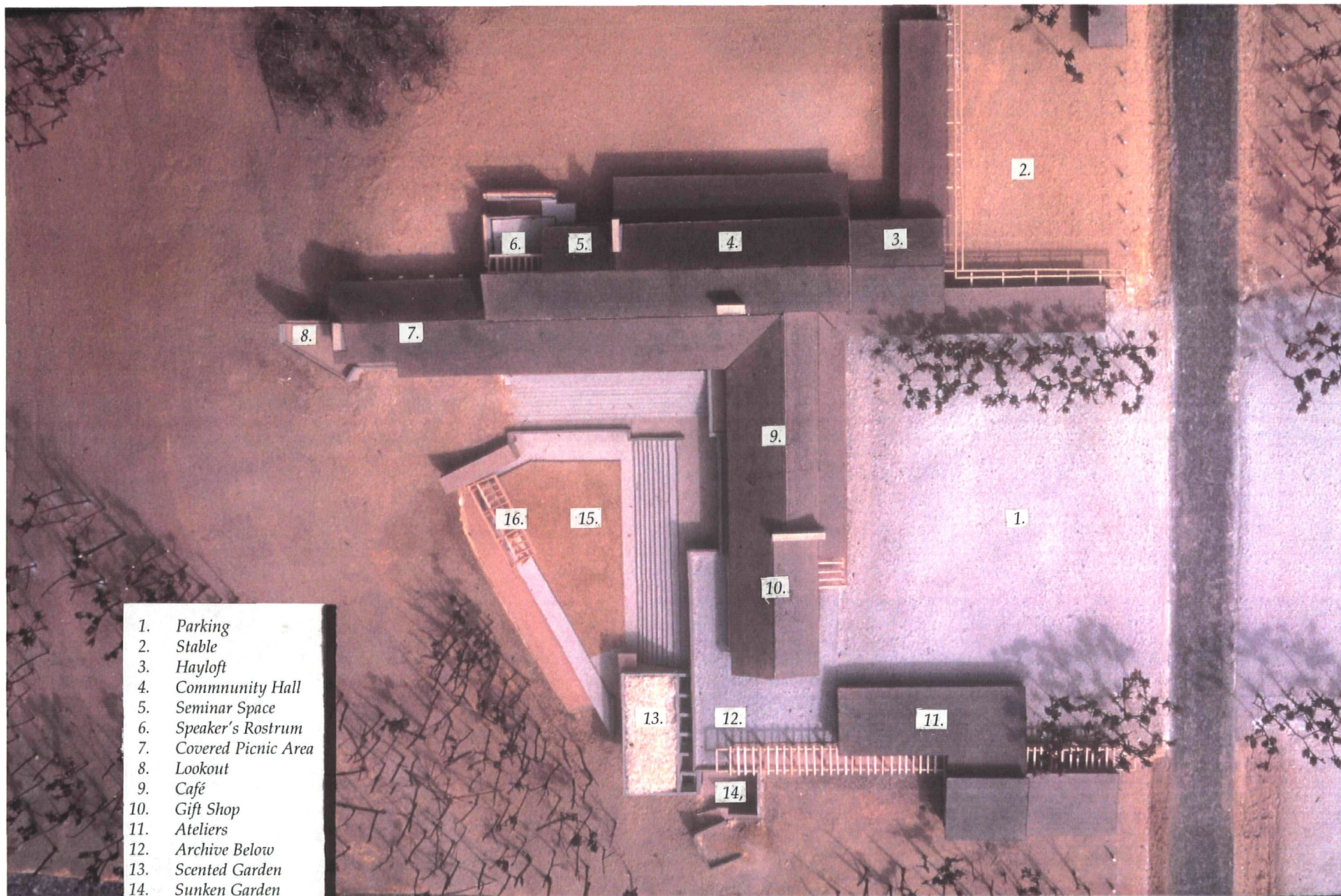


We don't need another hero

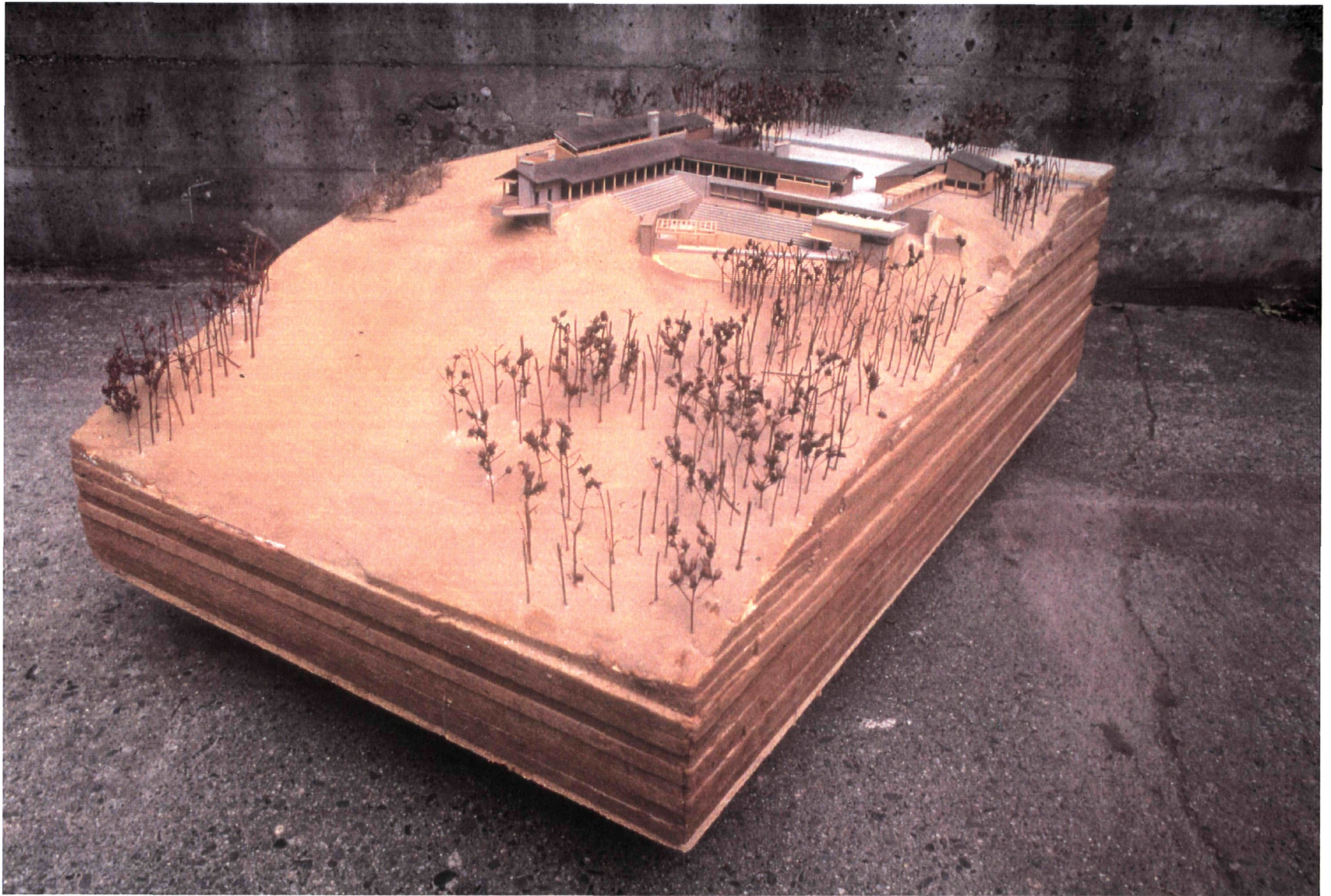




Exploratory Model of Community Hall (Scale 1/16"=1'-0")



1. Parking
2. Stable
3. Hayloft
4. Community Hall
5. Seminar Space
6. Speaker's Rostrum
7. Covered Picnic Area
8. Lookout
9. Café
10. Gift Shop
11. Ateliers
12. Archive Below
13. Scented Garden
14. Sunken Garden
15. Amphitheatre
16. Outdoor Stage

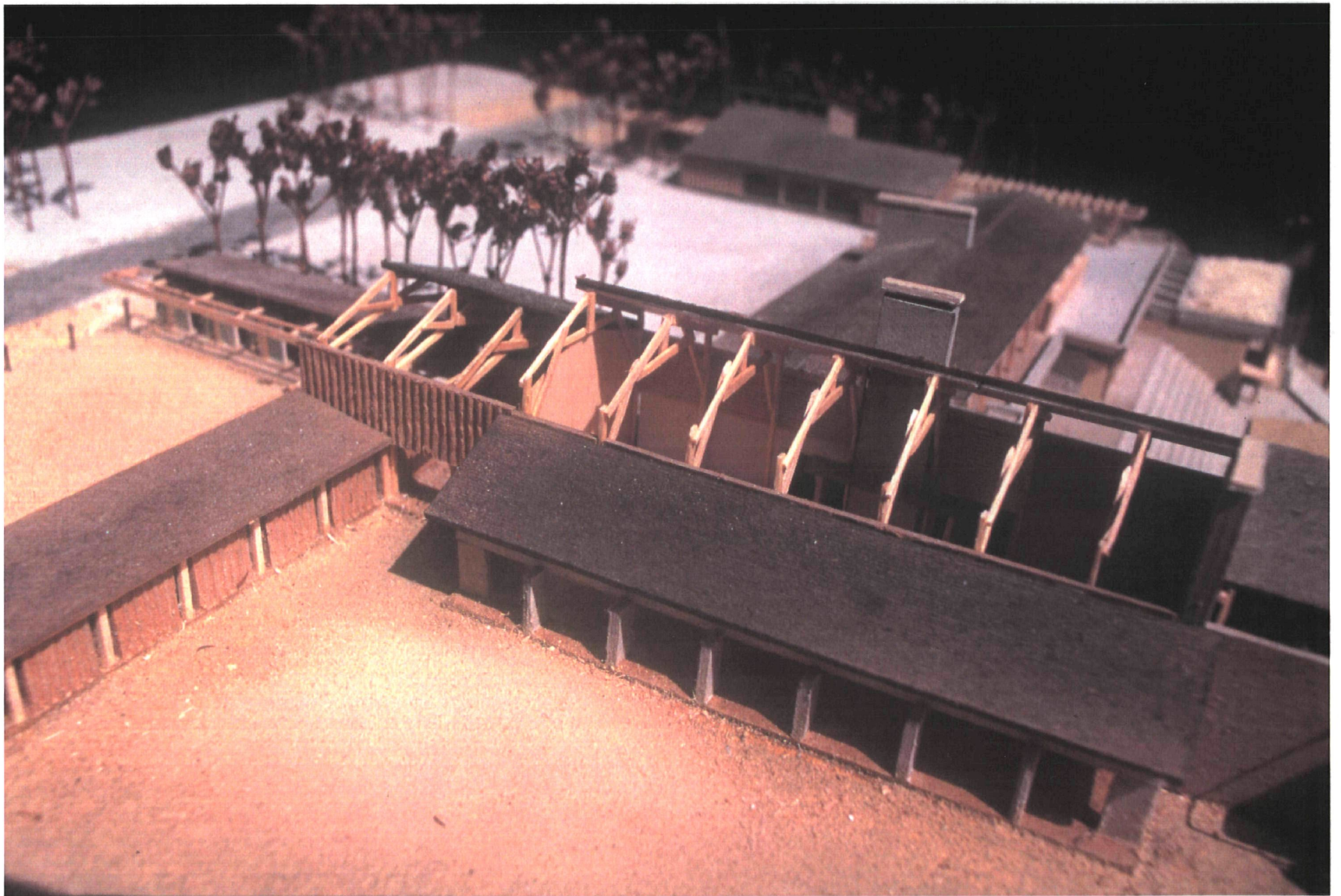












6. Design Development: Explanatory Notes

i.) Elders' Cabins

These little cabins were the subject of a week-long charrette which envisaged several floor plans and lot configurations. Cabins were arranged, for example, around an informal courtyard, or flanking an assembly ground. Finally, it was decided to arrange them along an existing dirt track leading from the ball-diamonds to the racetrack. Each cabin is actually a duplex, with bedroom, bath, sitting room, and kitchenette. A rolling barn door separates the two sitting rooms, allowing them to open up for extended family gatherings or dances. Each bedroom gives onto a sleeping porch for comfort in summer.

The structure is made of rough-sawn sandwich trusses 6' on center, over either sonotube footings or a strip foundation with crawlspace. Stock double-hung windows are ganged to maximize the view while providing a traditional feel to the place.

In retrospect, these little cabins suffer from formal preoccupations with symmetry and bay width. The screen porch is too narrow for comfort, and its corners are consumed by poorly-placed doors. Any sleeping porch in Saskatchewan would really have to be screened. The bathroom needs a roll-in shower, not a tub. In fact, to improve access by disabled elders, the whole cabin should be slab-on-grade, without the bumps and steps. A note for sticklers: sandwich-truss construction would not use a continuous ridge-plate, as shown. Live and learn.

ii.) Stable

The designs of the hall and stable were undertaken before final site selection. The small study model shown above is typical of the kind of "toys" produced while indulging in structural investigations. The result was often quite dry, despite the best intentions of occupying the 'ruins' of these structures with later design moves. Once the river-bank site was chosen, the design proceeded more conventionally, with greater attention paid to subtleties of contour.

The stable was finally placed in response to the proximity of an existing parking lot near the small church across the highway, which would provide overflow parking on busy days. The corral adjoins the highway so that tourists, especially children, would notice the horses as they were driving by. The southern wing of the stable block screens the parking lot from the existing grove of trees to the north. Wagons or sleighs arriving from the park would drive through the hay-loft, turn in the yard to collect passengers, and return north again along the existing dirt track. Cars in the gravel yard are plainly visible from the highway—as appropriate to this remote setting—but discrete from the more natural elements of landscape.

iii.) Community Hall

The hall is a slightly-raised extrusion of the adjoining barn, perpendicular to a café and gift shop which forms the west side of the yard. It is designed to seat three hundred—at a pinch. The hall's role as *foyer* is emphasized by two large hearths, placed formally on the long and short axes of the space. Behind the western hearth is a servery, kitchen, and pantry. The café to the south is designed to act as a lobby for the hall, and as a self-contained gathering space for visitors when the hall is not in use. Its small coffee-bar overlooks the valley. The eastern wall behind the dining booths is infill masonry with slit windows, a *clin d'oeuil* to the defensive gun-loops of the past. The western wall, on the other hand, is fully glazed, providing a pleasant surprise to visitors whose view has, until now, been screened. More kitchen, storage, and washroom space is required than has been shown.

Visiting critics commented that the main hall not clearly differentiated from the rest of the project, concealing its identity as a ceremonial space.

iv.) Amphitheatre

The amphitheatre is designed to exploit a natural fold in the countours, stepping down a full two storeys without requiring an inordinately high retaining wall. The geometry of the building breaks at this point, at the transition from the man-made to the natural world. The amphitheatre is loosely modeled after a racetrack grandstand,

with a combination of open and covered seating. The north wing is an covered picnic shelter, with a large barbeque at the west end. A cascade of platforms, alcoves, and terraces leads to a raised sage-grass lawn. The variety of spaces is provided to help choreograph events of different sizes.,

Visualizing *specific* social scenarios was an important part of the design process. Imagine a situation—from many hundreds at an outdoor mass to a few people waxing skis. By planning for the imagined situation, one builds the potential for an even wider variety of activities.

v.) Atelier

Two artists' live-work studios mark the southern boundary of the gravel yard.

Because the studios are intended for seasonal use, shared living accomodations are envisaged, with a small kitchen, lavatory, and living room. A skylit corridor leads to two upstairs bedrooms, each with ensuite bath and screened sleeping porch. The studios are arranged along an arbor which acts as a circulation spine and screen, so that the artisans' work spaces are visible to the public, but the living areas are screened from view. The studios are placed near the gift shop so that their relationship as place of manufacture and place of sale is apparent.

The arbor leads across the built-up roof of the archive, to a balustrade from which the view can be enjoyed.

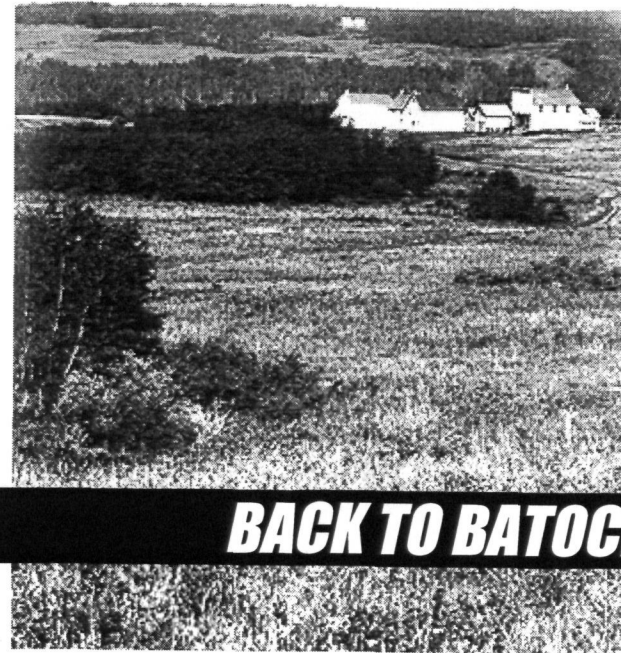
vi.) Archive

The cultural archive is a series of interlocking volumes set within the earth. Physically, these mediate between the main building and the terraced amphitheatre. Metaphorically, they refer to the cthonic realm of memory—the underworld springs of Mnemosyne and Lethe. As one descends along its inhabited corridor, one passes a gallery and seminar space, a curator's office with enclosed garden, a study carrel overlooking the valley, arriving at a main hall with open stacks end reference desk. The archive vault, not shown in plan, is behind the reference desk. The main hall gives onto the southern end of the amphitheatre so that it may be used as a staging area for outdoor ceremonies.

The hall is illuminated by diffused skylight. Windows are placed so that readers may enjoy the south-west view without suffering from harsh afternoon glare. The roof garden above the hall is planted with, sage, juniper, and other aromatic prairie flora to emphasize the archive's subterranean quality and to perfume the air on the terrace above, since Smell is perhaps the sense most closely associated with memory.

Conclusion

The project was well-received, in general, by visiting critics Larry Macfarland, Raymond Pradinuk, and—in preview—Fumihiko Maki. On the other hand, the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan, when contacted by telephone following final review, did not seem interested in receiving copies of the finished drawings. This may be due to the author's lack of dialogue with the community in the preliminary research and program development—dialogue which was sorely missed. It is hoped that the proposed design, though inadequate, will be accepted in apology, and that this thesis will promote the kind of enthusiastic discussion which made its preparation so rewarding.



BACK TO BATOCHE!

Appendix A: Notes on Consultation Process

There were two societies who treated together; one was small, but in its smallness it had its rights. The other was great, but by its greatness it had no greater rights than the rights of the small.

Louis Riel, 1885.

In order not to rely too heavily on previously-published material, both site selection and program development evolved in response to several live interviews. The research topic was kindly suggested by Dr. Michael Ames, curator of the UBC Museum of Anthropology. Parks Canada in Winnipeg provided both topographic and policy information. Museum director Irwin Wilson outlined the shortcomings of Parks Canada policy while sharing his own hopes for sustainable development at Batoche. The Métis Nation's Batoche Planning Committee was represented by Murray Hamilton, who is negotiating the co-management review. It must be recorded, however, that Mr. Hamilton failed to disclose the Métis' master plan despite repeated promises of assistance. Lorna Dawkin, a great-grand-daughter of Gabriel Dumont, was more helpful; the program brief was developed in great part thanks to her suggestions.

Two site visits were made, once in autumn, and once again later in mid-winter. Unfortunately, the author did not attend the *Back to Batoche* festival—missing important opportunities for community consultation—because it takes place just *after* spring thesis reviews.

Appendix B: Notes on Technique

The hand of the Lord came upon me and brought me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the vally; and it was full of bones...and indeed they were very dry.

He said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord: Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know I am the Lord.'"

So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but there was no breath in them...

Ezekiel 37:1-8

Drawings are on A0 sheets of 100g vellum. Most of the linework was done with disposable Rotring technical pens. The finer pens wear out quickly, giving an 'antiqued' look to the hatching lines. Because the sheets were substantially reduced for publication, even professionally made laser copies dropped dropped lines. This is also due to the double screening of digital photocopier and greyscale PMT.

The PMTs, however, faithfully reproduced the toned underlays used on the site plan. These are solvent transfers—using ordinary bond copies, a light dusting of spray mount, and a blender marker from the UBC bookstore. In some cases, photocopies on either buff trace paper or white bond were applied directly to the back of the sheets. Titles are also solvent-transfers, not sticky-back.

The perspective drawings and isometric projections were traced from pen-plots of an AutoCad wireframe. By investing time making the Cad model, I was much more productive in the days before final review—laying out and drawing one sheet per evening.

A word to the wise: Don't experiment with markers or watercolour the night before hand-in!

The trusses for the small study model are built on paper jigs. Coat each jig with spray-mount to tack down the sticks before applying glue at the joints. Give the truss a few minutes to dry, and lift carefully with a scalpel. Repeat *ad nauseam*.

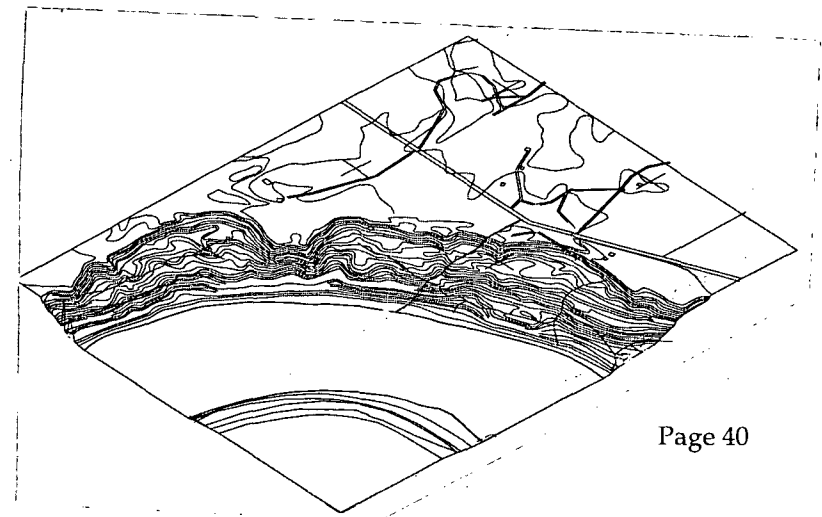
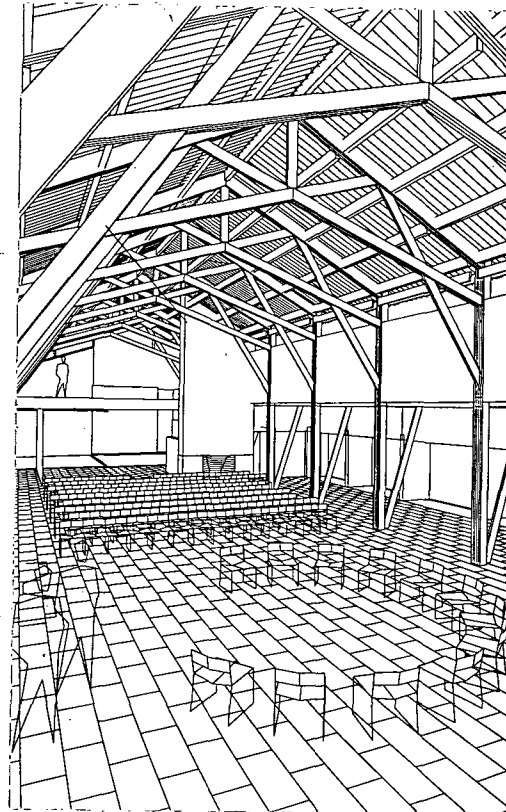
The base for the big model is hollow. It is built up from strips of the cheapest beaver-board, purchased at Coe Lumber and carried to school on the bus. White glue and weights were used to assemble the strips. Beaver-board captures fairly well the feeling of the sandy substrate around Batoche. (Painted modelling paste would not have been suitable.) The contours were smoothed out in a few hours with a coarse rasp and elbow grease, and built up with a thin coating of plaster. Grass was done model-railroad style, with spray mount, sawdust, and *fines herbes*. The trees are crummy. Try to pick yarrow in the fall—before the rains come—or find a cheap willow broom at a dime store. Neither were on hand when needed at the eleventh hour.

Roofs: Scored card with powdered graphite and paper varnish

Gravel: White sand-blast ballast mixed with graphite

Siding: Corrugated basswood or McDonalds burger-box liners

To the right are examples of AutoCad wireframe models: an interior view and an isometric projection of the bend in the river valley near the site. Crude tools, but effective.



Notes

- ¹ "A Hidden Treasure Uncovered", *Saskatoon Star Pheonix*, June 23 1992, p. C4.
- ² "A Project That Grew and Grew", *Saskatoon Star Pheonix*, June 23 1992, p. C16.
- ³ Wilson, pp. 57-59.
- ⁴ Forrest Wilson with Ron Keenberg and William Loerke, "Batoche National Historic Site", *Architecture: Fundamental Issues*, (New York, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1990), p.57.
- ⁵ Parks Canada, "Cultural Resource Management Policy", chapter 3.5, p. 114.
- ⁶ *ibid.*, p. 104
- ⁷ Canadian Encyclopedia, (Edmonton, Hurtig Publishers, 1988), p. 1343.
- ⁸ Diane Paulette Payment, *The Free People—Otimemisiwak: Batoche, Saskatchewan 1870-1930* (Parks Canada, 1990), p. 19.
- ⁹ George Woodcock, *Gabriel Dumont: The Métis Chief and His Lost World*. (Edmonton: Hurtig Pulishers, 1975), p. 21.
- ¹⁰ Canadian Encyclopedia, p. 1836.
- ¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 1344.
- ¹² Woodcock, p.35.
- ¹³ Guillaume Charette, *Vanishing Spaces: Memoirs of a Prairie Métis*. Ray Ellenwood, translator. (Winnipeg: Editions Bois-Brûlés, 1976), p. 15.
- ¹⁴ Canadian Encyclopedia, p. 1836.
- ¹⁵ Charette, pp. 77-78.
- ¹⁶ Payment, p. 212.
- ¹⁷ Maurice J. Clayton, *Canadian Housing in Wood*, (Ottawa: Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 1990), p. 75.
- ¹⁸ Charrette, p. 4.
- ¹⁹ Charrette, p. 111.
- ²⁰ Canadian Encyclopedia, p. 1871.
- ²¹ Walter Hildebrandt, *The Battle of Batoche: British Small Warfare and the Entrenched Métis* (Parks Canada, 1985), p. 40.
- ²² Payment, p. 200.
- ²³ Gabriel Dumont as cited in *The Other Natives: The Métis*, ed. Antoine S. Lussier and D. Bruce Sealey, authors T.J. Brasser et al. (Winnipeg: Manitoba Métis Federation Press, 1978-), vol. 1, p. 157.
- ²⁴ Woodcock, p. 12.
- ²⁵ Thomas Flanagan, *Louis 'David' Riel: 'Prophet of the New World'* (Tornonto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), p. 178.
- ²⁶ Yonina Talmon, 'Millenarism', *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (1968) vol. 10, p. 349.
- ²⁷ Flanagan, p. 181.
- ²⁸ Flanagan, p.76.

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