

THE WHIG INTERPRETATION OF THE HISTORY  
OF RED RIVER

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ABSTRACT

The whig interpretation, which can be most simply defined as the idea that past events led in direct and progressive stages to the present, has long been recognized as a basic historiographic fallacy. The fullest expression of the whig interpretation of western Canadian history is to be found in the works of George F.G. Stanley and W.L. Morton. In presenting a narrative reconstruction of the events surrounding Canada's annexation of Red River, these authors primarily attempt to justify Canadian policy as the extension of British civilization. Their interpretation is deeply flawed by a racist view of the aboriginal peoples of the region who are regarded as savages. That the works of these men fully encompass the whig interpretation is of less significance than the resurgence of that outlook amongst the present generation of historians.

Regressive nationalistic and ethnocentric themes have been at the centre of much that has recently been written about Red River. A characteristic feature of these works is the tendency to emphasize racial and religious divisions within the Métis community rather than to pose more fundamental questions about the social structure. Although the farmers and hunters of Red River were drawn together by a common Cree kinship, John Elgin Foster argues that the offspring of Hudson's Bay Company employees and Cree women, whom he calls the "Country-born," were strongly attached to British institutions and traditions. Foster uses this concept of the separate identity of the "Country-born" to introduce a new version of the whig interpretation, arguing that it was the respect of the "Country-born" for British institutions which created social order. While rejecting Foster's image of social harmony in Red River, Frits Pannekoek introduces another form of the whig interpretation with the argument that society was disintegrating because of racial and religious strife and therefore the Canadian

incursion was necessary to restore social order to the settlement. Employing the characteristic whig model of social change as a simple progression, Sylvia Van Kirk provides further support for the idea that society in Red River was divided by arguing that the Foss-Pelly scandal added to the growing reluctance on the part of Company officers to marry mixed-blood women. Although these three historians claim to be concerned with the dynamics of social change in Red River, they fail to consider the lack of social mobility among the lower class and ignore evidence about the polyglot character of the elite.

In order to expose the whig bias in the works of Foster, Pannekoek, and Van Kirk it is necessary look at marriage patterns in society as a whole rather than just within the elite. Among the most convincing refutations of whig historiography to date is the quantitative analysis of land tenure in Red River by Douglas Sprague, which confirms that the Métis were not nomadic. Using the data base compiled by Sprague and Ronald Frye, I have analyzed marriage patterns among the population at large and in three representative parishes of Red River. The conclusion derived from this analysis is that the early development of a capitalistic labour market in Red River reduced social mobility for the great majority of the people even as it created a polyglot mercantile oligarchy.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### QUANTITATIVE TESTS OF THE WHIG INTERPRETATION

If history is not merely a narrative art but a social science whose object is to reveal the structure of past societies and the process of social change, it is necessary for historians to adopt a methodology which will allow the testing of assumptions derived from narrative sources. Since the ability to perform such tests rests upon the availability of quantitative data, historical research is limited by the chance survival of such data. Red River presents a unique opportunity for the historian because it is perhaps "the most thoroughly documented of all proprietary colonies in English colonial experience."<sup>1</sup>

The aim of this thesis is to show that a number of recent historical works about Red River ought logically to be regarded as a continuation of an earlier tradition of whig historiography and to present a quantitative analysis of the validity of some of the claims made in these works. In order to introduce a more specific examination of the persistence of whig elements within the recent

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<sup>1</sup>D.N. Sprague and Ronald Frye, "Manitoba's Red River Settlement: Manuscript Sources for Economic and Demographic History," Archivaria, 9 (Winter, 1979-80), p.179.

historiography of Red River it will be necessary to explain what is meant by the whig interpretation of history and to consider some quantitative tests of the whig interpretation already undertaken which will form a model for further research.

As an intellectual concept the whig interpretation can be seen as a conservative ideology which, in celebrating the existing structure of society, creates anachronism through an attempt to understand the past in terms of the present. This anachronism is produced by denigrating those aspects of the past which seem unlike the present or by idealizing those events in the past which superficially appear to have led to present conditions. Thus Herbert Butterfield defines the whig interpretation of history as "the tendency in many historians to write on the side of Protestants and Whigs, to praise revolutions provided they have been successful, to emphasize certain principles of progress in the past and to produce a story which is the ratification if not the glorification of the present."<sup>2</sup> In the context of English historiography the Glorious Revolution, English constitutional development, and the rise of Parliament are subjects which the whigs emphasize as leading to the existing social order<sup>3</sup> while the Catholic Church and its adherents are seen as absolutist and repressive forces. It should be emphasized that whig ideology is not fundamentally a problem of bigotry, although a racist outlook often accompanies it, but a problem of faulty historical methodology.

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<sup>2</sup>Herbert Butterfield, The Whig Interpretation of History (1931; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973), p.9.

<sup>3</sup>For a comprehensive analysis of the main trends in English whig historiography see P.B.M. Blaas, Continuity and Anachronism: Parliamentary and Constitutional Development in Whig Historiography and in the Anti-Whig Reaction Between 1890 and 1930, International Archives of the History of Ideas 91 (The Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978).

Lord Acton, one of the few whigs named by Butterfield, was a Roman Catholic. In spite of much evidence to the contrary recorded in his notebooks, Acton's feeling that his own time represented a new era of liberty led him to become a purveyor of the 'Black Legend.'<sup>4</sup>

The annexation of Rupert's Land by Canada in 1870 was primarily effected by volunteers from Ontario, many of whom were members of the Orange Order, recruited through an appeal to seek revenge for the execution of the Orangeman, Thomas Scott. Following annexation, western Canada was reshaped in the image of Protestant immigrants from Ontario. Western society, which had been a pluralism of native, French, and British elements, was radically transformed into a society which reflected the cultural values of these immigrants. The historians who chose to chronicle the annexation of Rupert's Land in the English language were descendants of these Ontario immigrants and they naturally felt that settlement was a civilizing process. In their neglect of economic themes, such as the effect of the policies of the Hudson's Bay Company upon the social structure or the influence of the National Policy upon settlement society, they reflect the standard whig approach which focuses upon ideals and values. The most prominent of these historians, both Rhodes scholars whose works are still regarded as standard references on the history of the west, are George F.G. Stanley and W.L. Morton. A persistent theme of their works which identifies them with the whig interpretation is their portrayal of the clash between the incoming Canadians and the Catholic Métis as a struggle between civilization and savagery.

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<sup>4</sup>Herbert Butterfield, Man On His Past: The Study of the History of Historical Scholarship (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1969), pp.171-95.

A clear example of this theme in Stanley's works is his view that the insurrection of 1869-70 and the events of 1885 are "a Canadian example of a far wider problem which was . . . the inevitable clash arising out of the expansion of an industrialized civilization into regions inhabited by people whose culture-pattern was still based upon a hunting or rudimentary agricultural economy."<sup>5</sup> Although Stanley refers to Red River as a 'frontier,' he does not imply a "Turnerian frame of reference" but "an imperial one that compared the destruction of Métis society with the fate of other peoples who unsuccessfully resisted the march of white civilization in Africa and Australia."<sup>6</sup> Despite his claim to have produced a "new interpretation of the Métis risings,"<sup>7</sup> Stanley's account of the Métis differs little from that of such early commentators as Alexander Ross whose derogatory comments he quotes uncritically.<sup>8</sup> Stanley regards the aboriginal population as savages "centuries behind in mental and economic development," incapable of competing with European settlers who must therefore accept the inevitability of the "white man's burden."<sup>9</sup> According to Stanley, the Métis were

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<sup>5</sup>George F.G. Stanley, "The Last Word on Louis Riel - The Man of Several Faces," in F. Laurie Barron and James B. Waldron, eds., 1885 and After: Native Society in Transition (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1986), p.10.

<sup>6</sup>Carl Berger, The Writing of Canadian History (Toronto: Oxford Univ. Press, 1976), p.175.

<sup>7</sup>"The Last Word on Louis Riel. . .," p.11.

<sup>8</sup>The Birth of Western Canada (Toronto: Longman's, Green, 1936), p.8.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p.194.

a nomadic people who only made the transition to permanent settlement during the period between 1870 and 1885 when they were faced with "a sociological problem of great magnitude, the reconciliation of the needs of a primitive native society with the demands of a modern civilization."<sup>10</sup>

Although Morton appears to differ from Stanley in that he refers to Red River as a civilized community rather than a frontier, Morton's view of Red River is really that of a community balanced between civilization and savagery. The civilized half of Red River is represented by the Anglican Church and its adherents among the mixed-blood population while the Catholic Métis are described as "children yet but half won from barbarism."<sup>11</sup> Morton idealizes the Anglican mixed-blood farmers even as he denigrates the Catholic mixed-bloods as savages. According to Morton farming was "the anchor of the colony, which kept it civilized against the pull of the plains and the fur trade, and made Red River the metropolis of the west."<sup>12</sup> Morton argues that "for 50 years the Red River Settlement was to live in uneasy balance between civilization and barbarism, the river lot and the buffalo hunt."<sup>13</sup> The lifestyle of the hunters and fur traders represented an "ever active influence . . . towards barbarism."<sup>14</sup> It is Morton who inspired both John Elgin Foster and Frits Pannekoek in their division of the mixed-bloods of Red River into progressive Protestants and backward Catholics.

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p.193.

<sup>11</sup>Manitoba, A History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), p.139.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p.85.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp.61-2.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p.73.

Morton's conception of historical writing as a reflection of communal sentiment is indicative of the translation of popular whig attitudes into whig historiography. "History," Morton writes, "is not an academic mystery," but simply "what the community thinks about itself, how it sorts out ideas."<sup>15</sup> As is evident from his comparison of Donald Creighton and Frank Underhill in which he calls Underhill "the agent of fragmentation and Creighton the champion of coherence," Morton feels that history is a narrative art in which it is more important to "create rather than to criticize, to construct rather than to demolish, to comprehend rather than to analyze."<sup>16</sup> Like Creighton, Morton believes that "the bonds between history and literature are close and enduring and that the historian at his best is also an artist."<sup>17</sup> An analytical approach to historical research is therefore seen as leading toward fragmentation while the true role of the historian is to reflect the "coherence of family, tradition, and nation."<sup>18</sup> Morton's view of history was thus deeply rooted in his own experiences. His grandparents settled in Gladstone, Manitoba "in 1871 on what was then the outer limits of the new province, an uninhabited area that within a single decade became a settled society, dominated by the Ontario-born, with only a sprinkling of English, Scottish, and Irish immigrants and overwhelmingly Protestant in religion."<sup>19</sup> The indigenous French-speaking population "whose linguistic and school rights were swept away by the Greenaway Liberal government that

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<sup>15</sup>A.B. McKillop, "William Lewis Morton, 1908-1980," Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers, (Halifax, 1981), p.224.

<sup>16</sup>"Some Thoughts on Understanding Canadian History," Acadiensis, II (Spring, 1973), p.101.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Berger, p.238.

Morton's grandfather had been elected to support . . . were not accepted as equals."<sup>20</sup>

In his review of Marcel Giraud's Le Métis Canadien,<sup>21</sup> Morton far exceeds anything in Giraud's work in describing the Catholic Métis as savage and barbaric. Rather than translate directly from Giraud, Morton produces an indirect paraphrase which introduces a new element of ethnocentrism into Giraud's analysis of the Métis.<sup>22</sup> In his summation, Morton comments that "at Batoche civilization had triumphed over barbarism, the sedentary over the nomadic way of life, and the Métis who were intermediaries between the two . . . . were shattered."<sup>23</sup> Giraud's history of the Métis deals much more fully with the rise of a Métis "bourgeoisie" than does Morton. Even Morton's comments on Louis Riel, whom he admits was a member of the bourgeoisie, betray an ethnocentric view of the Métis. The "instability and violence of Riel," Morton suggests, reflected "the inherent instability and ready violence of his own uncertain people."<sup>24</sup> Morton also implies that the economic position of the majority of the Métis was a result of their lack of industry and dynamism. The description of the Catholic mixed-bloods as "fickle" or "careless and amiable"<sup>25</sup> ignores the fact that they provided the main source of food for the Red River Settlement and the fur trade.

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p.239.

<sup>21</sup>(Paris: Institut D'Ethnologie, 1945).

<sup>22</sup>Despite his understanding of the development of a Métis 'bourgeoisie,' Giraud's work has been justly criticized for his portrayal of the Indian population and its chief value now is in a presentation of evidence from the Hudson's Bay Archives and other primary sources.

<sup>23</sup>W.L. Morton, "The Canadian Métis." The Beaver (September, 1950), p.7.

<sup>24</sup>Manitoba, A History, p.7.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p.63.

Although Morton admits that "the long contest between nomadism and settlement was being ended on the whole in favour of the latter,"<sup>26</sup> he ultimately accepts Giraud's account of the nomadism of the Métis<sup>27</sup> with the suggestion that "the tragedy of the Métis of Red River" was that "their evolution away from nomadism was incomplete in 1869."<sup>28</sup>

The transition toward a historical methodology appropriate to the social sciences began when researchers in such rapidly developing disciplines as economics, anthropology, and political science turned to a critical analysis of the documentary evidence. As the ethnographic sources were thoroughly examined in their historical context the savagery of the indigenous people, who formed the vast majority of the population, came into question. While the whigs had portrayed the aboriginal inhabitants of the west as nomadic, unchanging, entirely dependant on European manufactured goods, and profligate in their economic behaviour, a more plausible account of these people began to emerge which formed the basis of a new understanding of the process of social change. A more rigorous textual criticism was followed by an attempt to apply quantitative techniques to analyze such sources as account books and census records.

One of the first successful applications of quantitative methodology to the study of the pre-confederation west was Arthur J. Ray and Donald Freeman's analysis of the account books of the Hudson's Bay Company which cast doubt on

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<sup>26</sup>"Introduction," in W.L. Morton, ed., Alexander Begg's Red River Journal and other papers relative to the Red River Resistance of 1869-70 (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1956), p.2.

<sup>27</sup>Giraud's view of the Métis was influenced by Stanley but Morton fails to acknowledge the ultimate source of Giraud's ideas. Giraud wrote that The Birth of Western Canada "contient l'exposé le plus sûr, le plus complet et le plus scientifique." See, Marcel Giraud, Le Métis Canadien (Paris: Institut D'Ethnologie, 1945), p.li.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., note 2.

the hypothesis that the trading system of the early fur trade was an institutional extension of the native alliance system.<sup>29</sup> E.E. Rich's argument that economic motivations of aboriginal peoples involved in the fur trade should not be seen in terms of European concepts of supply and demand,<sup>30</sup> which was further refined by Abraham Rotstein,<sup>31</sup> was undermined by Arthur Ray's discovery that the fur traders adjusted the official standards of trade by adding an additional surcharge known as the 'overplus.'<sup>32</sup> Through a detailed analysis of the account books Ray and Freeman further demonstrated that the economic behaviour of the Indians could be understood as a rational response to market forces.

Among the most fundamental assumptions of whig historiography is that the Catholic Métis of Red River were nomadic. Douglas Sprague and R.P. Frye's compilation of genealogical and demographic information about the population of Red River enabled them to disprove this widespread fallacy. Sprague's analysis of land tenure reveals the persistence rate of the Catholic Métis (54%) to be higher than that of the Kildonan Scots (51%) and only slightly lower than the Protestant

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<sup>29</sup>'Give Us Good Measure': An Economic Analysis of Relations Between the Indians and the Hudson's Bay Company Before 1763 (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1978).

<sup>30</sup>E.E. Rich, "Trade Habits and Economic Motivation Among the Indians of North America," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, 26 (1960), 35-53.

<sup>31</sup>Abraham Rotstein, "Trade and Politics: An Institutional Approach," Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology, 3 (1972), pp.1-28.

<sup>32</sup>'Give Us Good Measure', p.93.

Métis (59%).<sup>33</sup> The Métis, Sprague concludes, were "in no sense nomadic before 1870."<sup>34</sup>

The most recent use of quantitative methods to test assumptions about fur trade society is Philip Goldring's study of elite recruitment in the Hudson's Bay Company. While Jennifer S.H. Brown<sup>35</sup> had focused on racism as the main factor determining promotional patterns within the Hudson's Bay Company after 1821, Goldring shows that there was a significant degree of entry level patronage directed toward the mixed-blood sons of prominent fur trader officers.<sup>36</sup> Since a basic tendency of whig historiography is to focus on racism rather than economic factors in explaining social change in Red River, Goldring's work is essential to any critique of the whigs.

It is my intention in the following chapters to study the influence of the whig ideology of G.F.G. Stanley and W.L. Morton upon a new generation of historians. The objective is to provide an alternative reading of the primary sources which will reveal the anachronism inherent in the works of John E. Foster and Frits Pannekoek and to present a quantitative test of the ideas

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<sup>33</sup>D.N. Sprague, "Historical Introduction," in D.N. Sprague and R.P. Frye, comps., The Genealogy of the First Métis Nation, p.28. Douglas Sprague generously provided a machine readable listing of this data which formed the basis of the conclusion reached in Chapter Five of this thesis.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Strangers in Blood; Fur Trade Families in Indian Country (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980). Brown's emphasis on racism as a factor in determining promotional patterns in the Hudson's Bay Company after 1821 does not imply any agreement with Sylvia Van Kirk's argument that racism caused a decline in the rate of marriage to mixed-blood women. For Brown's refutation of Van Kirk's argument see, *ibid.*, pp.215-16.

<sup>36</sup>"Governor Simpson's Officers: Elite Recruitment in a British Overseas Enterprise, 1834-1870," Prairie Forum, 10 (Autumn, 1985), pp.251-281. Philip Goldring sent me a draft copy of this article which proved invaluable in understanding marriage patterns in Red River.

advanced by Sylvia Van Kirk.

## CHAPTER TWO

### CREE AFFINITIES IN RED RIVER

John Elgin Foster's analysis of Red River society is a whig interpretation because he argues that British institutions, supported by the Protestant mixed-bloods, created social order in Red River while the Catholic mixed-bloods with their 'nomadic' lifestyle remained the primary threat to this order. Several features of his analysis contribute to this argument. The most evident of these is his use of a terminology not employed by the people themselves to divide the mixed-blood population into two factions, a progressive Protestant group, the "Country-born," and a backward Catholic group, the Métis. Despite evidence that the Catholic buffalo-hunters and the Protestant farmers of Red River shared a common Cree heritage, Foster further stresses the ties of the Catholic population to the Saulteaux, who were the last to take up farming or convert to Christianity. Finally, Foster argues that their fear of the loss of British institutions made the Protestant mixed-bloods unwilling to join the protest of the "semi-nomadic" Métis, who are portrayed as the primary source of disorder in the settlement. It will be argued here that Foster's thesis, including the terminology employed, his claims about ethnicity, and the anachronistic comparisons which derive from this

perspective, is a whig interpretation rather than an accurate reflection of historical conditions.

The terminology Foster employs to define Red River's mixed-blood people links his work to that of earlier whig historians. He admits that in "the one definitive work dealing with the mixed-bloods, Marcel Giraud's Le Métis Canadien, the term Métis is synonymous with 'mixed-blood.'"<sup>1</sup> In spite of the precedent established by Giraud,<sup>2</sup> which is consistent with the meaning of the French term, Foster notes that "among English language historians who have given some attention to the Red River Settlement<sup>3</sup> there has been a tendency to use the term Métis in a more restricted sense. Although one can find examples of the term used in a sense closely equivalent to 'mixed-blood,' the trend has been to limit it to those mixed-bloods associated with the 'French' tradition in the fur trade, the Roman Catholic missionaries and the way of life centering upon the buffalo hunt."<sup>4</sup> In order to further facilitate the distinction between the Catholic and Protestant mixed-bloods in Red River, Foster urges the use of a new term to describe the Protestant mixed-bloods. Although the term "Country-born" was not employed by the people themselves, Foster argues that Thomas Cook's "rather vague phrase 'my Countrymen,'" which occurs in a letter to Rev. John Smithurst of 30 January 1853, "lends support for an infrequently used term [Country-born]

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<sup>1</sup>"The Country-Born in the Red River Settlement, 1820-1850." (PhD Dissertation, University of Alberta, 1972), p.3.

<sup>2</sup>It is Giraud's usage of the term "Métis" as equivalent to mixed-blood which has been followed throughout this thesis.

<sup>3</sup>These "English language historians" are George F.G. Stanley and W.L. Morton, whose works promote the idea that the Catholic Métis were savages.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

found in documents originating with British-born Anglican missionaries."<sup>5</sup> Foster's proposal of a new term for the Protestant mixed-bloods thus establishes a dichotomy between Catholic Métis buffalo hunters and progressive Protestant "Country-born" whose support for British institutions created social order in Red River. "With due notation of the fact that exceptions exist to any system of labelling or classifying peoples," Foster insists, "Métis in historical parlance, has come to refer to the French and Cree or Saulteaux-speaking, Roman Catholic buffalo hunters."<sup>6</sup>

Although no evidence has been produced to show that Protestant mixed-bloods called themselves "Country-born," several examples have been found in which they are referred to as Métis or "bois brûlés."<sup>7</sup> There is also evidence that the Catholic mixed-bloods referred to the Protestant mixed-bloods as "Métis Anglais." The statement of Thomas Bunn, a Protestant mixed-blood, contains references to the "English Métis" in a context where he is referring to the Protestant mixed-blood community as a whole. Bunn, a farmer of Mapleton parish who was Secretary to the Provisional Government from February of 1870 until its dissolution, testifies that "the French Métis claimed for all the half-breeds a right to the lands of the country generally; but the English half-breeds did not put forth that claim. It is not to my knowledge that the English Métis claim that right. They did not claim the right because there was no action by the surveyors

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<sup>5</sup>John E. Foster, "The Origins of the Mixed Bloods in the Canadian West," in Lewis H. Thomas, ed., Essays on Western History in Honour of Lewis Gwynne Thomas (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1976), p.73.

<sup>6</sup>"The Origins of the Mixed Bloods in the Canadian West," p.72.

<sup>7</sup>The term 'bois-brûlé' which means 'burnt wood' is thought to be a reference to the swarthy complexion of the Métis.

in the neighborhood of the territory which they occupied."<sup>8</sup> Nor was it only members of the Provisional government such as Bunn who made reference to the English Métis. Walter Robert Bown, an editor of the Nor'Wester and an ardent supporter of Canadian annexation, in an apparent reference to the release of Griffiths Owen Corbett from jail, stated that "this was done by the English Métis."<sup>9</sup> The statements of Bunn and Bown suggest that the Protestant mixed-bloods of Red River were not seen as ethnically distinct from their Catholic compatriots. The reference of Alexander Ross, a member of the Presbyterian Scots community, to his son James as a "brûlé" offers further proof of this.<sup>10</sup> According to Isaac Cowie the term most commonly used by the French mixed-bloods when speaking of mixed-bloods of British descent was "Métis Anglais."<sup>11</sup>

In addition to the fact that the term "Country-born" was not used by the mixed-blood community in Red River, it is also unsatisfactory because of its ambiguity. It is unclear from the context in which it was used if the term was intended to apply only to those members of the English-speaking Protestant community who were of mixed-blood. It seems probable that "Country-born" was originally intended to describe all those English-speaking Protestants born in Red River whether of European or mixed-blood ancestry. The children of William

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<sup>8</sup>Canada, Parliament, Journals of the House of Commons, vol. VIII, Appendix no. 6, 1874, Report of the Select Committee on the Causes of the Difficulties in the North-West Territories in 1869-70, p.115.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p.114

<sup>10</sup>P.A.M., Ross Family Papers, John Black to James Ross, 9 February 1854, quoted in Sylvia Van Kirk, "What if Mama is an Indian?": The Cultural Ambivalence of the Alexander Ross Family," in John E. Foster, ed., The Developing West: Essays on Canadian History in Honor of Lewis H. Thomas (Edmonton: Univ. of Alberta Press, 1983), p.129.

<sup>11</sup>Isaac Cowie, The Company of Adventurers (Toronto: William Briggs, 1913), p.501.

Drever, a retired Scottish servant of the Hudson's Bay Company who became a prominent merchant in Red River, and his wife Helen Rothney, who travelled to Red River as a maidservant to Adam Thom, could therefore be considered to be "Country-born" despite their lack of any aboriginal kinship. An analogy might be drawn to the phrase "native English," which Douglas Sprague defines as a "reference to persons whose first language was English, who were Protestant and native to the country in the sense of intimately attached to Rupert's Land by birth or by marriage."<sup>12</sup> The application of the term "native English" is so general that even English-speaking Protestants such as Andrew Graham Ballenden Bannatyne and his father-in-law, the Irishman Andrew McDermot, who converted from Catholicism to Anglicanism, are so designated.

In spite of evidence that the term 'Métis' was sometimes used in the general sense, Foster has recently been joined by Thomas Flanagan in the opinion that it was only during the twentieth century, when "Métis and half-breeds intermarried to an unmeasured but considerable extent," that "the French word Métis has entered the English language in Canada as an inclusive term for all persons of mixed Indian and white ancestry who identify themselves as distinct from Indians or Whites."<sup>13</sup> Their own usage of the term belies any such firm distinction between the two groups in at least one case, that of the Protestant mixed-blood, George Sanderson, whose account of the events of February 1870 has recently been edited by Irene Spry.<sup>14</sup> Since Sanderson mentions that he is related to

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<sup>12</sup>D.N. Sprague and P.R. Mailhot, "Persistent Settlers: The Dispersal and Resettlement of the Red River Métis, 1870-85," Canadian Ethnic Studies, 17 (1985), p.9.

<sup>13</sup>"Introduction/The Métis: Past and Present," Canadian Ethnic Studies, 17 (1985), p.iv.

<sup>14</sup>"The 'Memories' of George William Sanderson 1846-1839," Canadian Ethnic Studies, 17 (1985), pp.115-134.

some of Riel's men and does not appear hostile to them in spite of his Protestant religion and his participation in the march of the Portage Party to Kildonan, Flanagan and Foster classify George Sanderson as a "nineteenth-century Anglophone Métis."<sup>15</sup> This idiosyncratic usage of terminology only leads to greater confusion about the origin of the people of Red River. It is highly reminiscent of Frits Pannekoek's remark that William Dease, a supporter of the Canadian Party despite his French Catholic heritage, was a "loyal Métis of Country-born ancestry."<sup>16</sup>

A final attempt to distinguish between the Protestant and Catholic mixed-blood communities in Red River is Foster's introduction of yet another term to describe Paulet Paul, a folk hero recognized by the entire community in Red River. Since the legend of Paulet Paul is retold in J.J. Gunn's Echoes of the Red, it would appear that Paulet Paul was well known among the English-speaking population as well as the French community. The legend of Paulet Paul suggests a folk culture common to all the people of Red River. It seems unlikely that the origin of a mythical figure can ever be known with any certainty, yet Foster is determined, on the basis of evidence in the records of the Scrip Commission, to classify Paulet Paul as a "House Indian."<sup>17</sup> Despite the fact that most of his works centre on the identification of "non-Métis mixed-bloods," Foster has

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p.v.

<sup>16</sup>"The Churches and the Social Structure in the Red River Area, 1818-1870," (PhD Dissertation, Queen's Univ., 1973), p.264.

<sup>17</sup>"Paulet Paul: Métis or 'House Indian' Folk Hero?," Manitoba History (Spring, 1985), pp.2-7.

recently admitted that this emphasis on naming conventions represents an "unprofitable debate on terminology."<sup>18</sup>

In employing terminology which emphasizes the ethnic distinctiveness of French and English mixed-blood people in Red River, Foster overlooks the common Cree ancestry shared by both groups. The adoption of a separate terminology to describe the Protestant mixed-bloods in Red River is justifiable in the opinion of Douglas Sprague because of the importance of "cultural variables" which tend to set English-mixed bloods apart from French mixed-bloods.<sup>19</sup> If Sprague is correct in the assertion that cultural factors are important in determining ethnicity, the Cree culture of the majority of the people of Red River is a key element which has been overlooked in the recent historiography of Red River. Foster neglects to consider the Cree heritage of the mixed-blood population of Red River in his discussion of the nature of relations between the English and French Métis. Yet evidence suggests that the majority of the "Country-born" and the Catholic Métis in Red River were of Cree ancestry. Although Foster acknowledges that the "Country-born" were of Cree origin he gives the impression that the French Catholic Métis were mainly *Saulteaux*.<sup>20</sup> His most extreme statement of this position is that in the second decade of the nineteenth century the Métis "did not exist" in the Red River Valley; "at best one

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<sup>18</sup>"Some Questions and Perspectives on the Problem of Métis Roots," in Jennifer S.H. Brown and Jacqueline Peterson, eds., The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America, Manitoba Studies in Native History I (Winnipeg: Univ. of Manitoba Press, 1985), p.87, note 1.

<sup>19</sup>"Persistent Settlers," p.9.

<sup>20</sup>The *Saulteaux* were a branch of the Northern Ojibwa as were their southern relatives the Chippewa.

might use the term proto Métis."<sup>21</sup> Not until the arrival of "French-speaking Roman Catholic missionaries in the region in 1818, and the first of the regularized buffalo hunts in 1820," can one speak of Métis in the region.<sup>22</sup> This definition of Métis ethnicity in Red River would even exclude Cuthbert Grant and his followers who defeated Governor Semple at the Battle of Seven Oaks on 19 June 1816, an event which has always been considered a "heroic moment of self-defence and self affirmation"<sup>23</sup> for the Métis. While it is true that there was some intermarriage between Métis men and Chippewa women, the Pembina Chippewa<sup>24</sup> were not generally thought of as *Saulteaux* and were known to be acculturating towards the Cree culture of the majority of the Métis. It was mainly the followers of Peguis, who settled at Netley Creek near Lake Winnipeg, who were referred to as *Saulteaux*. Their symbiotic relationship with Selkirk and later with the Canadian Party enabled them to retain their aboriginal culture longer than any other Indian group in Red River.

In spite of some Chippewa admixture in the Métis population there is little doubt that the French-speaking mixed-bloods in Red River had stronger links with the Cree than with any other Indian group. Evidence suggests that the majority

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<sup>21</sup>"The *Saulteaux* and the Numbered Treaties - An Aboriginal Rights Position?" in Richard Price, ed., The Spirit of the Alberta Indian Treaties (Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1980), p.174.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, note 71.

<sup>23</sup>D.N. Sprague, "Historical Introduction," in D.N. Sprague and R.P. Frye, comps., The Genealogy of the First Métis Nation (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1983), p.14.

<sup>24</sup>So pronounced was the trend towards Cree acculturation amongst the Chippewa at Pembina that they have sometimes been called "Plains Ojibwa" or "Chippewa-Cree." See James H. Howard, "The Identity and Demography of the Plains-Ojibwa," *Plains Anthropologist*, 6 (1956), pp.171-78 and John C. Crawford, ed., The Michif Dictionary: Turtle Mountain Chippewa Cree, Patline Laverdure and Ida Rose Allard, comps. (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1983).

of the Métis in Red River were of Cree origin and convincingly demonstrates that the Cree had occupied the northwest plains long before the establishment of the Selkirk settlement.<sup>25</sup> This is evident in the case of Cuthbert Grant's people, the buffalo-hunters of St. François-Xavier parish at the White Horse Plains. Far from having an eastern origin, they centred their activities on the Qu'Appelle region of what is now Saskatchewan before the founding of Red River.<sup>26</sup> It is significant that Foster disregards one of the few scholarly studies of the aboriginal population occupying the Pembina area prior to the founding of Red River.<sup>27</sup> The reason for Foster's neglect of this historical analysis of the Pembina Chippewa may be that Hickerson clearly distinguishes between "the Métis who first appeared in small numbers at Pembina in 1805" and were "freed servants of the defunct X.Y. Company,"<sup>28</sup> and the Chippewa of the Pembina region. Unlike the Chippewa, who are described as migrants from the east, poorly adapted to the plains, Hickerson believes the Métis had already become equestrian buffalo-hunters by 1805.<sup>29</sup> Joseph F. Dion, a leader of the Métis and the Cree group of which he was a member, gives corroborating evidence that "the great majority of the Métis or half-breeds scattered throughout the three prairie provinces are a mixture of

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<sup>25</sup>John S. Milloy, "The Plains Cree: A Preliminary Trade and Military Chronology, 1670-1830" (M.A. Thesis, Carleton University 1972).

<sup>26</sup>John Perry Pritchett, The Red River Valley, 1811-1849: A Regional Study (New York: Russell and Russell, 1942), p.149.

<sup>27</sup>Howard Hickerson, "The Genesis of a Trading Post Band: The Pembina Chippewa," Ethnohistory, 3 (1956), pp.289-345.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p.326. Hickerson cites Elliott Coues, ed., New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest: The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry, Fur Trader of the Northwest Company, and of David Thompson, Official Geographer and Explorer of the Same Company, 1799-1814 (New York: n.p., 1895), pp.268-9.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

white and Cree."<sup>30</sup> Although the Chippewa element predominated south of the border in Pembina, V. Havard, in a report to the Smithsonian Institute, also reiterates that the Métis of the Canadian northwest were almost exclusively Cree.<sup>31</sup> In his most recent comments on Métis origins, Foster argues that "when the focus is put on the ethnic group, rather than a way of life, the analysis shifts to those cultural elements which serve to define a people's boundaries."<sup>32</sup> The point to be made here is that it was such cultural elements as Cree language and myth which primarily defined a Métis ethnicity linking both Protestant and Catholic mixed-blood communities in Red River.

Most anthropologists have supported the view that during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the Cree migrated into the west from an area east of Lake Winnipeg as their middleman role was eroded by the movement of the fur traders into the interior and game and fur resources were depleted during the period of competition between the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies. This position is now thought to be an incomplete account of Cree territorial expansion. In a significant revision of the traditional view, James G.E. Smith argues that "there is evidence that although the Swampy Cree were migrating during this period, the Rocky and Strongwoods Cree had been long present in the west: it was apparently merely the name Cree that was at this time extended westward to

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<sup>30</sup>Hugh A. Dempsey, ed. and intro., My Tribe the Crees (Calgary: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1979), p.1.

<sup>31</sup>V. Havard, "The French Half Breeds of the Northwest," Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institute, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880), p.318, cited in David P. Delorme, "History of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians," North Dakota History, 22 (July, 1955), p.125.

<sup>32</sup>"Some Questions and Perspectives on the Problem of Métis Roots," in Jennifer S.H. Brown and Jacqueline Peterson, eds., The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America, Manitoba Studies in Native History I (Winnipeg: Univ. of Manitoba Press, 1985), p.77.

apply to these divisions, previously known as Southern or Upland Indians."<sup>33</sup> It would also appear that a southerly movement of the Cree to the plains from their previous boreal forest habitat (which included the northern region of the area which now comprises Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba) occurred during early historic times.<sup>34</sup> Smith endorses an opinion he attributes to Arthur Ray that "the Cree occupying the transitional forest-parkland-prairie ecotone were preadapted to a Plains adjustment by virtue of seasonal adaptations to the Plains fauna."<sup>35</sup> The freemen, discharged engagés of the North West Company, intermarried with these western Cree enabling them to adapt to a plains culture. This sequence of events is the most plausible explanation of the equestrian hunting lifestyle and western origin of the Métis of St. François-Xavier parish.

The richly allusive Cree language and the complex tradition of Cree myth formed cultural ties between the French and English mixed-bloods in Red River. Commenting on the patriotism of the mixed-bloods of Red River, James Joseph Hargrave, the nephew and secretary of William Mactavish, Governor of Assiniboia, writes that "the custom, mode of thought, and language of the Indians retain their hold on the affections of their descendants to successive generations. Thus a man whose usual language is English, and one who speaks French alone, are enabled to render themselves mutually intelligible by means of Cree, their Indian mother tongue, though each is totally ignorant of the civilized language ordinarily used by the other."<sup>36</sup> Some conception of the attachment of the Protestant

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<sup>33</sup>"Western Woods Cree," in June Helm, ed., Subarctic, vol. 6, Handbook of North American Indians (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1981), p.257.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, p.253 and p.264.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, p.264.

<sup>36</sup>J.J. Hargrave, Red River (Montreal: Printed for the author by John Lovell, 1871), p.181.

mixed-bloods to the Cree culture is conveyed by James Settee's account of Cree legends. Baptized by Anglican clergyman David T. Jones, Settee became an Anglican clergyman and married Sarah Cook, also of part Cree ancestry, and the grand-daughter of Chief Factor William Hemmings Cook.<sup>37</sup>

There is some debate among anthropologists regarding the nature of marriage customs among the Cree. The question whether the Cree practiced cross-cousin marriage is considered by Irving A. Hallowell who argues for its existence on the basis of linguistic evidence in the ethnographic sources.<sup>38</sup> Hallowell sees the use of Cree kinship terms as proving that a vigorous tradition of cross-cousin marriage existed among the Cree. Research on the Shamattawa Cree, who are descended from the Orcadian-Cree of the bayside posts, suggests that they did not marry their cross-cousins.<sup>39</sup> Even if there was little actual marriage between cross-cousins, Cree concepts of kinship involved a complex system of relationships which extended far beyond the immediate family.

Foster's conclusion that cultural divisions separated the Protestant and Catholic mixed-bloods in Red River is contradicted by evidence that Cree kinship concepts formed the basis of the trade between the two communities which provided the main subsistence of the mass of the population. It appears that kinship had important economic implications within Cree society and an extended

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<sup>37</sup>Jennifer S.H. Brown, "James Settee and his Cree Tradition: An Indian Camp at the Mouth of Nelson River, Hudson's Bay," in William Cowan, ed., Actes du Huitième Congrès des Algonquistes (Ottawa: Carleton University, 1977), p.36.

<sup>38</sup>Irving Hallowell, "Cross-Cousin Marriage in the Lake Winnipeg Area," in Raymond D. Fogleson and others, intro., Contributions to Anthropology: Selected Papers of A. Irving Hallowell (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1976).

<sup>39</sup>David H. Turner and Paul Wertman, Shamattawa: The Structure of Social Relations in a Northern Algonkian Band, National Museum of Man Mercury Series, Canadian Ethnology Service Paper Number 36 (Ottawa: 1977).

kinship relationship often signified an economic relationship.<sup>40</sup> A trading relationship with one's extended family group was all that was required in order to become involved in reciprocal obligations and duties. Alfred Campbell Garrioch's comment that almost every one of the English-speaking settlers had someone among the French community to whom he referred as "ni-chiwam" (my cousin) is extremely significant when viewed in terms of the cross-cousin kinship system. Speaking of the relationship between his own father and a French-speaking Métis, Garrioch recalls that:

Every settler had some one among the Métis who called him "Ni Chiwam," my cousin, and if the person so addressed did not want to show himself painfully lacking in friendliness and good manners, there was nothing for it but to reciprocate both in word and deed. The Chiwam relationship did not live on air but on spontaneous and mutual acts of friendliness given and received usually in the form of Indian presents.<sup>41</sup>

Garrioch, a grandson of North West Company trader Colin Campbell,<sup>42</sup> was an Anglican minister of Cree ancestry and an expert on the Cree language. Garrioch's statement is especially pertinent to a discussion of Foster's works because Foster argues that the Anglican clergy taught the Protestant mixed-bloods to support British institutions and values. One would therefore not expect to find a clerical source supporting the view that there were ties linking the Protestant and Catholic mixed-bloods. Although Garrioch assumes an air of superiority when referring to the French-speaking Métis and deprecates the importance of the

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<sup>40</sup>David G. Mandelbaum, The Plains Cree: An Ethnographic, Historical, and Comparative Study, J. Archer, ed., Canadian Plains Studies 9 (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1979), p.78.

<sup>41</sup>Alfred Campbell Garrioch, First Furrows (Winnipeg: Stovel, 1923), pp.99-100.

<sup>42</sup>Eric J. Holmgren, "Fort Dunvegan and the Fur Trade on the Upper Peace River," in Thomas C. Buckley, ed., Rendezvous: Selected Papers of the Fourth North American Fur Trade Conference, 1981 (St. Paul, Minnesota: North American Fur Trade Conference, 1983), p.182.

buffalo meat they traded with the farming community, his statement that nearly all the Protestant mixed-blood farmers recognized a bond of kinship with the buffalo-hunters is critical in understanding the importance of Cree affinities in Red River. Since Garrioch was born in 1848 and possessed a superb command of the Cree language, his recollection of kinship terms employed during the trading process can be accepted as definitive proof of Cree kinship among the mixed-bloods of Red River.

Further evidence of the significance of economic ties between the Catholic and Protestant Métis in Red River is given by John McLean, a trader and a critic of Hudson's Bay Company rule. McLean reveals that the English mixed-bloods were dependant upon their trade with the buffalo hunters since "very few of them resort to the plains, unless for the purpose of trafficking the produce of their farms for the produce of the chase; and it is said that they frequently return home better supplied with meat than the hunters themselves."<sup>43</sup> Foster does not reflect on the importance of the hunt because the farming community is seen as the foundation of civilized life in Red River. This emphasis on the Protestant mixed-bloods produces an anachronistic view of the Catholic Métis because it reduces their society to the single occupation of buffalo-hunting and compares the hunt to an agricultural economy which developed only when dry-land farming techniques were perfected half a century later. As G. Herman Sprenger has shown, "in the Red River Settlement . . . a generally less efficient method of production (hunting) was more efficient than a generally more efficient method (agriculture)."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>W.S. Wallace, ed., John McLean's Notes of a Twenty-five Year's Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1932), p.378.

<sup>44</sup>"An Analysis of Selective Aspects of Métis Society, 1810-1870," (M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1972), p.6.

Cree affinities were also important to the mixed-bloods of Red River because of a shared hostility toward the Saulteaux which was caused by a political dispute over land ownership. The Saulteaux, latecomers to the area around Lake Winnipeg, emigrated from the area of Sault St. Marie. According to a descendant of Peguis, Chief Albert Edward Thompson, who recalls an account of the early history of Red River Saulteaux written by his grandfather, the Rev. William Henry Prince, the Saulteaux occupied land on Netley Creek (near Lower Fort Garry) in the 1790s after an epidemic decimated the local Cree population.<sup>45</sup> The relations between the Métis and the Saulteaux followers of Peguis became embittered when the Saulteaux allied themselves with Thomas Douglas, Lord Selkirk, who recognized the Saulteaux claim to the land. The Métis never accepted the land settlement signed by Peguis but recognized the Cree leader, Senna, who had refused to sign. At a meeting of the French and English Métis community held in Red River at McKenney's Royal Hall in 1860, it was decided that, as the descendants of the Cree, the Métis should press for recognition of their right to the land in Red River.<sup>46</sup>

In relying on W.L. Morton's interpretation of the nature of Red River society, which emphasizes the importance of farmers as the 'civilized' half of the mixed-blood population, Foster fails to examine the role of the Saulteaux in Red River. The evidence presented here, that the Saulteaux and not the "Country-born" were the main supporters of Lord Selkirk, and later of the Canadian Party in Red River, conflicts with Foster's essentially whig interpretation because it is known that the Saulteaux were far less acculturated to European ways than the Cree.

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<sup>45</sup>Chief Peguis and His Descendants (Winnipeg: Peguis Publishers, 1973), pp.1-2.

<sup>46</sup>Nor'Wester, 14 March 1860.

Of all the Indian groups in Red River the Saulteaux were the last to accept Christianity or to take up farming.<sup>47</sup> The Cree regarded the Saulteaux with disdain, and it has been reported that "Cree speakers use the [English] term Saulteaux for dialects other than their own in a way highly reminiscent of the Greek term barbaros."<sup>48</sup> Peguis supported Selkirk because he was a shrewd strategist who aspired to the leadership of the Cree in Red River as well as his own people. Later, Peguis renounced the treaty he had signed with Selkirk, and the Saulteaux under Peguis' son, Henry Prince, became the most zealous supporters of Canadian annexation in Red River. Thus, it was the Saulteaux who most enthusiastically supported British institutions in Red River rather than the Protestant mixed-bloods, as Foster asserts.

Foster's arguments about terminology and ethnicity allow him to make anachronistic comparisons between the French and English mixed-blood communities in Red River. The distinction he draws between the sedentary character of the Protestant mixed-bloods and the nomadism<sup>49</sup> of the Catholic mixed-bloods is the most important of these. Foster's thesis is basically a celebration of the British "institutions of Church and state" which "made it possible for different communities to function relatively peacefully in close

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<sup>47</sup>Michael Peter Czuboka, "St. Peter's: A Historical Study with Anthropological Observations on the Christian Aborigines of Red River (1811-1876)" (M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1960).

<sup>48</sup>H. Christoph Wolfart, "Boundary Maintenance in Algonquian: A Linguistic Study of Island Lake, Manitoba," American Anthropologist, 75 (1973), p. 1322, quoted by Jack H. Steinbring, "Saulteaux of Lake Winnipeg," in June Helm ed., Subarctic, vol. 6, Handbook of North American Indians (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1981), p.255.

<sup>49</sup>D.N. Sprague's study of land tenure in Red River has demonstrated that the Catholic mixed-bloods were permanently settled on their river lots.

proximity."<sup>50</sup> While the Catholic Métis are seen as the main threat to the peace of the community, the Protestant mixed-bloods were "the primary foundation which supported the institutions of British civilization established there."<sup>51</sup> Foster argues that social protest abated because the Protestant mixed-bloods "feared the loss of their political and other institutions" while the Catholic mixed-bloods "with their semi-nomadic way of life and connections to the south felt little concern with this possibility."<sup>52</sup>

The anachronism of this proposition is demonstrated by evidence that the buffalo-hunters of Red River only developed the hunt into a primary occupation after the merger and that before 1821 they had also practiced small scale agriculture. Father Georges A. Belcourt comments that the Métis at Pembina

. . . commenced farming in the country, but finding no market for their produce, and having much to buy, it was necessary that they should resort to occupations that would yield them a means of purchasing the necessities of life. At that time, the Hudson Bay Company [sic] traders were the only possessors of merchandise in the country, and would dispose of it only in a way to promote their own trade. This was by the employment of trappers, voyageurs, and hunters on the plains. From the last they got their 'dried meat' and 'pemmican,' articles of subsistence which are almost the sole dependence of the people of that country. . . . Into these employments the people have been driven by necessity, in consequence of which they had to neglect their farms; the practice continuing, they abandoned them, and are now the victims of occupations they cannot discard, and are able to obtain from them only a bare subsistence. They now devote themselves entirely to fur hunting and the chase; by the former they obtain some money; and by the latter they live. . . . Within our territory there is no farming; the small gardens they cultivate yield so triflingly, that they are hardly worthy of notice.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>"The Country-Born in the Red River Settlement. . . ," p.266.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p.265.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p.254.

<sup>53</sup>Major Wood quoting Father Georges A. Belcourt, "Pembina Settlement," Executive Document, No. 51, 31st Congress, 1st Session, 1850 (Washington: Government Printing Office), pp.27-8, quoted in David P. Delorme, "History of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians," North Dakota History, 22 (July, 1955), p.128.

Other evidence confirms that the Métis buffalo-hunters practiced agriculture more extensively before the development of the large scale hunt than thereafter. A.S.

Morton records that

. . . a little community of Métis had grown up at the Elbow of the Assiniboine, planted gardens and the like, traded with the Indians and finally with the Americans. Simpson regarded them as a menace to the fur-trade, and to the Red River Settlement, for they were trying to persuade their fellows there to join them in forming a separate village. He took no stock in their 'seating themselves down as agriculturalists' for there was no market for their surplus produce. When he tried to remove them to the Red River where there was a market, they obstinately replied that this country was theirs."<sup>54</sup>

Apart from the trade between French and English mixed-bloods, market conditions within Red River before 1870 made farming an uncertain occupation because the Company's demand for perishable foodstuffs was limited while its entire work-force relied on pemmican for subsistence. The boat brigades could not have functioned without an adequate supply of pemmican. Simpson's desire to prevent the Métis from engaging in agriculture outside the colony had little to do with market conditions in Red River, as John McLean's description of the demand for produce indicates:

. . . in the work to which I have so frequently referred, it is mentioned, that a 'certain market is secured to the inhabitants by the demand for provisions for the other settlements.' If by 'settlements' the miserable trading posts be meant, as it must be, I know not on what grounds such an affirmation is made. A sure market, forsooth! A single Scotch farmer could be found in the colony, able alone to supply the greater part of the produce the Company require; there is one, in fact who offered to do it. . . . Thus it happens that the Red River farmer finds a 'sure market' for six or eight bushels of wheat - and no more. Where he finds a sure market for the remainder of his produce, Heaven only knows - I do not.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>H.B.C.A., Governor Simpson's Report, 10 August 1832, quoted in A.S. Morton, "The New Nation, The Métis," Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, Series III, Sec. II (1939), pp.137-45.

<sup>55</sup>John McLean's Notes of a Twenty-five Year's Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1932), pp.381-2.

Although Foster sees the Protestant clergy as having influenced the "Country-born" to support the Company, Protestant clerical sources give a different interpretation, suggesting the mutual discontent of the French and English mixed-bloods with Company rule. The Anglican minister David Jones records that

. . . from some parts you will perceive that many disagreeable things have transpired in course of last year on account of disaffection towards the Company in the minds of the Halfbreeds. I am not here called upon to express an opinion upon the reasonableness of their complaint or the justice of their representations but the language used and the menaces uttered were quite indefensible, and I much fear that unless a well organized force be put in operation that much confusion will some day ensue. We are under no apprehension of injury in person or property, but we are very anxious about the public peace and tranquility and we feel it more necessary than ever to be on guard how we speak of men and things around us. . . . The principle [sic] evil existed among the Catholic part of the Halfbreeds; but we cannot deny that many on our side of the question were drawn in to join plots and plans which they but very imperfectly understood, and there is a spirit of national sympathy which connects them together by a very strong bond of union.<sup>56</sup>

Later in 1835, William Cockran, another Protestant missionary, further explains the nature of the discontent which

. . . had been raging amongst the former [Roman Catholics] for several months; it was now ready to burst forth into open resistance. They wanted only the sanction of the Protestant Half-breeds to carry their threats into accestion [sic]. They were active in stirring up their worst feelings, and soon got them partly to unite in the same cause. As soon as a coalition was affected, and the parties understood each other; they began to resist the Governor's authority; dispute the territorial rights of the Hudson's Bay Company; their exclusive right to trade and determined to settle the matter by scalping [?] the Governor and obtaining a representative of their own. . . . One cabal succeeded another throughout the whole winter.<sup>57</sup>

It appears obvious from these comments that the Protestant mixed-bloods no less than their Catholic relations were involved in the free trade movement and were

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<sup>56</sup>C.M.S.A., I.C., D.T. Jones to the Clerical Secretary, Red River Settlement, 10 August 1835, quoted in John E. Foster, "The Country Born in the Red River Settlement. . .," p.236.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., William Cockran to the Secretaries, Grand Rapids, 28 October 1835, quoted by Foster, "The Country-born in the Red River Settlement. . .," p.206.

equally discontented with the Company's monopoly. Furthermore, the protest of the 1840s, which was a continuation of the agitation for free trade alluded to by Jones and Cockran, was composed of both Protestant and Catholic mixed-blood traders.

If the free trade movement did not lead to fundamental social change this was not because of a lack of support from the Protestant mixed-bloods but because the leadership of the movement was easily co-opted by the Company. Foster himself notes that "an examination of métis activists as distinct from the Hudson Bay English participants in the events of 1846 to 1849 and 1869-70 suggests, with the exception of the Riel and Goulet families, a lack of continuity between the activists of the free trade movement and those of the first Riel rising."<sup>58</sup> It is well known that following the Sayer trial a number of the more influential French Catholic mixed-bloods were appointed to the Council of Assiniboia for the first time.<sup>59</sup> The men most deeply involved in the free trade movement, aside from Louis Riel Sr., who was never accepted as an equal among the French mixed-blood merchants,<sup>60</sup> were Andrew McDermot and his Protestant mixed-blood partner, James Sinclair. Even before the resolution of the free trade dispute Simpson attempted to reach a settlement with McDermot who "once more occupied his old position of tolerated private trader, for late in 1846 one of his

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<sup>58</sup>"Some Questions and Perspectives on the Problem of Métis Roots," in Jennifer S.H. Brown and Jacqueline Peterson, eds., The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America, Manitoba Studies in Native History I (Winnipeg: Univ. of Manitoba Press, 1985), p.89, note 24.

<sup>59</sup>Lionel Dorge, "The Métis and Canadien Councillors of Assiniboia," The Beaver, Parts I-III (Summer, 1974), pp.12-19 (Autumn, 1974), pp.39-45 (Winter, 1974), pp.51-58.

<sup>60</sup>Robert Gosman, "The Riel and Lagimodière Families in Red River Society," Manuscript Report Series, no.171 (Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, National Historic Sites, 1976).

sons was put in charge of Pembina Post."<sup>61</sup> Shortly after the Sayer trial, Sinclair wrote to McDermot indicating his willingness to settle with Simpson. Particularly revealing is Sinclair's remark that he "might have done much but you know how little I cared about the free trade provided I was let alone and fairly treated."<sup>62</sup> In 1853, Sinclair made a secret agreement with Simpson that he would lead a party of emigrants to the Columbia River area in return for a grant of 200 head of cattle, the rank of clerk in the Company, and a promise of rapid promotion.<sup>63</sup> Once the limited objectives of the Catholic and Protestant merchant leaders of the free trade movement had been achieved, which merely involved improving their own access to the market, they abandoned any attempt to promote change in Red River.

If the causes of social protest had little to do with the supposed nomadism of the Métis, neither is it appropriate to see the habits of the Catholic mixed-bloods as nomadic in comparison to the sedentary ways of the Protestant mixed-bloods. A key problem with the comparison between the nomadic and sedentary habits of the mixed-bloods of Red River is that Foster does not view attempts by the Catholic mixed-bloods to settle permanently upon the land as being of equal significance with the same process among the Protestant mixed-bloods. While he celebrates the beneficial influence of the Protestant clergy upon their parishioners, the attempt of the Catholic clergy to encourage settlement is

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<sup>61</sup>E.E. Rich, ed. Eden Colville's Letters, 1849-52, intro. by W.L. Morton (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1956), p.lxxiii.

<sup>62</sup>P.A.B.C., Sinclair Collection, Letter from James Sinclair to Andrew McDermot, 19 March 1851, quoted in D. Geneva Lent, West of the Mountains: James Sinclair and the Hudson's Bay Company (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1963), p.227.

<sup>63</sup>Irene M. Spry, "Free Men and Free Trade, " (A Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, 5 June 1979, Saskatoon), p.41.

denigrated. Thus Foster comments that in Red River "the Métis came under the influence of French-speaking, Roman Catholic priests from Lower Canada who encouraged them to squat on river lots to the south and west of the junction of the Red and Assiniboine rivers."<sup>64</sup> Foster sees attempts by Catholic mixed-bloods to settle on the land solely as a violation of the property rights of the Hudson's Bay Company. Yet evidence that the Catholic Métis wanted to begin farming on a permanent basis, which became most pronounced as the hunt declined in the 1860s, reveals their willingness to adapt to new conditions. Louis Goulet, son of Moïse Goulet and a French-Cree woman, Marie Beauchamp, who was born on 6 October 1859 on the banks of the Gratiot River near Red River,<sup>65</sup> reveals that the Catholic Métis were aware of the nature of the changes taking place in the Red River area:

By the time I was six or eight years old (the age when we start to have a clearer recollection of the past) it was between 1865 and 1870 and the Red River country had already changed a lot. For the past couple of years the buffalo had been nothing but a memory of days gone by. There were no more herds like those I remembered seeing in the valley. Quite a few little boys my age had never set eyes on one of those proud animals. A significant number of people were beginning to raise livestock and almost every family already had its little vegetable garden. Here and there you could see pigs and sheep, every home had its chicken coop and dairy cattle were popular. Each day there were more and more people sowing small fields of wheat, barley and oats. The great hunts were disappearing to make way for grain farming.

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. We had just seen proof that the old timers were wrong in thinking that the immense herds could never be wiped out, and we knew that from now on the age of the great hunt was over. What's more, my parents, as hunters of the open plains, could feel changes coming that they didn't like and weren't ready to accept on short notice.

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<sup>64</sup>"The Mixed Bloods and the Red River Settlement," in Lewis H. Thomas, and others, eds. The Prairie West to 1905: A Canadian Sourcebook (Toronto: Oxford Univ. Press, 1975), p.37.

<sup>65</sup>Ray Ellenwood, trans., Vanishing Spaces: Memoirs of Louis Goulet, by Guillaume Charette (1976, rpt. Winnipeg: Editions Bois Brûlés, 1980), pp.1-3.

People knew the prairie soil was very rich, capable of feeding the large population who would share it sooner or later. That was what the missionaries (most of whom preached farming as much as the gospel) were always predicting.

From there it wasn't a big step for the Métis to turn 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. So began the race for easily cultivated grain land which led to the wild bidding still famous in history as the Great Boom of 1882.<sup>66</sup>

Foster also fails to explain that the Company opposed the settlement of the Protestant mixed-bloods no less than the settlement of the Catholics. In his testimony before the Select Committee of 1857, Griffiths Owen Corbett complains that the Company took every possible measure to discourage the formation of a new Protestant parish on the Assiniboine as is shown by the following exchange between the Corbett and his interrogator on the Committee:

2682. Did you ever know of any objection being made to the formation of a missionary station or settlement in any other portion of the territory? We considered that there were measures taken which were equivalent to a prohibition in reference to our own station.

2683. What is your own station? It is called Headingly on the Assiniboine River, about 12 miles from the seat of Government.

2684. What measures were taken of a prohibitory nature in regard to that? Immediately after I had begun building a little cottage (for we have to begin with a tent, then a cottage, and then a little chapel), and had settled down, and the people had manifested a disposition to gather round me, the Hudson's Bay company raised the terms upon which each settler could have lands. The original terms were that each settler should pay down £2 before he could set his foot upon a lot of land; and at the time of which I speak the Hudson's Bay company raised the terms up to £12; so that no settler could legally settle down upon a lot of land without going down to the agent of the Hudson's Bay Company, at the Fort, and paying £12.

2685. Was this a sum in addition to the price of the land? No; those were the terms upon which they could have it; a sort of deposit or pledge. A council of my own people was formed on account of this, wishing me to represent this grievance to the Hudson's Bay Company's officer. Accordingly, I sought an interview with the agent at Upper Fort Garry, Mr. Black, who very kindly received me, and talked over the matter, and promised to represent it to the authorities in London, but could not promise me any redress. I also represented it to the bishop, because it was the wish of the people that I should do so. The bishop said that the difficulties could not have been foreseen, but that he would

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid., pp.13-15.

represent it in other quarters also. Since the bishop's arrival in England I have asked his Lordship whether any change has taken place for the better; and he says that it is rather for the worse, because now the people have to pay down £ 15 instead of £ 12 in my own immediate district. Therefore perhaps had not this committee been sitting, I should have felt a desire, before returning to the country, to have sought an interview with the Colonial Secretary, for the purpose of having some change introduced; because we have appealed to the authorities in the country, and have had no change whatsoever introduced in my own district.<sup>67</sup>

The Company opposed settlement because a large population of unemployed men in Red River depressed labour rates while an unlimited supply of farm land would have provided an alternative to wage labour.

The importance of Foster's analysis, in terms of the development of the whig interpretation of Red River society, is that he replaces the old vocabulary of whig polemic, involving civilization versus savagery, with a new terminology in which "Country-born" is opposed to Métis. Without a detailed study of the historical usage of such terms, the reader is unlikely to perceive that the anachronism of the whig interpretation is as much facilitated by this new dichotomy as by that which preceded it.

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<sup>67</sup>Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons, Report of the Select Committee appointed to consider the state of those British possessions in North America under the administration of the Hudson's Bay Company (London: n.p., 1857), pp.138-9.

CHAPTER THREE  
THE INVASION OF RED RIVER

Although Frits Pannekoek's work is in part a critique of the idea that the churches created social order in Red River, it is also at a deeper level yet another reformulation of the whig interpretation. The whig tendencies in Pannekoek's analysis of Red River society can be seen in his contention that the Canadian incursion was necessary because it brought order to a community divided by religious strife between the progressive Protestant "Country-born" who supported the Canadian annexationists and the backward Catholic Métis who opposed them.<sup>1</sup> "One half of Red River," Pannekoek argues, "was becoming sedentary, Protestant and English, the other nomadic, Catholic and French."<sup>2</sup> While the Protestant mixed-bloods were transformed "from parochial settlers

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<sup>1</sup>Pannekoek employs John Elgin Foster's term "Country-born" even though he does not accept Foster's idea that the relationship between the Catholic and Protestant mixed-bloods was harmonious.

<sup>2</sup>Frits Pannekoek, "The Churches and the Social Structure in the Red River Area, 1818-1850," (PhD Dissertation, Queen's Univ., 1973), p.186.

whose concern was principally with the internal politics of Red River"<sup>3</sup> into loyal supporters of the British Empire and a new transcontinental nation, the Catholic Métis languished in a state which "may have been a balance between civilization and barbarism."<sup>4</sup> An analysis of the contemporary sources will reveal the anachronism inherent in Pannekoek's analysis by showing that only a minority of the Protestant mixed-bloods supported the Canadian Party in Red River; that many Catholic Métis merchants actually favoured union with Canada; and that far from creating social order the main result of the Canadian incursion was to re-establish the existing oligarchy.

Throughout his works, Frits Pannekoek claims that the Catholic and Protestant mixed-bloods became implacable enemies. Yet the evidence he provides of actual conflict is dubious. The statement of Rev. David Jones, an Anglican priest in Red River from 1823 to 1833, is the strongest he is able to muster despite extensive research in the Church Missionary Society Archives. Jones reports that a child in his congregation berated a Catholic Métis for the "heathen rites" of image worship and Latin preaching. Jones records that "the Catholic became so incensed that he ripped the catechism out of the Anglican's hands and threw it in the fire."<sup>5</sup> Remarkably, this argument between children is the only instance cited by Pannekoek of direct conflict between the Catholic and Protestant mixed-bloods prior to the Riel Resistance.

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<sup>3</sup>Frits Pannekoek, "The Rev. Griffiths Owen Corbett and the Red River Civil War of 1869-70," Canadian Historical Review, 57 (1976), p.147.

<sup>4</sup>"The Churches and the Social Structure. . .," p.288.

<sup>5</sup>C.M.S.A., David Jones to the Secretary, 26 December 1826, quoted in Frits Pannekoek, "The Rev. Griffiths Owen Corbett and the Red River Civil War of 1869-70," Canadian Historical Review, 57 (1976) p.135.

Virtually all of Pannekoek's assumptions about the relations between the Catholic and Protestant mixed-bloods in Red River are inferences derived from speculations about the effect of scandals among the elite. According to Pannekoek it was "racial flashpoints" such as the Ballenden scandal of 1851 which "broke the elite into its Country-born, white, and clerical fragments."<sup>6</sup> Since it can be shown that the elite was far more polyglot than the population as a whole and that the rate of marriage between Hudson's Bay Company officers and mixed-blood women did not decline after the Foss-Pelly scandal,<sup>7</sup> Pannekoek's contention that divisions in Red River started with the elite and spread to the generality<sup>8</sup> is severely compromised. Pannekoek's claim that a majority of the Protestant mixed-bloods supported the Canadian Party during the Riel Resistance is an equally anachronistic aspect of his interpretation of Red River history which deserves close examination.

Frits Pannekoek's argument that a state of civil war developed in Red River begins with the premise that although relations between the Catholic and Protestant mixed-bloods "had been amicable" as late as the free trade crisis of 1849, the influence of Griffiths Owen Corbett led the Protestant mixed-bloods to "refuse to think of race as a valid unifying force in Red River."<sup>9</sup> Stressing that

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<sup>6</sup>"The Anglican Church and the Disintegration of Red River Society, 1818-1870," in Carl Berger and Ramsay Cook, eds., The West and the Nation: Essays in Honour of W.L. Morton (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), p.73.

<sup>7</sup>This will be demonstrated in an analysis of Sylvia Van Kirk's works in Chapter Four of this thesis.

<sup>8</sup>Pannekoek argues that in the later 1850's "the factionalization of the elite, the elite which was to have provided the example and guidance in the paternalistic society that was Red River, contributed to the lack of unity among the lower orders already split between Scots, Country-born and Métis." See, "The Churches and the Social Structure in the Red River Area, 1818-1850," (PhD dissertation, Queen's University, 1973), pp.155-6.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp.219-20.

"Corbett despised Catholics and painted them as equal to the basest pagans in Red River,"<sup>10</sup> Pannekoek reasons that the most significant result of the movement for Crown Colony status led by Corbett was the adoption of a loyalist, Protestant, and anti-Catholic identity by the Protestants. Pannekoek argues that when Corbett became embroiled in a scandal over his attempt to perform an abortion upon his Protestant mixed-blood servant and mistress Maria Thomas, he retained most of his support by claiming that the charge was a Company plot to discredit him. Following Corbett's expulsion from Rupert's Land in June 1864 "only the Canadian Party had the potentiality of offering the direction English Red River could accept and needed."<sup>11</sup> As a result, Pannekoek argues, the "Country-born" fired by religious hatred of the Catholic Métis supported the Canadian Party against Riel's forces.

Although Pannekoek assumes that a significant portion of the Protestant mixed-bloods, and not merely Corbett's own parishioners, came to share his anti-Catholic prejudices, he offers no proof of this. Much of the support Corbett received was based on his agitation against the Company rather than his anti-Catholicism. It was mainly Corbett's criticism of the Company which led James Ross to use his position as editor of the Nor'Wester to rally support for Corbett. Yet, on 28 January 1860, Ross denied that sectarian bitterness divided the people of Red River. In a commentary on the quality of the Protestant schools in the settlement Ross stated that "happily there is perfect harmony and good feeling between both sections [Catholic and Protestant]. . . . The lamentable feuds, the bitter animosities which spring from a difference of creed and which

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p.219.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p.250.

mar the usefulness of educational systems in other countries, have not germinated here as yet."<sup>12</sup>

Pannekoek argues that since Corbett hated the Company as vehemently as he detested Catholics, his attack on the growing powers of the Governor of Assiniboia, William Mactavish, because of his marriage to Sara (Mary Sally) McDermot in St. Boniface Cathedral, "crystallized the Protestant identity of the Country-born [even as] he increased their hatred of Catholics."<sup>13</sup> A more logical conclusion to be drawn from Corbett's protest about the Governor's marriage to a Catholic is that the elite was becoming more polyglot in the final decade before Confederation. No longer overshadowed by the presence of George Simpson, who had early exhibited a racist attitude, the acculturated mixed-blood women of Red River's elite were finally enjoying a status commensurate with their privileged position in fur trade society. Whether Catholic or Protestant, the mixed-blood daughters of Red River's elite appeared to the status-conscious ranks of the Hudson's Bay Company officers to be much more desirable marriage partners than their poorer white sisters among the Kildonan Scots. Unlike their mothers, in many cases Indian women who had married according to the 'custom of the country,'<sup>14</sup> the mixed-blood daughters of Red River's elite were educated to fulfill

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<sup>12</sup>Nor'Wester, "Education in Red River," 28 January 1860.

<sup>13</sup>Frits Pannekoek, "The Reverend Griffiths Owen Corbett and the Red River Civil War of 1869-70," Canadian Historical Review, 57 (1976), p.146.

<sup>14</sup>Robert Clouston, one of the clerks who went to Fort Garry in August 1842, wrote of the wives of James Sinclair, Alexander Ross, and Andrew McDermot, all prominent men in Red River, that they "are . . . natives who seldom make their appearance before strangers - except in Church." Although, of the three, only Ross's wife, who was of the Okanogan tribe, was a full-blooded Indian, it seems that many wives of the first generation of officers to settle in Red River had little chance to learn the fashionable ways of Victorian society. See, Elaine Allan Mitchell, "A Red River Gossip," The Beaver (Spring, 1961), p.8.

the Victorian upper-middle-class<sup>15</sup> ideal of femininity. That men such as Corbett, who had only arrived in Red River in 1853, and whose entire career there would occupy barely more than ten years, could not accept the position of mixed-blood women and Catholics in this society reflects his dissatisfaction with his lowly social position as the incumbent of Headingley parish. Corbett's own exploitation of Maria Thomas brought an end to his career and led some of his most devoted followers to question his leadership role and the nature of his mission in Red River.

If the Protestant mixed-bloods really hated Catholics as much as Pannekoek suggests, they would never have accepted John Christian Schultz as a leader because, as W.L. Morton observes, in 1867 Schultz "married Anne Campbell Farquharson when that lady had just been baptized as a convert to Roman Catholicism."<sup>16</sup> That this fact was widely known to Schultz's supporters is demonstrated by a letter sent to the Globe on 28 March 1870 in which the writer, who identifies himself only as "a Red River Loyalist," mentions Schultz's connection to the Roman Catholic Church and even suggests that he was a lapsed convert to Catholicism.<sup>17</sup> Although Schultz had married in St. Boniface cathedral nearly a decade after Corbett's condemnation of William Mactavish's marriage in the same cathedral, Pannekoek insists that "there was no deep-rooted hatred of

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<sup>15</sup>It is assumed here that Red River society was composed of a merchant class (which included both the commissioned officers of the Hudson's Bay Company and the free-traders) and a class of single commodity producers, (subsistence farmers, buffalo hunters, and trappers) whose ranks also provided a pool of casual labour. The former class will be referred to as the middle-class while the latter will be called the lower-class. For a more detailed analysis of the process which created this class system see Chapter Five.

<sup>16</sup>W.L. Morton, "Introduction," in W.L. Morton, ed., Alexander Begg's Red River Journal and other papers relative to the Red River Resistance of 1869-70 (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1956), p.23.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p.496.

Dr. Schultz and the Canadian Party."<sup>18</sup> Indeed, an essential feature of Pannekoek's interpretation of events in Red River is that Corbett taught the Protestant mixed-bloods to hate the Catholic Métis because of their Catholicism and thus to identify with the Canadian Party.<sup>19</sup> This seems less likely when one considers that the most loyal supporters of Griffith's Owen Corbett, such as John Taylor, became followers of John Christian Schultz. Clearly, the agitation in favour of Canadian annexation was not a sectarian movement and those who participated in it did so as part of a political strategy to gain power in Red River.

Lieutenant-Colonel John Stoughton Dennis, a surveyor whose role in attempting to provoke hostilities between the Protestant and Catholic mixed-bloods is fully documented in his letters to Governor-designate William McDougall, provides conclusive evidence that Corbett found few followers who shared his religious bigotry. An assessment of the feelings of the Protestant mixed-bloods shortly after McDougall had been prevented from entering Rupert's Land was given by Lieutenant-Colonel Dennis.<sup>20</sup> Dennis reported to McDougall on 27 October 1869,

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<sup>18</sup>Pannekoek, "The Reverend Griffiths Owen Corbett . . .," p.144.

<sup>19</sup>For a convincing refutation of the argument that the mixed-bloods of Red River were divided by religious hatred, see Irene M. Spry, "The Métis and Mixed-Bloods of Rupert's Land Before 1870," in Jennifer S.H. Brown and Jacqueline Peterson, eds., The New Peoples: Being and Becoming Métis in North America, Manitoba Studies in Native History I (Winnipeg: Univ. of Manitoba Press, 1985), pp.95-118.

<sup>20</sup>Lieutenant-Colonel Dennis had received a commission from William McDougall, when the latter held the position of Canadian Minister of Public Works, to survey the settlement in preparation for the transfer of Rupert's Land to Canada. Dennis, born of a United Empire Loyalist family in Kingston, Upper Canada in 1820, led an abortive raid on the Fenians in 1866. His conduct during that raid caused Captain King, who fought with Dennis at Fort Erie, to label him a "coward" and a "Poltrooney scoundrel." See Colin Read, "The Red River Rebellion and J.S. Dennis, 'Lieutenant and Conservator of the Peace,'" Manitoba History, 3 (Spring, 1982), p.12.

following his return from the lower part of the settlement on the west bank of the Red River, that "the general disposition is in favour of receiving the incoming Governor with respect but there is no enthusiasm."<sup>21</sup> The Protestant mixed-bloods resented that the transfer had been undertaken without consulting them. With respect to the Catholic mixed-bloods blocking the entry of McDougall, Dennis reported that the "English-speaking portion of the colony" felt that "when you present to us the issue of a conflict with the French party, with whom we have hitherto lived in friendship. . . . we feel disinclined to enter upon it, and think that the Dominion should assume the responsibility of establishing amongst us what it, and it alone has decided upon."<sup>22</sup> Even at this early date, Dennis had sought to engage the Protestant mixed-bloods in military action but had been rebuffed because of the peaceful relations that had always existed among the people of Red River.

In spite of Lieutenant Dennis' statement to the contrary, Pannekoek argues that the Protestant mixed-bloods were inflamed by religious prejudice. The main evidence he provides for the bellicosity of the Protestant mixed-bloods is an excerpt from the diary of John Phelps Gardiner, the incumbent Anglican pastor of the largest Protestant parish, St. Andrew's. Pannekoek implies that Gardiner's diary entry for Thursday November 25, in which he describes a meeting at St. Andrew's, proves that Gardiner's parishioners were ready to respond to James Ross's call for an attack on the Catholic mixed-bloods to recover Government provisions seized by Riel:

On reaching home late in the afternoon I found the meetg still going on  
- I went in. Mr. Jas Ross was speakg & ask<sup>d</sup> the people to go & take

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<sup>21</sup>S.P., 1870, vol. III, no. 12, J.S. Dennis to William McDougall, Wednesday, 27 October 1869, p.11.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

away some Gov<sup>t</sup> provisions wh<sup>n</sup> the Insurgents have seized - asks them if they were will<sup>g</sup> to go at [?] the point of the Bayonet - I was shocked at some things he said & left the room - after a while I went in ag<sup>n</sup>. I found that they had passed resolutions to go and take the Fort & 40 sledges & abt 100 escort were pledged to go. I protested ab<sup>t</sup> this. This people I know are not prepared for this & suggested that they sh<sup>d</sup> form a Comm of Safety for self defence - ascertain how many men we have & how many guns & as the French have proposed a Provisional Gov<sup>t</sup> and the people protested agst this. It was resolved to obtain the signatures of all the English people agst it. Our people are not organized & a conflict with the French w<sup>d</sup> be disastrous.<sup>23</sup>

While this passage appears to show that at least 100 men from St. Andrew's parish were willing to launch an assault on Riel's men, Alexander Begg's reference to the same meeting must also be considered before any judgment can be made of Protestant mixed-blood attitudes. In his diary on 29 November 1869 Alexander Begg recorded that:

It is reported to-day and substantiated by parties who were present at the time that Mr. James Ross and Maurice Lowman attended a meeting at St. Andrews and led the people to understand that 220 Two hundred and twenty of the Scotch were ready and in fact that One hundred & eight were going to the Town the next day (Friday last) to take charge of the Government Pork and called on them to support their fellow countrymen. As soon as this was heard of by the Scotch (early next morning) Alex. Polson was sent down to the Settlement to say that Mr. Ross was not authorized to make such statements and as far as the Scotch were concerned the Government Pork might go to the d---!

At the same meeting it was given out to the people that Gov. MacTavish was a prisoner - also Dr. Cowan - and J.H. McTavish, and a resolution was passed that Gov. MacTavish be released at all hazards. There is a very strong feeling against Canadiens and others trying to start a fight prematurely. Mr. James Ross spoke for two hours at the meeting in St. Andrews last Thursday evening and is reported to have been so drunk that he left his vomit on the floor. Maurice Lowman at the same time made a war speech. Mr. James Ross is very much condemned in Kildonan the parish he represented as delegate for the course he pursued in St. Andrews.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p.148.

<sup>24</sup>W.L. Morton, ed. Alexander Begg's Red River Journal and other papers relative to the Red River Resistance of 1869-70 (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1956), p.190.

One can well imagine how the denunciation of Ross by the Kildonan Scots affected his credibility. Ross not only lost the support of many of the men in St. Andrew's but he also undermined his own position in the parish of Kildonan where he had been raised.

On 28 November 1869, Thomas Bunn reported another attempt to incite the Protestant mixed-bloods to take action. Bunn "stated that a great deal of excitement had been caused in his neighbourhood by false reports regarding the Government Pork question - and that on learning the truth that it did not amount to what was represented, he had to turn back over two hundred men to their homes who had turned out armed to go to Fort Garry and rescue the Pork."<sup>25</sup> Just as in St. Andrew's parish, a distorted picture of the situation had been presented in order to provoke the people into action. Passions had been aroused only because the people in the Mapleton area had been told that "lives were in danger."<sup>26</sup> Thomas Bunn's explanation of the true situation was enough to disperse the assembly.

The response of William McDougall to appeals for advice on whether to act against Riel reveals the nature of the relationship between the Protestant and Catholic mixed-bloods. McDougall wrote that "in view of the peculiar relations existing between the French half-breeds and the rest of the native population, I thought it very undesirable to allow a 'fight' to take place about Government property, until some collision had occurred which would excite the feelings of the English and Scotch half-breeds and exasperate them against the insurgents."<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p.189.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>S.P., vol. III, no. 12, William McDougall to Honourable Joseph Howe, Larose's Farm, Pembina, U.S., 29 November 1869, p.65.

McDougall's feeling that the relations between the Protestant and Catholic mixed-bloods were "peculiar" can be explained by his lack of understanding of their common Cree kinship. McDougall's remarks should be interpreted with the knowledge that he had come prepared for military action against Riel and may have brought up to 350 rifles and 30,000 rounds of ammunition on the advice of Dennis,<sup>28</sup> some of which arrived in Red River.<sup>29</sup>

A further indication of the feelings of the Protestant mixed-bloods towards the Catholic mixed-bloods is the statement of Major J. Wallace in November 1869. Wallace advised McDougall that William Auld Tait, the son of a Kildonan Scot and a mixed-blood woman, had stated that the English-speaking residents of Red River were opposed to a conflict with "those who have been born and brought up among us, ate with us, slept with us, hunted with us, traded with us, and are our own flesh and blood."<sup>30</sup> Tait's comments are particularly significant since he represented Griffiths Owen Corbett's former parish of Headingley on the committee of twenty-four elected to consider the establishment of a provisional government. As Tait's statement shows, even in Headingley an element of the Protestant mixed-bloods had a strong feeling of solidarity with the Catholic mixed-bloods.

Another reflection of Pannekoek's neglect of sources which conflict with his interpretation is his failure to consider evidence that only a minority of the

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<sup>28</sup>For this estimate of the number of guns, see Colin Read, "The Red River Rebellion. . .," p.14. Read cites Don W. Thompson, Men and Meridians: The History of Surveying and Mapping in Canada, 1867 to 1916, vol. 2 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1966), p.15. No exact source is given by Thompson.

<sup>29</sup>S.P., vol. III, no. 12, "Correspondence and Papers. . .," W.E. Sanford to Joseph Howe, Hamilton, 18 November 1869, p.16.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., Notes by J.W. between November 4<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1869, p.61.

Protestant mixed-bloods were willing to engage in military training for defensive purposes. The events immediately following the November 29 meetings are not in dispute. As Pannekoek notes, "William McDougall, still at Pembina, declared himself governor, not knowing that the Canadian government had refused possession of the territory until Riel had been crushed. He despatched Colonel J.S. Dennis into the settlement as Conservator of the Peace with wide powers to put down the insurgents."<sup>31</sup> The commission issued to Lieutenant-Colonel Dennis on 1 December 1869 authorized him in the Queen's name to "raise, organize, arm, equip and provision a sufficient force" to "attack, arrest, disarm, or disperse the . . . armed men so unlawfully assembled and disturbing the peace; and for that purpose, and with the force aforesaid, to assault, fire upon, pull down, or break into any fort, house, stronghold, or other place in which the said armed men may be found."<sup>32</sup> In response to an appeal from Dennis, who was at first believed to be acting under the authority of the legitimate governor, the English-speaking residents of Red River organized militia units. Anglican Bishop Robert Machray decided that the Church Missionary Society rule against involvement in politics should be disregarded. In a meeting with the Anglican clergy on 4 December, Machray stated that "every man must take a decided stand for loyalty and religion & act for his own people's safety."<sup>33</sup> As Pannekoek himself points out, "by 4 December there were eight [sic nine] forces in training: 71 at the stone Fort, 50 at St Andrews, 27 at Portage la Prairie, 25 at St Pauls, 74 at Kildonan,

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<sup>31</sup>Frits Pannekoek, "The Reverend Griffiths Owen Corbett. . . ," p.140.

<sup>32</sup>S.P., 1870, vol. III, no. 12, William McDougall to J.S. Dennis, 1 December 1869, p.105.

<sup>33</sup>Pannekoek, p.149.

50 at St Peter's, 40 at Winnipeg, 31 at Poplar Point, and 31 at High Bluff."<sup>34</sup> It must be emphasized that these men, numbering 399 in all, represented the total force responding for training purposes to the call of what was thought to be the legally constituted government of Red River.

An analysis of the number, origin, and reported length of training of the volunteers will not sustain Pannekoek's claim that the Protestant mixed-bloods responded "eagerly and were well organized well before 1 Dec."<sup>35</sup> Only 208, or 52 percent of those who turned out for training exercises, were from the Protestant mixed-blood areas of the Lower Fort, St. Paul's, Poplar Point, High Bluff, and St. Andrew's, while the remaining 191 were from areas populated mainly by Scots, Canadians, or Saulteaux. The largest single group of volunteers consisted of 120 Saulteaux from St. Peter's whose services were temporarily refused by Dennis except for 50 men whom he "retained . . . to serve as a permanent guard for the Fort."<sup>36</sup> Few mixed-bloods lived in the Scots parish of Kildonan. Nor did the contingent from Winnipeg contain many mixed-bloods. It is significant that Dennis always referred to the volunteers from Winnipeg as "Canadians." The 27 early recruits from Portage la Prairie also included a large number of Canadians. When one considers that the total population of Protestant mixed-bloods in Red River at this time was over 4,000, 208 men does not appear to have been a very significant response. The lack of support for action is demonstrated by the reaction of the men in St. Andrew's parish. John Phelps Gardiner stated in his diary entry of 27 November 1869 that "the Comm for Public

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p.141.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p.140.

<sup>36</sup>S.P., 1870, vol. III, no. 12, "2 A," J.S. Dennis to William McDougall, Stone Fort, Lower Settlement, 2 December 1869, p.77.

Safety reported 302 men in the Parish of St. Andrew's, the largest Protestant parish]. . . ."<sup>37</sup> If the total number of men was 302, then only one-third of them responded to James Ross's appeal for action on Thursday 25. It seems that support for Dennis declined when the men of St. Andrew's learned the true feelings of the Kildonan Scots, because by 4 December only 50 of the 302 turned out for training exercises. These 50 men represented only one-sixth of the men available in St. Andrew's parish - hardly firm support for military action. Nor were those who did turn out well organized. The time spent drilling the nine forces was as little as 1 day in the case of St. Paul, with an overall average of only 4 days, while the longest training period of 10 days was for "Chief Prince"<sup>38</sup> and the Saulteaux.<sup>39</sup>

The List of Rights proclaimed by the provisional government on 1 December 1869 had a significant impact on the Scots and the Protestant mixed-bloods in further strengthening their resolve not to act against Riel. In a letter of 4 December, Dennis complained to Schultz that the latter's estimate of Protestant mixed-blood support for the Canadian cause was too optimistic and that the only sign of enthusiasm was displayed by the Saulteaux of St. Peter's.<sup>40</sup> So weak was support for the Canadian Party after the publication of the List of Rights that Lieutenant Dennis was unable to raise a small force to relieve Schultz and the Canadians barricaded in Schultz' store. Dennis got the 40 volunteers (likely Saulteaux) then drilling at the Lower Fort to agree to go with him to Winnipeg,

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<sup>37</sup>Pannekoek, p.140.

<sup>38</sup>Henry Prince was Peguis's son and successor. Peguis named his son "Prince" because he had been told that the Queen's son was called Prince.

<sup>39</sup>S.P., 1870, vol.III, no.12, "Record of Proceedings. . .," "B.8," J.S. Dennis to William McDougall, p.125.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., J.S. Dennis to Schultz, 4 December 1869, p.115.

but when he arrived at St. Andrew's confidently expecting to secure an additional sixty men, he found "an entire absence of the ardour which existed previously."<sup>41</sup> Some of the leading men in this large Protestant parish assured him that the change had come about because of the distribution of the List of Rights.<sup>42</sup>

Disappointed with the result of his call for voluntary support for action against Riel's forces, Dennis issued a proclamation on 6 December to "all loyal men of the North-West Territories to assist me by every means in their power" to subdue the insurgents.<sup>43</sup> Yet, on the next day at the Scotch settlement of Kildonan delegates were chosen to urge Dennis to halt aggressive measures. Dennis reports that, "I speedily became satisfied that the only condition on which the Scotch people would now arm and drill, would be to act strictly on the defensive, indeed, I was informed that a public meeting, held in the vicinity had just broken up; at which delegates were appointed to visit me at the Stone Fort, without delay, to request that aggressive measures might for the present be abandoned. This attitude on their part, just at the present time, strengthened the conclusion I had come to, as to the change in sentiment of the people of the Lower Parishes."<sup>44</sup>

Thus, the majority of the Scots and the Protestant mixed-bloods were unwilling to be drawn into a conflict with Riel's men. By 6 December, even James Ross, who had tried desperately to get the Protestant mixed-bloods to support Dennis, urged him not to "make any aggressive movement at present."<sup>45</sup> On 8

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., "Record of Proceedings. . .," J.S. Dennis, 7 December 1869, p.111.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., "K 1," J.S. Dennis, p.119.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p.112.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., J. [ames] R. [oss] to Colonel Dennis, 6 December 1869, p.120.

December, Dennis received a letter from Bishop Machray expressing disappointment that the "English population" had not responded more positively to his appeal for support and advising that military action against the rebels should be abandoned.<sup>46</sup> Also on 8 December, the guide who had led McDougall to Pembina from St. Cloud, probably William Hallett, wrote to McDougall that "even among our English population we have to contend with worse characters than the French half-breeds. . . .The Scotch settlement won't join us or any other parish of the protestant population so that it would be the height of folly for us to take any aggressive steps, for we would be overpowered by numbers. . . .if the people were willing they could muster arms enough to put down the half-breeds, but they won't do it."<sup>47</sup>

Finally, on 9 December Dennis admitted that "having become convinced that it is useless longer to entertain any expectation of being enabled to get a reliable force with which to put down the party in arms, [I have] decided to abandon the call upon the English speaking people. . . .and so withdraw from a situation which the change in sentiment during the last few days has rendered a false one."<sup>48</sup> In accordance with his decision that further military action would be futile, Dennis dismissed the 399 men who had participated in military training exercises and prepared for his own hasty retreat from Red River to rejoin McDougall at Pembina.

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., "N," R. Rupert's Land to Colonel Dennis, Bishop's Court, 6 December 1869, pp.121-22.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., "5C," Letter from Guide on the state of public feeling at Red River to William McDougall, 8 December 1869, p.97.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., J.S. Dennis to William McDougall, 9 December 1869, p.113.

Although the foregoing analysis indicates that William McDougall and the Canadian Party were deeply involved in fomenting a sectarian war in Red River, this conclusion has been drawn from government documents which have been carefully edited to present Canadian interests in the most favourable light. Much pertinent evidence was suppressed by the Canadian government. The degree of this editing can be inferred by the survival of a reference to Dennis' actions before he left Pembina which had been deleted from the documents available to the public. Before his departure from Pembina on 16 December 1869 Dennis secretly issued a commission to Joseph Monkman, "an Indian of the Red River Settlement," to "induce certain tribes of Indians to join in a deadly war against the French half-breeds at Red River."<sup>49</sup> The original copy of this commission was presented by Rev. Father Richot to Sir George Cartier, then acting as Canadian Minister of Justice during the illness of Sir John A. Macdonald, together with a petition to the British government. The reference to this commission survives only because the memorandum written by Cartier to Lord Lisgar in which it occurs was printed at the request of Macdonald. According to Lord Dufferin, Lisgar's successor who approved the release of the memorandum, the memorandum itself "emanating from a member of the Privy Council and embodying advice, tendered by a Minister to the Queen's representative, is of course a most confidential paper; even its author could not have produced it before the Committee without my consent."<sup>50</sup> In the memorandum Cartier reveals that "the language of that commission is of such an extraordinary character that it was

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<sup>49</sup>Canada, Journals of the House of Commons, vol. VIII, Appendix no. 6, 1874, Report of the Select Committee on the Causes of the Difficulties in the North-West Territory in 1869-70, Memorandum of Sir George E. Cartier, Ottawa, 8 June 1870, p.175.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p.170.

thought proper not to have it printed among the 'correspondence and papers' designated as paper A [Report of the Select Committee of the Senate on the North-West Territories]."<sup>51</sup> It is obvious that McDougall and Dennis did everything in their power to provoke hostilities in Red River and that their influence, rather than a racial or religious conflict deeply rooted in the history of the community, created such violence as did occur.

Having considered the apathetic response of the Kildonan Scots and the Protestant mixed-bloods to Dennis' December call to arms, it must be emphasized that a significant proportion of the Catholic mixed-blood middle-class were willing to give active support to the Canadian Party. Far from being a civil war fought on the grounds of religious hatred between the Catholic and Protestant mixed-bloods, the Riel Resistance was much more complex in that initially the Canadian Party received perhaps as much support from the French-speaking bourgeoisie of St. Boniface as from the lower-class Protestant mixed-blood inhabitants of Corbett's former parish of Headingley. Since the outcome of the free trade movement in 1849 really benefitted only one element of the middle-class Catholic Métis, a number of whom were appointed to the Council of Assiniboia for the first time following the Sayer trial, many of these men adopted a pro-annexationist posture when faced by the collapse of the old order in Red River.

Among the most prominent pro-annexationist Catholic Métis was William Dease, appointed to the Council of Assiniboia in 1869.<sup>52</sup> As early as 27 October

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p.173.

<sup>52</sup>William Dease was the son of Chief Trader John Warren Dease, of Irish descent, and Geneviève Beignet. He married the daughter of Councillor of Assiniboia Maximilien Genthon and was appointed Collector of Customs, 1861, and Councillor, 1868. His brother John was also a Councillor of Assiniboia from 1861 until he left Red River for North Dakota in 1863. See Lionel Dorge, "The Métis

1869, Dease had willingly offered a force of Catholic mixed-bloods to accompany William McDougall into Red River.<sup>53</sup> Dease had assured Dennis during the latter's trip to Red River, bearing McDougall's proclamation, that he could raise "over ninety" Catholic Métis against the reliable men among Riel's supporters who did not "exceed three hundred in number."<sup>54</sup> In a later comment on the conflict, Charles Mair wrote that it was well known that "under the leadership of William Dease, about a hundred of the most respectable French half-breeds were in sympathy with the English loyalists. . . ."<sup>55</sup> Perhaps the lack of enthusiasm for conflict among the Protestant mixed-blood community led to a change of heart among Dease and his followers. By 8 December 1869, Joseph Marion had informed Dennis that Dease's party were unwilling "to go against the French to fight."<sup>56</sup>

In Pannekoek's earlier works no mention is made of a Catholic Métis middle-class, but in response to Robert Gosman's work on the position of the Riel family in Red River,<sup>57</sup> Pannekoek does admit to increasing social stratification among the Catholic Métis. Although Pannekoek now acknowledges the growth of a Catholic middle-class "concentrated in the parishes of St. Vital, St. Boniface, and St. Nor-

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and Canadien Councillors of Assiniboia," *The Beaver*, Part III (Winter, 1974), pp.56-58.

<sup>53</sup>University of British Columbia Archives, Report of J.S. Dennis, 27 October, 1869, pp.1-4 (typescript), cited in Colin Read, "The Red River Rebellion. . .," p.14.

<sup>54</sup>S.P., 1870, vol. III, no. 12, "Record of Proceedings. . .," J.S. Dennis, Wednesday, 1 December 1869, p.107.

<sup>55</sup>Charles Mair, Review of George T. Denison's *Soldiering in Canada*, *Ottawa Citizen*, October 6, 1900, quoted in Norman Shrive, *Charles Mair: Literary Nationalist* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p.95.

<sup>56</sup>S.P., 1870, vol. III, no. 12, "Record of Proceedings. . .," "S," [Joseph Marion] to Colonel Dennis, St. Boniface, 8 December 1869, p.123.

<sup>57</sup>Robert Gosman, "The Riel and Lagimodière Families in Red River Society," *Manuscript Report Series*, no. 202 (Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, National Historic Sites, 1976).

bert," he claims that this middle-class element did not favour Canadian annexation because "that connection would spell an end of the commercial and agricultural hegemony of the St. Boniface merchant farmer elite."<sup>58</sup> The idea that the Catholic Métis middle-class did not favour Canadian annexation is contrary to all existing evidence about the conflict. Men such as Pascal Bréland, the son-in-law of Cuthbert Grant, with clear interests in maintaining the status quo in Red River, played key roles in the campaign against Riel. As Pannekoek acknowledges, it was Pascal Bréland who persuaded the "winterers" of the Saskatchewan district to remain neutral. The critical point is that Bréland was not an isolated individual but a member of a group of middle-class Catholic Métis who were as numerous as the Canadian Party's committed supporters in Headingley.<sup>59</sup> In an address to a Toronto assembly, gathered to raise support for a military expedition to Red River, John Schultz claimed that there was "a very considerable section of the French people who had been industrious and in comfortable circumstances and that section had always been loyal."<sup>60</sup> While his estimate that at "at least four hundred French half breeds . . . were loyal,"<sup>61</sup> is wildly exaggerated, Schultz's statement has a kernel of truth. If the ardour of

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<sup>58</sup>Frits Pannekoek, "Some Comments on the Social Origins of the Riel Protest of 1869," Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, Transactions, Series III, 34 (1977-78), pp.43-44.

<sup>59</sup>The Portage Party consisted of approximately 150 men. About 50 of these came from Portage la Prairie itself while about 100 men came from the area of Corbett's former parish of Holy Trinity. Since William Dease pledged over 90 middle-class Métis in support of McDougall, it would seem that there was as much initial support for the Canadian Party among the middle-class Métis as among the most radical supporters of Corbett. Dease had few followers among the lower-class Métis.

<sup>60</sup>Globe, 7 April 1870, "Report of Mass Meeting in Toronto, Held on the Arrival of Loyalist Refugees, April 6, 1870," reprinted in W.L. Morton, ed. and intro., Begg's Journal, p.513.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*

the pro-annexationist Catholic Métis faction cooled even before that of their lower-class counterparts in the Protestant community, it was perhaps because they were in a better position to assess the level of support for the Canadian Party in the Settlement.

Despite the total failure of Dennis's military adventure in December, Pannekoek maintains that the Protestant mixed-bloods were united in their opposition to Riel's Provisional government during the abortive February movement of the Portage Party against Riel.<sup>62</sup> A newly published account of the march of the Portage Party to Kildonan by George W. Sanderson, a participant in the expedition, is highly revealing of the degree to which the Portage Party was directed by Canadians and joined by both Protestant and Catholic mixed-bloods who had little intention of fighting Riel. Sanderson recalls that:

... about the middle of (February) 1870, a man came into the settlement and told us we were to go to the Scotch Settlement Kildonan. I have found out since that there are always busybodies making more trouble than is necessary on these occasions. But I was young then, so of course a bunch of us went. We were to hear what the leaders of the different churches would advise us to do, so we started out, mostly natives of the country, English and Scotch Halfbreeds, a few from eastern Canada who had come with the surveyors, and some French Half-breeds from the Portage. Among these were old Mr. Pocha and his three sons, Suza, William and Johnny, a man named McLean and his son, Farquar, also a man named Scott, these are the only ones I will mention in my story. When we got to the place of meeting, I forgot whether it was the church or school house, nearly everyone had gone home. Our captain (I believe his name was Boulton) and the others decided to return to Portage and High Bluff. We took our horses and sleighs as far as Headingly, left them there and walked the rest of the way, by the time we got to Kildonan there were over forty of us. Each one of us was given a gun, a muzzle loader of course and only three bullets, enough powder for the three shots, so we were not very formi[d]able. Riel had sent word that we should follow the road and if we had any arms we should keep them to ourselves and not make any show of them. There is no doubt

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<sup>62</sup>Pannekoek argues that "on the morning of 14 February, then, some 500 men, mostly semi-armed Country-born, were ready to take up a position at St. Boniface Cathedral and with the single cannon Schultz had brought down from the Lower Fort, breach the walls of Fort Garry." See, "The Reverend Griffiths Owen Corbett. . .," pp.145-6.

everything would have been alright had we followed the road as we were bid. When we got to the place near Fort Garry where the road made a detour we halted for awhile and held a council. Some of the men from eastern Canada wanted to show off and defy Riel's orders. They wanted to go straight across the forbidden ground. Old Mr. Pocha advised them to follow the road, I myself talked for some time and tried to induce the captain to let us follow the road. For my own part I was not afraid of the French Half-breeds, though we were just forty-four in number, and there were five hundred men in the fort. I knew Riel and many of his adherents, in fact I was related to some of his leaders.<sup>63</sup>

As one of the only accounts of the march of the Portage Party by a mixed-blood participant, Sanderson's reminiscences are crucial to an understanding of the motivations of the Protestant mixed-bloods. It is obvious from his account that the march to Kildonan did not result from tensions between the Catholic and Protestant mixed-bloods but was planned and directed by members of the Canadian Party.

The main authority Pannekoek cites for the events following the arrival of the Portage Party at Kildonan is Charles Mair. Mair, a protégé of William McDougall who had come to Red River in 1868 as paymaster of the Dawson Road crew, had married Schultz's niece and was closely associated with Schultz in his attempts to provoke hostilities against Riel. He was captured along with Schultz and made a prisoner in Fort Garry, but like Schultz he escaped. It was important for members of the Portage Party to insist that there was support for military action among the Protestant mixed-bloods. They could never admit that they alone had counselled violence. According to Charles Mair, on the morning of 16 February "a force of over five hundred men, armed with ladders, swords, clubs, rifles and cannon, was prepared to move on St. Boniface, plant the cannon there

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<sup>63</sup>Irene Spry, ed., "The 'Memories' of George William Sanderson 1846-1839," Canadian Ethnic Studies, 17 (1985), pp.24-25.

and breach the walls of Fort Garry."<sup>64</sup> This estimate of support for armed action is the same as Mair had used on 8 December when he advised McDougall that "the English have not risen because they have not been called upon. . . . Issue your proclamation and it will be responded by 500 men."<sup>65</sup>

Captain (later Major) Charles Boulton gives an account that is totally opposite that of Mair concerning the willingness of the Kildonan Scots and the Protestant mixed-bloods to take action against Riel. Boulton acknowledges that the Kildonanites and the Protestant mixed-bloods repudiated any call to arms, just as they had done when Dennis attempted to recruit them two months earlier. Many settlers expected the convention which had formed at the request of Donald A. Smith, the acting Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company who had received a commission to represent Canada in Red River, to bring about a settlement with Riel. Boulton admits that

. . . some of the settlers, seeing us arrive at Kildonan, were alarmed at the sudden turn affairs had taken. The action of the Convention, they expected, was about to bring a peaceful solution of the difficulties, which they hoped would be realized; but the appearance of another armed force on the scene cast all their hopes to the wind. Before leaving Portage la Prairie we had, of course, no knowledge of the arrangements that had been made between the commissioners and Riel and the population a few days earlier.<sup>66</sup>

Most of the participants in the demonstration of 16 February had been assembled by Schultz at the Lower Fort. Boulton recalls that "it was a fine sight, about 3 o'clock in the afternoon [16 February], to see three or four hundred

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<sup>64</sup>Mair Papers, "Murdoch McLeod", "J. Dilworth and Self", and "Notes on the Early Rebellion", cited in Norman Shrive, Charles Mair: Literary Nationalist (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p.101.

<sup>65</sup>S.P., 1870, vol. III, no. 12, "Record of Proceedings. . . ," "C," Charles Mair to William McDougall, Winnipeg, 8 November 1969, p.39.

<sup>66</sup>C. [Charles] A. [rkell] Boulton, Reminiscences of the North West Rebellions (Toronto: Grip Printing and Publishing Co., 1886), p.105.

settlers marching up to our neighbourhood, headed by a small cannon, drawn by four oxen, the whole under the leadership of Dr. Schultz, whose powerful figure stood out boldly as he led them up."<sup>67</sup> Boulton's recollections stand in stark contrast to Pannekoek's claim that civil war would have resulted but for a lack of leadership on the part of John Christian Schultz, who for "no apparent reason" was "reluctant to assume direction of the entire February movement once it arrived at Kildonan."<sup>68</sup>

Although Schultz had incited these men to gather at Kildonan, he failed to provoke them to launch an attack on Riel. Those assembled had no intention of assaulting Riel's forces but merely wanted to press for the release of prisoners. As Boulton explains, "the English settlers . . . had no disposition to attack him [Riel], their actions having been confined to a demonstration to force him to release the prisoners, which he had previously promised to do."<sup>69</sup> Donald A. Smith's account corroborates that of Boulton. Smith admits that "the great majority of the settlers, English and Scotch, discountenanced the movement and bitterly complained of those who had set it on foot."<sup>70</sup>

An account of the events of February 1870 by the Rev. Rupert Leslie Taylor, the grandson of John Taylor,<sup>71</sup> one of the leaders of the Portage Party, reveals

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p.106.

<sup>68</sup>Frits Pannekoek, "The Reverend Griffiths Owen Corbett and the Red River Civil War of 1869-70," Canadian Historical Review, 57 (1976), p.146.

<sup>69</sup>Boulton, p.120.

<sup>70</sup>Report of D.A. Smith, Esq., D.A. Smith to Joseph Howe, Ottawa, 12 April 1870, in E.H. Oliver, ed., The Canadian Northwest: Its Early Development and Legislative Records, vol. 2 (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1914), p.928.

<sup>71</sup>John Taylor was the son of the Orkneyman James Taylor, of Middle Church, and Mary Inkster, whose father, James Inkster, also an Orkneyman, was the cooper and boat-builder at Brandon House, from 1797 to 1824, and whose mother, Mary, was a Cree. He was elected to represent the parish of Headingley

that the only solid support for the Canadian Party came from the Protestant parishes west of the forks, while the much larger parishes to the north of Fort Garry refused to take military action. Since Rupert Leslie Taylor was 20 when his grandfather died in 1925, he had personal knowledge of John Taylor's feelings about the men he had tried to incite against Riel. Rupert Leslie Taylor was born in Griffiths Owen Crobett's former parish of Headingley, a focal point of support for the Canadian party during the Riel Resistance, and was described by the Anglican Primate of Canada, the Very Reverend John William Matheson, to whom Taylor was related by marriage, as the last one who had "the background and ability to portray the life of the fur traders and early settlers of the Red River."<sup>72</sup> Since his first parish after ordination into the Anglican Church in 1929 was St. Andrew's, Rupert Leslie Taylor was uniquely qualified to comprehend the views of the Protestant mixed-blood community.

Taylor's description of the preparations of the Portage Party to enlist support for their cause proves that the faction supporting the Canadian Party included Catholic Métis opposed to Riel:

A meeting was held at grandfather's house [Headingley], and some of the men may have stayed in the church for shelter until ready to move on to Kildonan. It was agreed delegates should be sent to enlist the support of the settlers along the Red River to the north, and to those Métis who were known not to be in sympathy with Riel. John Taylor went to the English-speaking communities north along the Red River, with a companion, while Mr. Gaddy, a Métis, was commissioned to interview a

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on Louis Riel's Provisional Committee, 1869; to the Legislature of Manitoba in 1870 and 1874; and finally as Minister of Agriculture in John Norquay's government. Taylor was such an ardent supporter of John Christian Schultz that he named a daughter Agnes Schultz Taylor. See, "Publisher's Note," in R. Leslie Taylor, The Native Link: Tracing One's Roots to the Fur Trade (Victoria: Pencrest Publications, 1984), p.xv.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p.xviii.

Mr. Dease, another Métis, who was a well-respected member of the community.<sup>73</sup>

Open to members of both religious groups in Red River, the February demonstration cannot be seen as a sectarian movement that primarily expressed Protestant hostility to Catholics. In fact, the protest had little support among the men of St. Andrew's, who considered the Headingley faction to be extremists.

Rupert Leslie Taylor explains that:

The men met Dr. (later Sir) John Schultz at Kildonan Church, who had escaped from Riel's detention some time earlier. Schultz had a few additional supporters of the cause, but the fact that the people northward, the Selkirk settlers, and St. Andrew's parish people were not really interested in the fortunes of those held prisoner by Louis Riel was a great disappointment to the leaders of the Portage party, as it was called. "Hotheads from Headingley" was the way the Kildonanites described the Headingley Party, or the Portage Party, for they were afraid an abortive effort could set afire the entire neighbourhood with a general uprising against the French.<sup>74</sup>

Taylor's opinion of the degree of support of the mass of the Protestant mixed-bloods for armed action against Riel is particularly significant since he was in a position to know about the movement from within. Taylor also felt that:

Grand-father's staid, Scottish neighbours were quite annoyed to see him carrying a red flag, as it suggested really serious trouble. Civil war might have ensued if they pressed their attempts to free the prisoners, and this was threatening to the small colony. None of them wanted a real confrontation with Louis Riel.<sup>75</sup>

If Pannekoek is wrong in his claims about the nature of social relations within Red River before 1870, his interpretation is equally anachronistic with regard to his assertions about society in Red River after 1870. Contrary to the idea that annexation created a new social order in Red River, the period after the Canadian incursion was rent by political protest and lawlessness among the

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid., p.212.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., pp.212-213.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., p.212.

incoming settlers while the old oligarchy, eclipsed by Riel's provisional government, was restored to power. The stoning of Elzéar Goulet; the violent death of John Falcon Tanner;<sup>76</sup> and the tarring of Dr. Curtis Bird are events which punctuated the uneasy truce between newcomers and the Métis population in the early 1870's. Of the resentment which accompanied the appropriation of land at Rivière aux Islets de Bois by the incoming Canadians, who "discarded the name by which the river had been named and called it the Boyne," the new Lieutenant-Governor, George Adams Archibald, felt that "had blood been shed on that occasion we should have had a civil war in which every French half-breed would have been an active participator; while from the English half-breeds, in accord on the question of property with the French, neutrality was the utmost that could have been counted on."<sup>77</sup> In the new Provincial Assembly the mixed-blood population also showed a degree of solidarity and refused to let sectarian prejudice divide them.<sup>78</sup>

The incoming settlers were as dissatisfied with the political situation as the majority of the mixed-blood population. Enraged by their disqualification from voting in the Dominion elections of 1872 due to the residency requirements, "a group of Orangemen ransacked the St. Boniface polling station and burned the

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<sup>76</sup>Peter Lorenz Neufeld, "John (Falcon) Tanner's Death," Manitoba Pageant (Spring, 1979), pp.1-3.

<sup>77</sup>Canada, Parliament, Journals of the House of Commons, vol. VIII, Appendix No. 6, 1874, Report of the Select Committee on the Causes of the Difficulties in the North-West Territory in 1869-70, Memorandum connected with the Fenian Invasion of Manitoba in October, 1871, p.140.

<sup>78</sup>Gerald Friesen, "Homeland to Hinterland: Political Transition in Manitoba, 1870 to 79," Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers (1979), 33-47.

poll book."<sup>79</sup> Francis Evans Cornish, who was to become the first mayor of Winnipeg amidst charges of fraud, "leapt onto the back of a wagon on Main Street and harangued the mob, insulting the Governor, the head of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Sheriff, and calling the Chief of Police a 'toad-eating Communist.'"<sup>80</sup> A disgruntled supporter of Cornish, George Campbell, declared that "it is not the half breeds alone we have to deal with but Hudson Bay men and all those that is in power."<sup>81</sup>

The merchant elite benefitted most from the Canadian incursion because the formation of the provisional government was partly a reaction to their hegemony in local affairs. The Canadian government compensated those members of the merchant class who suffered losses at the hands of Riel's supporters.<sup>82</sup> Goods confiscated by the Provisional government were paid for and land rights of the merchant class were carefully respected. Many were given scrip intended to extinguish aboriginal title, even though they had no native ancestry. Perhaps the most sardonic occurrence was the publication of a letter of thanks to Lieutenant Governor Adams George Archibald, signed by over 500 of the more affluent citizens of Red River.<sup>83</sup> The first signature is that of Andrew McDermot, the

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<sup>79</sup>P.A.M., Donald Gunn Papers, Schultz to Gunn, 20 September 1872, quoted in Ruth Swan Rannie, "Frank Cornish - The Man," Manitoba History, 9 (Spring, 1985), p.29.

<sup>80</sup>The Manitoban, Extra Edition, 21 September 1872, quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>81</sup>P.A.M., Elections - Federal 1872, G. Campbell to friends in Ontario, 3 November 1872, quoted in *ibid.*

<sup>82</sup>For a list of the loyalist faction of Red River merchants compensated by the Canadian government see, D.N. Sprague and P.R. Mailhot, "Persistent Settlers: The Dispersal and Resettlement of the Red River Métis, 1870-85." Canadian Ethnic Studies, 17 (1985), pp.12-26.

<sup>83</sup>The Manitoban, 20 June 1870, "Presentation of Address to Governor Archibald."

wealthiest merchant in the old oligarchy, newly converted to Anglicanism shortly before annexation, expressing heart-felt thanks for the good management of the Canadian government.

Despite the distortions that their whig ideological perspective introduces into their analysis of society in Red River, George F.G. Stanley and W.L. Morton faithfully record the fact that the Protestant and Catholic mixed-blood communities were intimately related and that the Protestant mixed-bloods were willing to venture little to support the cause of the Canadian Party. Pannekoek takes the whig interpretation one stage further by recasting the Protestant mixed-bloods as the loyalist supporters of Canadian 'progress' in Red River.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## THE RISE OF AN INDIGENOUS OLIGARCHY IN RED RIVER

It is ironic that while Sylvia Van Kirk sets out to study the contribution of Indian and mixed-blood women to the society of the fur trade, her support for Frits Pannekoek's analysis of the Foss-Pelly scandal leads her to denigrate the position of those mixed-blood women who did achieve elite status. In keeping with the characteristic "straight-line" thinking of the whigs, Van Kirk suggests that there was a simple progression in fur trade marriage patterns from Indian women, to mixed-blood women, and finally to European women. This is a profoundly anachronistic view of society in Red River because, in the last two decades before Confederation, nearly all the most important men in Red River were married to mixed-blood women. Indeed, the marriages of Hudson's Bay Company officers into the family of Andrew McDermot, the wealthiest of the free-traders in Red River, formed the core of an oligarchy still influential long after Confederation.

Although Frits Pannekoek claims that the Red River elite was split into hostile factions by the Foss-Pelly scandal, an event so divisive that it was "the

bomb that would blow Red River society into its various fragments,"<sup>1</sup> he does not analyze the effects of that scandal in terms of genealogy or demography. Pannekoek explicitly states that his thesis "makes no pretense to statistical demography . . . . its methodology is more that of intuitive, institutional political history," and that the "maze of names defies disentanglement by even the most arduous scholar and requires exhaustive genealogical analysis before further genealogical analysis can be attempted to discern, for example, the extent to which the clergy influenced marriage patterns among the Country-born."<sup>2</sup> If the Foss-Pelly scandal was as divisive as Pannekoek has suggested, surely there would have been a marked decrease in marriages between mixed-blood women and Europeans amongst the officer class of the Company. Sylvia Van Kirk's conception of the nature of society in Red River is based on her agreement with Pannekoek of the significance of the Foss-Pelly scandal. Van Kirk argues that "the case of Foss v. Pelly created a furor in the settlement; it was particularly serious because it threatened to divide Red River irrevocably along racial lines - mixed-blood versus white."<sup>3</sup> Rejecting the reminiscences of a number of Red River women recorded by archivist W.J. Healy<sup>4</sup> as the "most distorted" view of life in Red River because "old timers usually choose to reconstruct their past in its most favourable light," Van Kirk refers to Pannekoek's account of the

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<sup>1</sup>"The Churches and the Social Structure in the Red River Area, 1818-1850" (PhD Dissertation, Queen's Univ., 1973), p.153.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p.16.

<sup>3</sup>"'Destined to Raise Her Caste': Sarah Ballenden and the Foss-Pelly Scandal," Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, Transactions, Series III, 31 (1974-5), p.41.

<sup>4</sup>Women of Red River (Winnipeg: The Women's Canadian Club, 1923).

Ballenden scandal as the "most penetrating analysis of the affair."<sup>5</sup> Van Kirk's acceptance of Pannekoek's conclusions about the significance of the Ballenden scandal lead her to insist that the scandal "added to the growing reluctance on the part of Company officers to marry mixed-blood women."<sup>6</sup> Van Kirk therefore concludes that the scandal led to a reduction in the number of Company officers who married mixed-blood women even though she concedes that "mixed-blood women were not entirely excluded from the elite."<sup>7</sup>

Although Van Kirk appears certain that in its "wider societal context" the scandal had the effect of "intensifying racial prejudice,"<sup>8</sup> she gives no evidence of a lessening in the rate of marriage between the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company and mixed-blood daughters of the Red River merchants. Instead she observes that "while incoming Hudson's Bay Company officers and other whites did not cease marrying mixed-blood women, this practice became increasingly selective."<sup>9</sup> Among the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company marriage partners were "increasingly restricted to highly acculturated daughters of wealthy Hudson's Bay Company families who studiously endeavoured to disassociate themselves from every vestige of their Indian heritage."<sup>10</sup> Yet there is no evidence that Company officers in active service in Red River ever married significant numbers of lower-class mixed-blood women, or, for that matter, lower-class European women.

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., notes 1 and 2, p.50.

<sup>6</sup>Sylvia Van Kirk, "The Role of Women in the Fur Trade Society of the Canadian West, 1700-1850" (PhD dissertation, University of London, 1975), p.21.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>"Destined to Raise Her Caste': Sarah Ballenden and the Foss-Pelly Scandal," p.49.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp.49-50.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p.50.

Although many of the Company officers who retired to Red River had married Indian women, this was not the case amongst the officers who were in active service in Red River. Their choices of marriage partners had always been amongst the mixed-blood daughters of senior officers and later amongst the mixed-blood daughters of prominent free traders who had themselves belonged to the clerical ranks of the company. Van Kirk's conclusion that "even in fur-trade society, with the increasing impact of white cultural values, prejudice gained hold to such an extent that the potential for racial integration was lost,"<sup>11</sup> is also inconsistent with her earlier statement that "in spite of growing racial prejudice, economic and social factors assured mixed-blood women of their place in Red River society at least until 1870, when the transfer of Rupert's Land to Canada signalled the end of the old fur-trade order."<sup>12</sup>

The problem with Van Kirk's argument is that she makes judgments which appear to be based upon an analysis of the number of mixed-blood women who married Company officers but her claims are not supported by the data she has presented. Instead the reader is confronted with a series of biographies of individual women arranged to illustrate Van Kirk's conception of the direction of social change. A comparison of the Hudson's Bay Company officers mentioned by Van Kirk against the total number of officers serving from 1821 to 1870 will give some indication of the validity of her argument in its most general form. E.H. Oliver<sup>13</sup> lists 34 men who served as Chief Factors under the Deed Poll of 1821; Van Kirk refers to the wives of 25, or 74% of them (see Table 1, p.70). She

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<sup>11</sup>"Many Tender Ties": Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870 (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer, 1980), p.242.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p.231.

<sup>13</sup>The Canadian North-West: Its Early Development and Legislative Records, vol.1 (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1914), p.624.

considers the wives of only 21 of 37, or 57% of the Chief Traders listed by Oliver (see Table 2, p.71). However, examination of the comprehensive list of officers compiled by Philip Goldring<sup>14</sup> indicates that the Van Kirk mentions the wives of only 25 of 111, or 23%, of the men commissioned under the Deed Poll of 1834 (see Table 3, p.72). A basic problem with Van Kirk's sample would therefore appear to be that it is skewed toward the early period. Yet even the limited number of marriages examined by Van Kirk do not support her contention that there was a trend away from marriages to mixed-blood women. Since 13 of 46 officers (28%) serving under the Deed Poll of 1821 married European women (see Tables 1 and 2); while in the later period (see Table 3, p.72) only 5 of 25 officers (20%) married Europeans, it would appear that Van Kirk's data disproves her own thesis. Although much more work must be done before a complete list of the wives of the entire officer class of the Hudson's Bay Company during the period from 1821 to 1870 can be produced in order to define more precisely the nature of fur trade marriage patterns, a further test of Van Kirk's argument in the context of Red River will be attempted here.

As an introduction to a quantitative analysis of marriage patterns of commissioned officers in Red River it will be useful to consider the validity of Van Kirk's anecdotal approach to marriage patterns amongst the elite and to estimate the degree of exogamy within it. A significant defect in Van Kirk's analysis is her failure to relate the experiences of the first generation of officers in Red River to the behaviour of their relatives in succeeding generations. The remark of James Douglas to his friend James Hargrave on the occasion of Hargrave's marriage to Letitia Mactavish forms the basis of Van Kirk's

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<sup>14</sup>"Governor Simpson's Officers: Elite Recruitment in a British Overseas Enterprise, 1834-1870," Prairie Forum, 10 (Autumn, 1985), pp.276-8.

TABLE 1

Wives of Chief Factors Commissioned Under the Deed Poll of 1821

Listed in Sylvia Van Kirk's "Many Tender Ties"

Officer	Name of Wife	Race of Wife*	Marriage Date
James Bird	Elizabeth	I	1821
	Mary Lowman	E	1835
Thomas Vincent	Jane Renton	M	
	Jane Sutherland	M	
John Haldane	Josette Latour	M	
James Sutherland	?	M	
Alexander Kennedy	Aggathas	I	
Colin Robertson	Theresa ?	M	
John G. McTavish	Nancy McKenzie	M	
	Catherine Turner	E	1830
John Clarke	Marianne Treutter	E	
George Keith	Nanette Sutherland	M	
John D. Cameron	Mary	I	
John Charles	Jane Auld	M	1835
	Margaret Macallum	E	1841
John Stuart	Catherine La Vallé	M	1824
	Françoise Lorraine	M	
	Mary Taylor	M	
John McLaughlin	Marguerite Wadin	M	1842
Joseph Beioley	Isabella McKay	M	
Donald McKenzie	Mary McKay	M	
	Aldegonde Droz	E	1825
Alexander Christie	Anne Thomas	M	
William McIntosh	Sarah Gladue	M	
William Connolly	Suzanne	I	
	Julia Woolrich	E	c.1832
John Rowand	Louise Humphrville	M	
James McMillan	Kilakotah	I	
	Eleanor McKinley	E	1829
Peter W. Dease	Elizabeth Chouinard	M	
Allen McDonell	Margaret	M	
John Lee Lewes	Jane Ballenden	M	
Roderick McKenzie	Angélique	I	
Duncan Finlayson	Isobel Simpson	E	1838

\*Racial Terms for Tables 1-5:

M= Mixed-blood

E= European

I= Indian

TABLE 2

Wives of Chief Traders Commissioned Under the Deed Poll of 1821

Listed in Sylvia Van Kirk's "Many Tender Ties"

Officer	Name of Wife	Race of Wife	Marriage Date
Daniel Harmon	Lisette Duval	M	
Robert McVicar	Christy McBeath	E	1824
J.F. Laroque		M	
Joseph McGillivray	Françoise Boucher	M	
Jacob Corrigan		M	
Thomas McMurray	Joachim Cardinale	M	
John Peter Pruden	Nancy	M	c.1800
	Anne Armstrong	E	1839
Alex. R. McLeod		M	
Alexander Fisher	Angélique Savard	M	
Samuel Black	Angélique Cameron	M	
Peter Skene Ogden	Julia Rivet	M	
Cuthbert Cumming	Jane McMurray	M	
Francis Heron	Isabella Chalifoux	M	1835
Robert Miles	Betsey Sinclair	M	
Archibald McDonald	Princess Raven	I	182?
	Jane Klyne	M	
John E. Harriott	Elizabeth Pruden	M	
	Nancy Rowand	M	1838
Donald Ross	Mary McBeath	E	1820
John Work	Josette Legacé	M	
Nichol Finlayson	Betsey Kennedy	M	
James Hargrave	Letitia Mactavish	E	1840
John Todd	Eliza Waugh	E	
	Sophia Lolo	M	

TABLE 3

Wives of Officers Commissioned Under the Deed Poll of 1834

Listed in Sylvia Van Kirk's "Many Tender Ties"

Officer	Name of Wife	Race of Wife	Marriage Date
A.C. Anderson	? Bimie	M	
John Ballenden	Sarah McLeod	M	1836
George Barnston	Ellen Matthews	M	1829
John Bell	Nancy Dease	M	1830
John Black	Margaret Christie	M	
Robert Campbell	Ellenora Sterling	E	1853
Robert Clouston	Jessy Ross	E	
William Cowan	Harriet Sinclair	M	1852
Charles Dodd	Grace McTavish	M	
James Douglas	Amelia Connoly	M	
Francis Ermatinger	Catherine Simpson	M	
George Gladman Jr.	Harriet Vincent	M	
Richard Grant	Helen McDonald	M	
Archibald McDonald	Jane Klyne	M	1835
Hector McKenzie	Annie Bannatyne	E	1851
Archibald McKinlay	Sarah Julia Ogden	M	1840
William H. McNeill	? Haida woman	I	
William Mactavish	Mary McDermot	M	1864
William Nourse	Anne Corrigan		
Augustus E. Pelly	Anne Clouston	E	1849
Pierre C. Pambrun Sr.	Catherine Humperville	M	
Bernard R. Ross	Christina Ross	E	1860
Charles Ross	Isabella Mainville	M	
William Sinclair Jr.	Mary McKay	M	
Donald A. Smith	Isabella Hardisty	M	1848

observations about the nature of the changing patterns of fur-trade marriages.

Douglas comments that:

There is a strange revolution in the manners of the country; Indian wives were at one time the vogue, the half-breed supplanted these, and now we have the lovely tender exotic torn from its parent bed to pine and languish in the desert.<sup>15</sup>

The casual reader might assume that Douglas' judgment applies to the entire period until 1870 under discussion by Van Kirk. Since the remark was made in 1840 it is obvious that Douglas could not have known whether the trend typical of the preceding decades would continue. The irony of the situation is that he could not have predicted that his own mixed-blood daughter would marry Alexander Grant Dallas, who was to be Simpson's successor in Red River,<sup>16</sup> or that William Mactavish, the brother of Hargrave's wife Letitia, would become Governor of Assiniboia and marry a mixed-blood daughter of Andrew McDermot,<sup>17</sup> the most prominent merchant in Red River.<sup>18</sup> That some mixed-blood women

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<sup>15</sup>G.P. de T. Glazebrook, ed., The Hargrave Correspondence 1821-1843 (Toronto: Champlain Society, XXIV), pp.310-311.

<sup>16</sup>See, W. Kaye Lamb, "Dallas, Alexander Grant," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, 10, pp.230-1, and B.A. McKelvie, "Successor to Simpson," The Beaver (September, 1951), pp.41-5.

<sup>17</sup>N. Jaye Goossen, "Mactavish, William," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, 9, p.530.

<sup>18</sup>Van Kirk explains that Simpson's close friend, Chief Factor John George McTavish, abandoned several mixed-blood women and later married Catherine Turner, of Aberdeenshire, in 1830. However, she fails to consider that William Mactavish and his brother Dugald, nephews of McTavish who benefitted from his patronage, did not follow his example in later years. On the kinship relationships of the McTavish clan see, Jennifer S.H. Brown, 'Strangers in Blood': Fur Trade Families in Indian Country (Vancouver: Univ. of British Columbia Press, 1980), pp. 39-41. Another example of the continuing tendency of Company officers to marry mixed-blood women is the marriage of one of McTavish's own illegitimate daughters, Grace, to Charles Dodd on 22 Nov. 1842, following which Dodd was placed in charge of Fort Stikine; Van Kirk consigns this marriage to a footnote. Dodd was to become Chief Trader in 1852 and Chief Factor in 1860. For details of Dodd's career see, Shirlee Anne Smith, "Dodd, Charles," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, 7, pp. 226-7.

would thus eclipse the position of the proud Letitia is a point not revealed by Van Kirk.

A review of Van Kirk's analysis of marriage patterns in Red River will reveal other striking anomalies. For example, the marriage of Hudson's Bay Company clerk Donald Ross to the daughter of one of the Kildonan Scots, Mary McBeath, in 1820, is duly noted by Van Kirk as the start of a trend away from marriages to mixed-blood women.<sup>19</sup> But Van Kirk appears to overlook the fact that although Ross rose to the rank of Chief Trader, his daughter Annabella, who had no mixed-blood ancestry, married Charles Edward McDermot, a mixed-blood son of Andrew McDermot, in 1857.<sup>20</sup> Nor did marriage to a mixed-blood cause a decline in status. Following Charles McDermot's death, Annabella Ross married Dr. Curtis James Bird, the son of James Bird and his European wife Mary Lowman.<sup>21</sup>

The conclusion Van Kirk draws from Governor George Simpson's behaviour is the result of a similarly selective presentation of evidence. Although Van Kirk claims that Simpson's callous rejection of Betsey Sinclair (1821), and of Margaret Taylor (1827), led to a decline in status for mixed-blood women,<sup>22</sup> she fails to fully discuss the later fortunes of the Sinclair women in Red River. Although the

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<sup>19</sup>"Many Tender Ties," p.179.

<sup>20</sup>Much of the detailed information about Andrew McDermot's family in this essay was obtained from Barry Hyman who provided the unpublished notes to his article "McDermot, Andrew," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, 9, pp.545-6. A detailed list of the marriages of McDermot's children is given in Hyman, "Notes," pp.6-7.

<sup>21</sup>Before he married Annabella Ross, Curtis Bird had married her sister, Frances Ross, in 1862. He served as coroner of the District of Assiniboia following the death of Dr. John Bunn in 1861; as a member of the Council of Assiniboia; on Louis Riel's provisional government; and as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba in 1870 and 1874. See, W.D. Smith, "Bird, Curtis James," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, 10, pp.67-8.

<sup>22</sup>"Many Tender Ties," pp.204-5. Simpson married his own cousin, Frances in February 1830.

marriage of Catharine Sinclair, the daughter of mixed-blood officer (Chief Factor 1850) William Sinclair Jr. and Mary McKay, to Chief Trader Francis Ermatinger in 1841 is mentioned by Van Kirk, she emphasizes Catherine's infidelity, a fact which has no bearing on the prominent social status indicated by her marriage.<sup>23</sup> Another of William Sinclair Jr.'s daughters to marry a prominent European visitor to Rupert's Land, which is acknowledged but viewed in a negative context by Van Kirk, is the marriage of Margaret Sinclair to Major Darling at Norway House in 1848. Van Kirk emphasizes the fact that she had once been raped.<sup>24</sup> Van Kirk does admit that Dr. William Cowan, who had come to Red River as a medical officer with the Chelsea Pensioners and who rose to the rank of Chief Trader, married Harriet Sinclair (the daughter of Betsey Sinclair's brother James, the prominent free-trader) in 1852.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, the marriage of James Robert Clare, Chief Factor in charge of Fort Garry from 1864 to 1867, to Margaret, the mixed-blood daughter of another member of the Sinclair clan, Red River merchant Thomas Sinclair, on 23 May 1861,<sup>26</sup> goes entirely unmentioned by Van Kirk. Also unacknowledged is the marriage of Chief Trader Alexander Hunter Murray, who took charge of Lower Fort Garry from 1862 to 1863, to Anne, the mixed-blood daughter of Chief Trader Colin Campbell on 28 August 1846.<sup>27</sup> James Sinclair's marriage to Mary Campbell, making Murray his brother-in-law, is therefore a

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<sup>23</sup>The marriage may have taken place on 10 August 1842. See Lois Halliday McDonald, ed., Fur Trade Letters of Francis Ermatinger (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1980), p.247.

<sup>24</sup>"Many Tender Ties," p.164 and p.275, note 62.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, p.233.

<sup>26</sup>Joan Craig, "Clare, James Robert," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, 9, pp.130-1.

<sup>27</sup>Kenneth L. Holmes, "Murray, Alexander Hunter," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, 10, p.541.

further indication of the high status of mixed-blood women in the Sinclair family.

The credibility of Van Kirk's view that the Foss-Pelly trial of 1850 caused a decline in the rate of marriage between Company officers and mixed-blood women is undermined by her failure to associate John Ballenden, whose wife Sarah's alleged affair with Captain Christopher Vaughan Foss was the cause of the furor, with the experiences of his nephew, Andrew Graham Ballenden Bannatyne, who became one of the wealthiest merchants in Red River.<sup>28</sup> If anyone felt the effects of the scandal it should have been Bannatyne, yet it does not appear to have influenced his marriage plans. It was Bannatyne's marriage to McDermot's daughter Annie, in 1851, which formed the basis of the fortune he was to make in partnership with McDermot.

Bannatyne was one of a number of the Company's eligible young European clerks in Red River to marry mixed-blood daughters of prominent Hudson's Bay Company officers and free-traders following the Foss-Pelly scandal. Richard Lane's brother, Chief Trader William D. Lane, who took charge of Lower Fort Garry as a clerk in 1850-54 and later managed a post on the Assiniboine (Lane's Post), in 1860 married Mary Bird, a mixed-blood daughter of Chief Factor James Bird, and following her death Eliza Lee Lewes, the mixed-blood daughter of Chief Trader John Lee Lewes.<sup>29</sup> Alexander R. Lillie, who managed Lower Fort Garry from 1856 to 1861 and who rose to the rank of Chief Trader, in 1852 married Harriet, another of McDermot's daughters. Also unmentioned by Van Kirk is the

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<sup>28</sup>Although she does not mention this relationship in "Many Tender Ties", Van Kirk was aware that A.G.B. Bannatyne was John Ballenden's nephew as she reveals in her article "McLeod, Sarah," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, 7, p.574.

<sup>29</sup>U.B.C., Special Collections Division, Lane Papers, Box 4, Folder 4-9, W.D. Lane to his mother, White Horse Plains, Red River Settlement, 25 June 1862 and Box 3, Folder 3-35, Eliza Lee Lane to W.D. Lane, 20 April 1872.

marriage of George Simpson's own grandson, John H. McTavish,<sup>30</sup> a clerk in charge of Fort Garry from 1870 to 1872 and Chief Factor in 1874,<sup>31</sup> to Sophia, a mixed-blood daughter of Chief Factor John Rowand, one of Simpson's most trusted friends.<sup>32</sup> Nor does Van Kirk consider that William Flett, a clerk in charge of Fort Garry in 1870, who later became a Chief Factor,<sup>33</sup> married Nancy Clouston, the daughter of Robert Clouston and his mixed-blood wife, Nancy.<sup>34</sup>

Van Kirk's suggestion that "in the post-1870 period, the mixed marriage which had been a central part of the fabric of Red River society was to become an increasingly peripheral phenomenon"<sup>35</sup> is also extremely misleading because it was the lower-class mixed-blood women who were dislocated by the coming of the

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<sup>30</sup>Born at Grafton, Ontario, on 11 June 1837, McTavish was the son of George Simpson's illegitimate daughter Maria, who was born in Scotland, and of Donald McTavish. See, John S. Galbraith, The Little Emperor: Governor Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976), p.129.

<sup>31</sup>Information about McTavish, who was later to become a member of the Council of the North West Territories, is given in E.H. Oliver, ed., The Canadian North West: Its Early Development and Legislative Records, vol. I (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1914), p.127.

<sup>32</sup>The date of McTavish's marriage is unknown but Sophia died before December 1864. See, H.B.C.A., A36/11, N to R, cited by J.G. MacGregor, John Rowand: Czar of the Prairies (Saskatoon: Western Prairie Producer Books, 1978), p.175, and p.184, Epilogue, notes 2 and 3.

<sup>33</sup>The reminiscences of Flett's daughter, Mrs. A.T. Cowley, are remarkably vague about the identities of her parents. See, A.T. Cowley, "Lower Fort Garry in 1868," The Beaver (September, 1938), pp.39-41.

<sup>34</sup>The name and racial origin of William Flett's wife was found by Hudson's Bay Company Archivist, Michael G. Moosberger, who cites P.A.M., Red River Census 1870, 707, p.199. See also, D.N. Sprague, The Genealogy of the First Métis Nation, Table 1, William Flett, no. 1606, which lists William Flett as a European. Little is known of her father Robert Clouston but he may have been related to the Company's agent in the Orkney Islands of the same name. The haughty Anne Clouston, whose jealousy of Sara Ballenden's position was partly responsible the Foss-Pelly scandal, would then have had mixed-blood relatives.

<sup>35</sup>Sylvia Van Kirk, "'Destined to Raise Her Caste': Sarah Ballenden and the Foss Pelly Scandal," Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, Transactions, Series III, (1974-5), p.50.

settlers from Ontario<sup>36</sup> rather than the acculturated mixed-blood women of the elite, as the position of the mixed-blood descendants of Hudson's Bay Company clerk Richard Lane demonstrates.<sup>37</sup> Van Kirk records the marriage of retired Chief Factor Robert Logan, whom she identifies as a community leader in the early days in Red River, to the British governess, Sarah Ingham,<sup>38</sup> but she does not mention that their son, Alexander Logan, born in November 1841, married Maria Lane in 1867.<sup>39</sup> Raised in her grandfather's household after the death of her mother, Maria Lane was the mixed-blood daughter of Hudson's Bay Company clerk Richard Lane and Andrew McDermot's mixed-blood daughter Maria (Mary). Alexander Logan was to serve as alderman during the period from 1874-1878 and as the mayor of Winnipeg (1879, 1880, 1882, and 1884). Logan, who inherited his father's estate on Point Douglas at the age of 25, is thought to have become a millionaire through land speculation in the decade after annexation. According to A.F.J. Artibise, "one of Logan's family of eight children married Richard D. Waugh, mayor of Winnipeg (1912, 1913, 1916)."<sup>40</sup> Similarly, the mixed-blood family of A.G.B. Bannatyne, who made and lost a fortune as a land speculator in

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<sup>36</sup>On the exodus of the mixed-blood population after 1870, see, D.N. Sprague and P.R. Mailhot, "Persistent Settlers: The Dispersal and Resettlement of the Red River Métis, 1870-85," Canadian Ethnic Studies, 17 (1985), pp. 1-30.

<sup>37</sup>The status, after 1870, of the mixed-blood descendants of Hudson's Bay Company officers who served in Red River has received little consideration to date. To judge by the children of Roderick McKenzie and his Nipigon wife Angélique, however, many maintained their position within the elite. For a detailed account of the McKenzie family, see Elizabeth M. Arthur, "Angélique and Her Children," Thunder Bay Museum, Papers and Records, 6 (1978), pp. 30-40. Philip Goldring, a historian for Parks Canada, provided this reference.

<sup>38</sup>"Many Tender Ties," p.142 and p.151.

<sup>39</sup>A.F.J. Artibise, "Mayor Alexander Logan of Winnipeg," The Beaver (Spring, 1974), p.5.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*

the decade after Confederation, was prominent in Winnipeg after 1870. Ross Mitchell recalls "vivid memories of the easy grace of their son, William, playing cricket at The Winnipeg Cricket Club."<sup>41</sup>

Although Van Kirk claims to be considering fur trade society at large, it often appears that she is merely discussing marriage patterns among the elite in Red River.<sup>42</sup> If her argument does not apply to the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company serving in Red River itself, one might well question its general applicability. Since Van Kirk does not attempt to estimate the size of the officer class in Red River the reader can only assume that the group was large enough that the marriages of several officers to mixed-blood women, acknowledged by Van Kirk as exceptions to the general rule, represented only a small percentage of total marriages within the officer class.

In order to determine whether marriages between mixed-blood women and active Company officers were declining in Red River, two lists of marriages of Company officers in charge of posts in Red River have been compiled.<sup>43</sup> In the period from 1821 to 1845, 7 of the 11 officers in charge of posts in Red River

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<sup>41</sup>"Andrew Graham Ballenden Bannatyne, 1829-1889: First Citizen of Winnipeg," Manitoba Pageant, 11 (1), p.13.

<sup>42</sup>For a case study which shows that marriages between Hudson's Bay Company officers and Indian women were accepted practice in Fort Langley long after they had become uncommon in Red River, see Janet McNeill, "Fort Langley: A Case Study of the Relations Between the Fur Traders and Native Women" (B.A. Honors Essay, Univ. of British Columbia, 1982).

<sup>43</sup>The list of officers in charge of Fort Garry and Lower Fort Garry was taken from two lists compiled by archivists at the Hudson's Bay Company Archives and obtained by Prof. H. Keith Ralston. See, H.B.C.A., Search File, "Men in Charge of Fort Garry at the Forks," L.C. 27255, 9 December 1963 and H.B.C.A., Search File, "Men in Charge of Lower Fort Garry," L.C. 27255, 9 December 1963. Lane's Post, located on the Assiniboine near St. François-Xavier parish, where William D. Lane spent most of his career, was within the boundaries of Red River and has been included also. The names of the wives of these officers have been compiled from numerous sources.

married European women or 'turned-off' mixed-blood women to marry European women (see Table 4, p.81). After 1845 this pattern was completely reversed. None of the 13 officers in command in Red River between 1845 and 1870, whose marriage partners have been identified, are known to have married European women (see Table 5, p.82). Although the wife of Chief Trader Alexander W. Buchanan is unknown, he was in command of Fort Garry for only one year from 1851-1852. The marriage date of Chief Factors John Swanston, who also served a one-year period in charge of Fort Garry, is also unknown and therefore it cannot be said with certainty that his wife accompanied him to Red River. Of English ancestry,<sup>44</sup> John Swanston married a daughter of Chief Factor George Keith and his wife Nanette Sutherland.<sup>45</sup> James A. Grahame, who took charge of Fort Garry from 1861-62, married Susan Birnie at Fort George (Astoria) in 1845, and following her death, Mary Work,<sup>46</sup> a daughter of Chief Factor John Work and Josette Legacé, a Spokane woman of mixed-blood.<sup>47</sup> In 1874, Grahame succeeded Donald A. Smith as Chief Commissioner of the Company in Canada, with headquarters at Fort Garry. In considering marriage patterns in Red River it should be understood that officers in active service for long periods in Red River had experiences which may have differed from their colleagues in remote areas. Despite this caveat, it is clear from the foregoing analysis that, contrary to Van

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<sup>44</sup>Glyndwr Williams, ed. and intro., "The 'Character Book' of George Simpson," in Williams, ed., Hudson's Bay Miscellany, 1670-1870 (London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1975), p.226.

<sup>45</sup>Jennifer S.H. Brown, "Keith, George," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, 8, p.454.

<sup>46</sup>Clifford Willson, "Private Letters from the Fur Trade," Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, Transactions, Series III, 5 (1950), p.33.

<sup>47</sup>William R. Sampson, "Work, John," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, 9, p.853.

TABLE 4

## Wives Of European Officers In Charge In

Red River From 1821 To 1844\*

Period	Officer	Rank	Area	Name of Wife	Race	Date
1821-22	James Bird	C.F.	F.G.	Elizabeth	I	1822
				Mary Lowman	E	1832
1822-23	John Clarke	C.F.	F.G.	Marianne Treutter	E	1822
1823-32	Donald McKenzie	C.F.	F.G.	Adelgonde Droz	E	1825
1832-33	George Simpson	Governor	L.F.G.	Frances Simpson	E	1830
1833-37	Alexander Christie	C.F.	L.F.G.	Anne Thomas	M	1821
1834-35	Archibald McKinlay	Clerk	F.G.	Sarah Ogden	M	1840
1835-36	Hector McKenzie	Clerk	F.G.	Annie Bannatyne	E	1851
1836-37	George Setter	P.M.	F.G.	Unknown		
1839-44	Duncan Finlayson	C.F.	F.G.	Isobel Simpson	E	1838
1842-43	Robert Clouston	A. Clerk	L.F.G.	Jessy Ross	E	184?
1840-42	John Black	Clerk	L.F.G.	Margaret Christie	M	1845

Acronyms Used in Tables 4 and 5:

Rank: C.F.=Chief Factor, C.T.=Chief Trader, A.Clerk=Apprentice Clerk, P.M.=Post Master

Area: F.G.=Fort Garry, L.F.G.=Lower Fort Garry, L.P.=Lane's Post.

\*In Tables 4 and 5 the year listed under the heading 'Date' is the date of marriage.

TABLE 5

## Wives Of European Officers In Charge In

Red River From 1845 To 1870

Period	Officer	Rank	Area	Name of Wife	Race	Date
1844-48	Alexander Christie	C.F.	F.G.	Anne Thomas	M	1821
1845-48	John Black	Clerk	L.F.G.	Margaret Christie	M	1845
1848-49	Alexander Christie	C.F.	L.F.G.	Anne Thomas	M	1821
1848-50	John Ballenden	C.F.	F.G.	Sarah McLeod	M	1836
1849-50	John Black	C.T.	L.F.G.	Margaret Christie	M	1845
1850-51	William D. Lane	P.M.	L.F.G.	Unmarried		
1850-52	John Black	C.T.	F.G.	Margaret Christie	M	1845
1852-53	A.W. Buchanan	C.T.	F.G.	Unknown		
1853-54	John Black	C.T.	F.G.	Margaret Christie	M	1845
1851-54	William D. Lane	P.M.	L.F.G.	Unmarried		
1854-55	John Ballenden	C.F.	F.G.	Sarah McLeod	M	1846
1858-62	William D. Lane	C.T.	L.P.	Mary Bird	M	1860
1855-58	William Cowan	Clerk	L.F.G.	Harriet Sinclair	M	1852
1855-56	John Swanston	C.F.	F.G.	Betsey Keith	M	
1856-61	Alexander Lillie	A. Clerk	L.F.G.	Harriet McDermot	M	1860
1856-64	William Mactavish	C.F.	F.G.	Mary S. McDermot	M	1864
1861-62	James A. Grahame	C.F.	L.F.G.	? Work	M	
1862-64	A.H. Murray	C.T.	L.F.G.	Anne Campbell	M	1846
1864-66	James R. Clare	C.F.	F.G.	Margaret Sinclair	M	1861
1862-70	William D. Lane	C.T.	L.P.	Eliza Lee Lewes	M	186?
1865-70	William Cowan	C.T.	F.G.	Harriet Sinclair	M	1852
1868-70	William Flett	Clerk	L.F.G.	Nancy Clouston	M	
1870-72	John H. McTavish	Clerk	F.G.	Sophia Rowand	M	

Kirk's assertion that marriages to mixed-blood women were declining, all prominent officers in Red River married mixed-blood women in the period from 1845 to 1870.

Van Kirk's dismissal of Women of Red River, in which it is claimed that relations between Catholics and Protestants were amicable before 1870, indicates her acceptance of Frits Pannekoek's account of religious strife in Red River. As an examination of the family and social ties of Andrew McDermot, the wealthiest of all the Red River merchants will show, relations within the elite do not support the conclusion that the merchant class, to which virtually all members of the elite belonged, was divided by racial or religious strife. Since McDermot was a Catholic, his own marriage to Sara McNab, daughter of Thomas McNab, at Berens River in 1814, probably crossed religious as well as racial lines.<sup>48</sup> It is known that most of his children were baptized as Protestants,<sup>49</sup> but his daughter Mary Sally (Sara) who became the wife of William Mactavish, was a Catholic. McDermot himself converted to Anglicanism in 1866,<sup>50</sup> perhaps in response to the transformation of Anglicanism under Bishop Anderson from a strict evangelicalism to a form much closer to Catholic ritual and to worship among his peers. Most of the officers of the Company and many of the English-speaking merchants attended St. John's Anglican Church. It also seems that although William D. Lane attended a Protestant church in Red River, both William Lane and his brother Richard Lane, McDermot's son-in-law, were of Irish descent and were educated<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Hyman, "Notes," p.6, note 3.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., pp.6-7.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p.5.

<sup>51</sup>Of W.D. Lane's education, his mother writes that "I gave Monsieur Le Curate 1.40 the other day only for his instruction of you." See, U.B.C., Special Collections Division, Lane Papers, Box 1, Folder 1-21, M. Lane to W.D. Lane,

in a private institution at St. Omer in Northern France.<sup>52</sup> On his indenture as a Chief Trader,<sup>53</sup> William D. Lane records County Cork, Ireland as his place of birth. More surprising is the fact that Simpson's grandson, John H. McTavish, was a Roman Catholic.<sup>54</sup> Since McTavish married a daughter of John Rowand, an Irish Catholic from Montreal who once chastised his servants for anti-Catholic comments, one would think she was a Catholic but she is listed as a Protestant in the census.<sup>55</sup> At least two of McDermot's children married members of the French Catholic mixed-blood community. Miles McDermot married Guillelmine Goulet in 1867 and Jane McDermot married Joseph Taillefeur on 3 February 1873.<sup>56</sup>

The recollections of several individuals on intimate terms with the McDermot clan offer compelling evidence of the racial and religious harmony among the merchant elite. Despite all the controversy about the nature of social relations in

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<sup>52</sup>In terms of the relations between the French and English within the merchant class it is significant that Francis Godschall Johnson, who was selected as Adam Thom's replacement as Recorder of Rupert's Land, was educated at the same private school at St. Omer, France, as the Lanes. William D. Lane acknowledges Johnson as an old school mate. There is an indication that both the Lane brothers were bilingual and perhaps, as Roy St. George Stubbs said of Johnson, could "speak French as naturally as a native of France." See Roy St. George Stubbs, Four Recorders of Rupert's Land (Winnipeg: Peguis Publishers, 1967), p.51.

<sup>53</sup>Philip Goldring, "Governor Simpson's Officers: Elite Recruitment in a British Overseas Enterprise, 1834-1870," Prairie Forum, p.278, note 5.

<sup>54</sup>E.H. Oliver claims that Simpson had McTavish educated at the Jesuit College, Montreal. See Oliver, p.127.

<sup>55</sup>It is notable that members of the merchant class changed their religious affiliations freely.

<sup>56</sup>Hyman, "Notes," pp.5-6.

Red River, the reminiscences of Jean Drever,<sup>57</sup> the daughter of Helen Rothnie and William Drever, who married William Cyprian Pinkham, later to become the first Anglican Bishop of Calgary, have never been considered. She was one of the few women born of European parents in Red River who belonged to the merchant class during the critical decades from 1860 to 1880.

William Drever, an Orkneyman who had left Kirkwall in 1821, served the Hudson's Bay Company at York Factory until the early 1840's when he was sent to Lower Fort Garry. About 1842 he married Helen Rothnie, who had come from Aberdeen in 1839 with Adam Thom as a companion for Thom's wife. In 1851 they moved to Upper Fort Garry where Drever was discharged from the Company's service and was granted a strip of land three chains wide. Although Drever and his wife had both been baptized as Presbyterians they attended the Anglican Church when they came to Red River and significantly did not leave to join John Black's congregation when he arrived. Rather they remained in St. John's, the church attended by the English-speaking merchants and most of the officer class of the Company. Born on 6 May 1849, Jean Drever was soon housed in her father's new home which her mother called Clova Cottage, and she comments that "by this time my mother was able to keep two servants, a nurse to whom she paid ten shillings a month, and a general servant at fifteen shillings."<sup>58</sup> On the importance of the social position William Drever had attained, Jean Drever remarks that "there were only four houses of any importance in the village at that time, one belonged to Mr. Andrew McDermott [sic], an Irishman, and one to

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<sup>57</sup>W. [illiam] J. F. [raser], ed., "Selections from the Unpublished Recollections of Mrs. W.C. Pinkham, An Early Manitoban," *Manitoba Pageant*, Part I (Winter, 1974), pp.21-23, Part II (Spring, 1974), pp.19-22, Part III (Autumn, 1974), pp.11-17.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, Part II, p.19.

his son-in-law, Mr. Bannatyne, a Scotchman: one to Mr. John Rowand, and the other belonged to my father."<sup>59</sup>

On the amicable relations among the merchants Mrs. Pinkham recalls that "Mr. McDermott [sic] had two or three sons married, and living at Sturgeon Creek, and our greatest excitement was to get up a party and drive out there, in a Cariole, or cutter, if you were fortunate enough to own one."<sup>60</sup> It seems that Jean Drever had a very warm relationship with the mixed-blood daughters of Andrew McDermot. On their status within the community she comments that "Mrs. McDermott [sic] had several very fine daughters. Sally married Governor McTavish [sic] and Annie married Mr. Bannatyne, the latter was always a good friend to me when I was a young girl; she was a handsome woman and could hold her own with anyone, she always dressed beautifully and was very vivacious. She was much given to good works and was the first to start working for the General Hospital in Winnipeg. She organized work parties for it, with me as her lieutenant, and many a garment have I made and sold at bazaars for the hospital. I believe her father gave the land on which the present hospital was built."<sup>61</sup>

The reminiscences of Harriet Sinclair Cowan, the daughter of James Sinclair, McDermot's mixed-blood partner, and Elizabeth Bird, also demonstrate the lack of sectarian and racial strife amongst the elite in Red River. Since her parents were married by the Anglican minister David Jones at St. John's parish in 1829,<sup>62</sup> Harriet was probably raised as an Anglican. It seems that James Sinclair's home

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., Part II, p.22.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>D. Geneva Lent, West of the Mountains: James Sinclair and the Hudson's Bay Company (Seattle: Univ. of Washington Press, 1963), p.85.

was on the east bank of the Red, in an area populated mainly by French Catholic families. She makes several references to her relations with Catholics in Red River. In spite of their Protestant faith, her family was on such friendly terms with Father Laflèche, "one of the priests at St. Boniface, who afterwards was Bishop of Three Rivers," that he visited them and played their piano.<sup>63</sup> She speaks affectionately of the Sister Lagrave who painted "beautiful festoons and other decorations" on the walls of St. Boniface cathedral.<sup>64</sup> Governor Mactavish raised his children as Catholics and Harriet Sinclair recalls that Bishop Taché selected "young James Mactavish and his twin sisters, Mary and Florence, to be the godfather and the godmothers" of three of the bells of the Cathedral.<sup>65</sup>

Van Kirk has done little to clarify the position of Catholics within the elite but it is evident that many of the marriages of commissioned officers crossed religious boundaries. This reduced tensions between the religious groups in Red River as is demonstrated by Governor James Douglas' attitude to some anti-Catholic remarks attributed to his daughter Jane. Although James Douglas' marriage to Amelia Connolly was conducted by the Anglican missionary Herbert Beaver, his father-in-law, William Connolly, was an Irish Catholic.<sup>66</sup> Amelia Connolly's sister belonged to a religious order and was upset by some comments made by Jane Douglas, Alexander Grant Dallas' wife. James Douglas wrote to his daughter that he had "lately received a communication from your aunt Soeur

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<sup>63</sup>Women of Red River, p.35.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>William Connolly once referred to himself as "a devout Catholic" and "a bit of an Irishman." See, William Connolly to James Hargrave, New Caledonia, 19 February 1830, in G.P. de T. Glazebrook, ed. and intro, The Hargrave Correspondence, 1821-1843 (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1938), p.42.

Connolly which has excited the most painful emotions in my mind. Her feelings have been deeply wounded and I fear the entire Roman Catholic community of Red River share in those feelings, by calumnies alleged to have originated with you. . . . if you are unjustly charged with being the author of these absurd tales, let Aunt Connolly know the truth at once that you may be relieved from the odium which never fails to visit the slanderer."<sup>67</sup>

Another indication of the lack of sectarian bitterness amongst the 'old Red River element,' as the settlement's original merchant class is sometimes called, is the behaviour of John Black, a Presbyterian minister who had come to Red River in 1851 to serve the Kildonan Scots community. Black's marriage in 1853 to Henrietta, the mixed-blood daughter of Alexander Ross, is seen by Van Kirk as an example of growing racial tension within the settlement because of the racist reaction of many of the Kildonanites.<sup>68</sup> It also indicates yet another instance in which a prominent European male chose to marry a mixed-blood attached to the merchant class rather than a member of the poor Kildonan Scots community.<sup>69</sup> It should also be noted that in 1874, after the death of his first wife, Black married Laurenda Bannatyne, the sister of A.G.B. Bannatyne.<sup>70</sup> Black was thus connected by marriage to the polyglot merchant class. During the controversy over separate schools which arose a few years after annexation, Black resigned his position as the representative of the Presbyterians on the Board of Education because he

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<sup>67</sup>Sir James Douglas, Correspondence Outward, Miscellaneous Papers, March 2, 1863, quoted by Derek Pethick, James Douglas: Servant of Two Empires (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1969), p.295.

<sup>68</sup>"Many Tender Ties," pp.234-36.

<sup>69</sup>The point of this thesis is not to deny that racism existed in Red River but only that racism can account for the social structure.

<sup>70</sup>Hartwell Bowsfield, "Black, John," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, 11, p.79.

"felt that he could not be a party to interfere with the amity between Protestants and Roman Catholics which had been a feature of the old days of the Red River Settlement."<sup>71</sup> In view of the attention which has been given to the divisive influence of Griffiths Owen Corbett in Red River,<sup>72</sup> John Black's behaviour points to the need for a more balanced appraisal.

A characteristic feature of whig historiography is a positive attitude toward men of property which leads to a disregard for the negative aspects of capitalist development. Contrary to the claim that the marriage patterns of European Hudson's Bay Company officers in Red River provide evidence of a society divided by racial and religious conflict, a close examination of such marriages will reveal the formation of a polyglot mercantile oligarchy. Marriages between Company officers and Andrew McDermot's mixed-blood daughters created an oligarchy which included the most influential leaders of government and business. During the critical years from 1860 to 1880 McDermot's extended family included such influential men as William Mactavish, the Governor of Assiniboia and Simpson's successor in Red River; former Company clerk A.G.B. Bannatyne, who succeeded to McDermot's fortune as a private trader; Chief Trader Alexander Lillie, who for a time became a business partner of Bannatyne and McDermot;<sup>73</sup> and Alexander Logan, Mayor of Winnipeg. The insidious effect of these relationships was evident to the editor of the Nor'Wester, who commented on a proposed trading expedition to the Mackenzie River: "the Governor decides to oppose his father-in-

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid., Bowsfield quotes George Bryce, John Black: The Apostle of Red River (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898), p.141.

<sup>72</sup>Frits Pannekoek, "The Reverend Griffiths Owen Corbett and the Red River Civil War of 1869-70," Canadian Historical Review, 57 (1976), pp.133-149.

<sup>73</sup>Roderick Campbell, "Reminiscences of Hudson's Bay Pioneers: Alexander Lillie," The Beaver (October, 1923), p.17.

law, and of all others who should he choose to conduct the opposition but another member of the same family - a brother-in-law of the leader of the present party. . . . both parties will probably return next spring, and Mr. McDermot has the satisfaction of knowing that which ever triumphs it is all in the family."<sup>74</sup> On the economic connections of the "old Red River element," W.L. Morton writes that aside from the marriage bonds which united them "it is probable that there were commercial ties also, such as the re-sale of furs to the company, the granting of freighting contracts by the company, and perhaps some rough division of the areas of trade or at least some specialization in trade."<sup>75</sup>

Annexation split Red River along class lines with members of the old oligarchy prospering as never before while most of the lower-class mixed-blood population were defrauded of their lands and forced into exile. In the years after annexation A.G.B. Bannatyne speculated in scrip and "there were some quite unsavoury aspects to the business" although he "was never directly associated with fraud."<sup>76</sup> On the recommendation of Donald A. Smith, Andrew McDermot was appointed "as Manitoba's representative among the provisional directors of the Canadian Pacific Railway."<sup>77</sup> John H. McTavish became Chief Land Commissioner of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1881.<sup>78</sup> Norman Wolfred Kittson, a prominent American free trader whose marriage to Elise Marion tied him to the St. Boniface

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<sup>74</sup>Nor'Wester, "Opposition in the North," 1 August 1861.

<sup>75</sup>W.L. Morton, ed. and intro., Alexander Begg's Red River Journal and other papers relative to the Red River Resistance of 1869-70 (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1956), pp.10-11.

<sup>76</sup>J.E. Rea, "Bannatyne, Andrew Graham Ballenden," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, 11, p.47.

<sup>77</sup>Hyman, "McDermot, Andrew," p.546.

<sup>78</sup>See, Oliver, ed., p.127.

merchant elite,<sup>79</sup> also prospered through his investment in river steamers and railways. In partnership with James J. Hill, Donald A. Smith,<sup>80</sup> and George Stephen of the Bank of Montreal, Kittson bought the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad.<sup>81</sup>

Sylvia Van Kirk's interpretation can be said to be whig because it validates Pannekoek's anachronistic vision of Red River as a divided society restored to order by Canadian annexation. Van Kirk's conclusion about mixed-blood women in Red River should also be recognized as whig because it obscures the existence of an oligarchy which was revived following the Canadian incursion.

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<sup>79</sup>Kittson's marriage crossed both racial and religious lines. His partner J.J. Hill, a Protestant from Rockwood, Canada West, married Mary Mehegan, a Roman Catholic. Nearly all the men connected with the merchant class in Red River married outside their own religious or racial group, which will perhaps surprise some readers of the works of Van Kirk and Frits Pannekoek. For details about Hill see, Albro Martin, James J. Hill and the Opening of the Northwest (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1976).

<sup>80</sup>Donald A. Smith was a relative of Cuthbert Grant who had married Isabella, the mixed-blood daughter of Chief Factor Richard Hardisty and his mixed-blood wife Margaret Sutherland. Smith was introduced into the fur trade by John Stuart, who was himself introduced by Cuthbert Grant Sr. of the North West Company. Smith was a native of Strathspey, the ancestral home of the Grants in Scotland, and he was "descended from Grants on both his father's and his mother's side." See, W.S. Wallace, "Strathspey in the Canadian Fur-Trade," in R. Flenley, ed., Essays in Canadian History Presented to George Mackinnon Wrong (Toronto: Macmillan, 1939), pp.278-9.

<sup>81</sup>Henry C. Klassen, "Kittson, Norman Wolfred," Dictionary of Canadian Biography, 11, p.477.

## CHAPTER FIVE

## THE FORMATION OF A CAPITALISTIC LABOUR MARKET IN RED RIVER

In the last chapter, a count of the number of European officers who married mixed-blood women in Red River demonstrated that exogamy was virtually universal amongst the elite in the period from 1845 to 1870. Since both Frits Pannekoek and Sylvia Van Kirk base their analysis of society in Red River on the assumption that the elite was divided by racial and sectarian strife there is an obvious need for a reassessment of the causes of social change in Red River. As an alternative to the whig interpretation it will be useful to consider the meaning of marriage patterns in Red River within the context of the capitalist development of the economy.

A distinctive feature of the whig historiography of Red River is that the vast majority of the population has been overlooked in order to focus attention on prominent commissioned officers of the Hudson's Bay Company. If one is to understand social change in Red River it is essential to discuss the nature of social relations beyond the confines of this small elite group. The structure of society in Red River was a result of the desire of the capitalists who gained control of the Hudson's Bay Company in the first decade of the nineteenth

century to create conditions which would enable them to reap higher profits. The rapid growth of population in Red River occurred after the achievement in 1821 of monopoly conditions that accompanied the reorganization of the Company in which the commissioned officers of the Company became shareholders while more than half the work-force was dismissed from the service. Red River reflected this reorganization in that it evolved into a society composed of a tiny merchant class<sup>1</sup> enriched by the profits of the trade and a majority of simple commodity producers<sup>2</sup> existing at a subsistence level whose ranks also afforded the Company with an abundant reserve of casual labour. The demographic effect of the creation of a capitalistic labour market in Red River is that the majority of the population exhibited an endogamous marriage pattern in sharp contrast to the characteristic exogamy of the merchant class. In order to present this thesis in a logical manner a discussion of the concept of a capitalistic labour market will precede a presentation of supporting quantitative evidence.

Although a key element of Marxist theory focuses on "underdevelopment," as does much of staples theory, little attention has been given to the role of capitalism in shaping society in Red River. Most Marxist historians have looked for evidence of class formation in response to industrialization.<sup>3</sup> This theoretical focus on industrialization among the Marxists in part explains H. Clare Pentland's

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<sup>1</sup>The merchant class included the officers of the Hudson's Bay Company in Red River and the free traders outside the Company.

<sup>2</sup>That is, buffalo hunters and subsistence farmers.

<sup>3</sup>For an exception to this generalization see Patricia A. McCormack, "Becoming Trappers: The Transformation of a Fur Trade Mode of Production at Fort Chipewyan," in Thomas C. Buckley, ed., Rendezvous: Selected Papers of the Fourth North American Fur Trade Conference, 1981 (St. Paul, Minnesota: North American Fur Trade Conference, 1983). Since most of the people of Red River were former employees of the Hudson's Bay Company, they do not appear to have undergone a similar transformation.

insistence that a capitalistic labour market did not emerge in Canada until the 1850s when early industrialization fostered the growth of wage labour. The importance of understanding the development of a capitalistic labour market, "in which the actions of workers and employers are governed and linked by impersonal considerations of immediate pecuniary advantage,"<sup>3</sup> is Pentland's most creative contribution to Canadian labour history. Yet Pentland's view of the transition to wage labour was also influenced by the same racist<sup>4</sup> attitudes which shaped the works of G.F.G. Stanley and W.L. Morton. According to Paul Phillips, one of Pentland's most enthusiastic admirers, Pentland's family "had a strong historic connection with the Orange Order (Clare's uncle was a member), a fact that no doubt contributed to Pentland's sympathetic interest in the Order in the nineteenth century" and "obviously influenced his perspective."<sup>5</sup> In Pentland's account of the development of a capitalistic labour market in Canada, a process he traces to the period of Canal construction in central Canada in the 1850s, the Orange Order is identified as the defensive organization of the artisans while the Irish Catholic immigrants are seen as the primary source of unskilled labour. A "general remoteness from the Protestant ethic" and a "profound indifference to every principle of hygiene and mechanics," Pentland argues, led these Irish Catholic immigrants to become wage labourers while their Protestant Irish

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<sup>3</sup>"The Development of a Capitalistic Labour Market in Canada," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, 25 (1959), p.450.

<sup>4</sup>Akenson compares Pentland's comments on the Catholic Irish in Canada to Adolph Hitler's vilification of the Jews in Mein Kampf. See, Donald Harmon Akenson, "H. Clare Pentland, the Irish, and the New Canadian Social History," in Akenson, Being Had: Historians, Evidence, and the Irish in North America (Don Mills, Ontario: P.D. Meany Publishers, 1985), pp.109-142.

<sup>5</sup>Paul Phillips, "Introduction," in Phillips, ed. and intro., Labour and Capital in Canada, 1650-1860, by H. Clare Pentland (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1981), pp.vii-viii.

neighbours were unwilling to make such a compromise. Thus, Pentland would have us believe that it was the unprogressive attitude of the Irish Catholic immigrants which "made possible the capitalistic market, as far as unskilled labour is concerned, in which employers could take or reject labour at will, always confident of a reserve to cushion their needs."<sup>6</sup>

In a recent critique of Pentland's conclusions about Irish settlement and employment patterns, Donald Akenson demonstrates that Irish Catholics, no less than the Irish Protestant immigrants who greatly outnumbered them, mainly settled on the land. Over 60% of the Irish population of Canada West, irrespective of religion, lived in rural areas until the 1860s.<sup>7</sup> The idea that the Irish Catholic immigrants to British North America settled mostly in cities where they became wage labourers is exposed as a myth.<sup>8</sup> Akenson's quantitative analysis of landholding patterns in nineteenth century Canada West completely dispels Pentland's image of the role of the Irish Catholic immigrant in the introduction of a capitalistic labour market in Canada West.

Allan Greer notes that Pentland's analysis involves "a socio-economic morphology of human development from primitive communism, through slavery and feudalism, up to capitalism that might, had it not ended with capitalism, have been taken from a Marxist textbook of the 1940s."<sup>9</sup> Pentland believed the labour

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<sup>6</sup>"The Development of a Capitalistic Labour Market. . . ," p.460.

<sup>7</sup>Akenson, Being Had, p.85.

<sup>8</sup>The weakest aspect of Akenson's argument is his application of the results of his research on the employment and landholding among the Irish in Canada to the situation which existed among the Irish in the United States. Nevertheless, Akenson's use of quantitative sources is a model of the methodology needed to understand social change.

<sup>9</sup>"Wage Labour and the Transition to Capitalism: A Critique of Pentland," Labour/Le Travail, 15 (Spring, 1985), p.10.

organization of the fur trade to be essentially pre-capitalist. He explains that "the system of labour organization that held sway in Canada until about 1850, neither slave nor capitalistic"<sup>10</sup> should be understood in terms of feudal labour relations. Pentland argues that the fur trade of the interior "provided classical conditions" for feudalism because "the companies, without a whisper of a labour market or labour reserve inland, were heavily dependent on the loyalty and permanence of their labour forces."<sup>11</sup> Yet even a cursory examination of the labour system of the Hudson's Bay Company will demonstrate that, contrary to Pentland's interpretation, the formation of a monopoly in 1821 created a capitalistic labour market in the fur trade. Labour became a commodity and the social cost of maintaining the labour force was shifted from the Company to the people of Red River.

Although the Hudson's Bay Company, founded in 1670, is one of the oldest capitalistic enterprises in continuous operation, relations between the directors of the Company and its employees were characterized by paternalism until after the merger with the North West Company in 1821. Formed in the Restoration court of Charles II, the original shareholders of the Company were "a distinguished and potent coalition of dukes, earls, baronets and knights of the realm, joined by some of the most influential of the whiggish merchant princes then beginning to dominate the City of London's blossoming financial district."<sup>12</sup> The attitude of these aristocratic owners of the Company was one of "absolutism, pomp, formality, and a sense of personal responsibility for retainers - all characteristics of

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<sup>10</sup>"The Development of a Capitalistic Labour Market. . . ," p.451.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p.454.

<sup>12</sup>Peter C. Newman, Company of Adventurers, vol. 1 (Markham, Ontario: Penguin Books, 1985), p.92.

feudalism."<sup>13</sup> The early paternalistic relationship between the management and employees of the Hudson's Bay Company was to persist until the first decade of the nineteenth century. During the Napoleonic Wars the Company, faced with a labour shortage, was forced to pay for the maintenance of its workers throughout the year. Since the indigenous population of Rupert's Land proved unwilling to abandon a middleman position in order to work for wages, the Company "relied almost entirely on a permanent work-force, consisting of men hired for a term of years, lodged and fed at the Company's forts at the Company's expense."<sup>14</sup>

In the eighteenth century, entry into the officer ranks of the Hudson's Bay Company was possible for men who had joined the Company as servants. Richard Glover argues that, due to competition for labour caused by the conscription of men for the military during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, common servants, mostly recruited from the Orkney Islands, were able to exert considerable pressure on their officers.<sup>15</sup> John Nicks has produced a detailed quantitative analysis of Orkneymen in the Hudson's Bay Company which demonstrates that a paternalistic relationship existed between the servants and the officers of the Company before the merger.<sup>16</sup> There was some incentive during the eighteenth century for the Orkneymen of the bayside posts to form

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<sup>13</sup>Agnes C. Laut, The 'Adventurers of England' on Hudson Bay: A Chronicle of the Fur Trade in the North (Toronto: Glasgow, Brook, 1914), quoted in *ibid.*, p.94.

<sup>14</sup>"Papers on the Labour System of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1821-1900: Volume I," Manuscript Report Series, no. 362 (Department of Indian Affairs and National Development, National Historic Sites, 1980), p.28.

<sup>15</sup>R. Glover, "The Difficulties of the Hudson's Bay Company's Penetration of the West," Canadian Historical Review 29 (1948), pp. 240-254.

<sup>16</sup>John Nicks, "Orkneymen in the HBC 1780-1821," in Carol M. Judd and Arthur J. Ray, eds., Old Trails and New Directions: Papers of the Third North American Fur Trade Conference (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), pp.102-126.

ties with the indigenous population and pursue a career within the company rather than to return home to the Orkney's with their savings. Nick's study suggests that in the early decades of the nineteenth century service in the Hudson's Bay Company became far less appealing for the average Orkney servant because there was less chance for advancement. Nicks argues that "at the end of the eighteenth century almost eighty percent of the employees of the Hudson's Bay Company were being recruited in the Orkneys" but by "1812 they accounted for about two-thirds of the total, and by the time of union less than forty percent."<sup>17</sup>

The character of the Hudson's Bay Company was to change radically under the direction of Thomas Douglas, Lord Selkirk, whose role in reorganizing the Company demonstrates how capitalists in key positions created market conditions which favoured their interests, thereby transforming the entire social order. Thomas Douglas was the son of Dunbar Hamilton Douglas, the 4th Earl of Selkirk, whose ancestral estate was situated in Galloway, in southwestern Scotland. Although his father had supported the Stuart cause in 1715, Dunbar Douglas "declared allegiance to the Hanoverian monarchy and even helped raise volunteer soldiers. . . to fight the Pretender's army."<sup>18</sup> A noted "agricultural improver," Dunbar Douglas was also a "true whig."<sup>19</sup> Dunbar Douglas' whig philosophy was to be reflected in the works of his son Thomas, a political economist whose first publication was an untitled pamphlet on poor relief which opposed taxation for relief of the poor because, he wrote, they would feel no gratitude if "the only aid

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p.102.

<sup>18</sup>J.M. Bumsted, "Introduction," in Bumsted, ed., The Collected Writings of Lord Selkirk, 1799-1809, vol. VII, The Manitoba Record Society Publications (Winnipeg: The Manitoba Record Society, 1984), p.2.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

they receive is extorted from the rich without their consent;"<sup>20</sup> such relief, would lead the poor to "believe that the assistance given them is their right" and any hardships suffered would be "considered as an injustice."<sup>21</sup>

In 1809, during a period when Hudson's Bay Company stock was trading at low prices due to competition with the North West Company, Selkirk and his sister's husband, John Halkett, began to buy large blocks of Hudson's Bay Company stock.<sup>22</sup> In 1810, Andrew Wedderburn (later Colville), who had married another of Selkirk's sisters in 1807, also invested in the Company, became a member of the London Committee and "interested himself greatly in improving the Company's organization and fortunes."<sup>23</sup> Soon after Selkirk and his relations gained control of the Company in 1811,<sup>24</sup> Selkirk was granted 116,000 square miles of land "astride the north-south and east-west communications systems"<sup>25</sup> of the North West Company. The establishment of the Red River Settlement in this territory, called Assiniboia, was part of a deliberate strategy to cut the supply lines of the North West Company to their traditional source of plains provisions in the Red River area. Although often represented as an act of benevolent concern for the plight of the Scottish crofters of the parish of Kildonan in Sutherlandshire, Selkirk gave little thought to the best interests of his future colonists, even depriving them, by his reckless promotion of his colonization

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p.23.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Jennifer S.H. Brown, Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country (Vancouver: Univ. of B. C. Press, 1980), p.116.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Selkirk was the largest shareholder in the Company by this time.

<sup>25</sup>John Stuart Galbraith, The Little Emperor: Governor Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1976), p.20.

scheme, of a chance to relocate on other lands.<sup>26</sup> The Pemmican Wars which followed the establishment of the colony were provoked by a man personally recruited by Selkirk, Miles Macdonnell, the first Governor of the Colony, a Roman Catholic and a United Empire Loyalist. Macdonnell's attempt to control the pemmican supply in the Red River region placed the settlers in the middle of a dangerous confrontation between the two companies.

Although litigation in the Canadian courts proved costly to Selkirk,<sup>27</sup> his aim in creating the Red River Settlement was achieved only one year after his death with the merger of the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821. It was only after the merger that the policies of the new directors of the Hudson's Bay Company, the most powerful of whom were relations of Selkirk, could be instituted. George Simpson, a nephew of Geddes Mackenzie Simpson, attracted the attention of Andrew Wedderburn while employed as clerk in his uncle's firm of Graham, Simpson, and Wedderburn, West Indian merchants. Simpson reshaped the management structure and dismissed more than half the labour force of the Company. There is considerable evidence that the Company's new managers created a rigid class division between servants and officers. The Deed Poll of 1821, signed by all of the Chief Traders and Chief Factors to be commissioned between 1821 and 1834, entitled them to receive a share of the profits. Unlike their salaried predecessors in the pre-coalition trade, the commissioned officers<sup>28</sup> now received a share of the 40% of the profits of the

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<sup>26</sup>J.M. Bumsted, "Lord Selkirk's Highland Regiment and the Kildonan Settlers," The Beaver (Autumn, 1978), p.19.

<sup>27</sup>F.L. Barron, "Victimizing His Lordship: Lord Selkirk and the Upper Canadian Courts," Manitoba History (Spring, 1982), pp.14-22.

<sup>28</sup>The term commissioned officers refers only to Chief Traders and Chief Factors but the officer class included clerks who were also allowed a seat at the officers mess since they were regularly promoted to fill vacancies among the

concern allotted to them. By this act they became shareholders in a capitalistic enterprise which made their interest in the concern fundamentally different from the lower ranking servants of the company. Seldom did a man hired as a servant achieve even the lowest clerical rank in the period after 1821.

Almost two-thirds of the commissioned officers of 1821 had been partners in the North West Company. Since it had been a common practice for bourgeois in the North West Company to marry daughters of the engagés,<sup>29</sup> the fur trade elite of the merged concern was from the beginning polyglot in origin. The marriage pattern most prevalent among the officers of the Company after the merger was that between clerks or Chief Traders and the daughters of senior commissioned officers, with the result that many Chief Traders and Chief Factors in the period between 1821 and 1870 had wives who were Cree, French, and Catholic. In the later decades, after the Company's monopoly had been undermined, marriages between the daughters of the Catholic free trader Andrew McDermot and Company officers formed a powerful indigenous oligarchy.

In order to determine the nature of marriage patterns in Red River several graphs of marriages over time have been produced (see Figures 1 and 2, p.102).<sup>30</sup>

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commissioned ranks. Postmasters were considered servants but that rank was also used to provide a measure of entry level patronage to the mixed-blood sons of the commissioned gentlemen.

<sup>29</sup>Sylvia Van Kirk states that "the most significant feature of the emerging pattern among the Nor'Westers was the extent to which the bourgeois married daughters of the French Canadian engagés or freemen - unions which cut across both class and racial lines." See, Van Kirk, "The Role of Women in the Fur Trade Society of the Canadian West," (Phd. dissertation, Univ. of London, 1975), p.15.

<sup>30</sup>Figures 1-8 are graphs created from a genealogical data base supplied by Douglas Sprague which was designed to test hypotheses about land tenure in Red River. Since the actual marriage dates were not included in the data base the marriages have been sorted on the basis of the date of birth of the female partner (each point on the graph represents marriages over a number of years). Figures 1, 3, 5 and 7 represent the number of marriages in each category in

Figure 1: Red River Marriages By Birthdate of Female Partner: Percent.

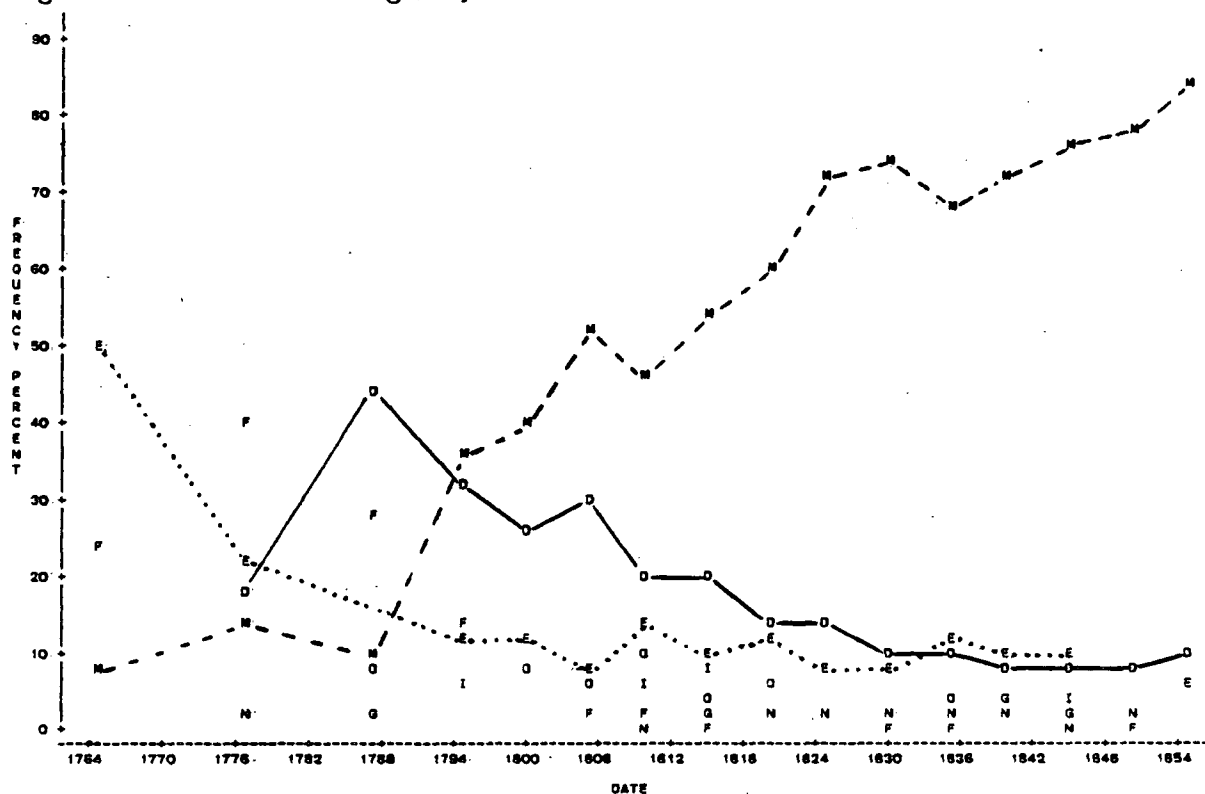
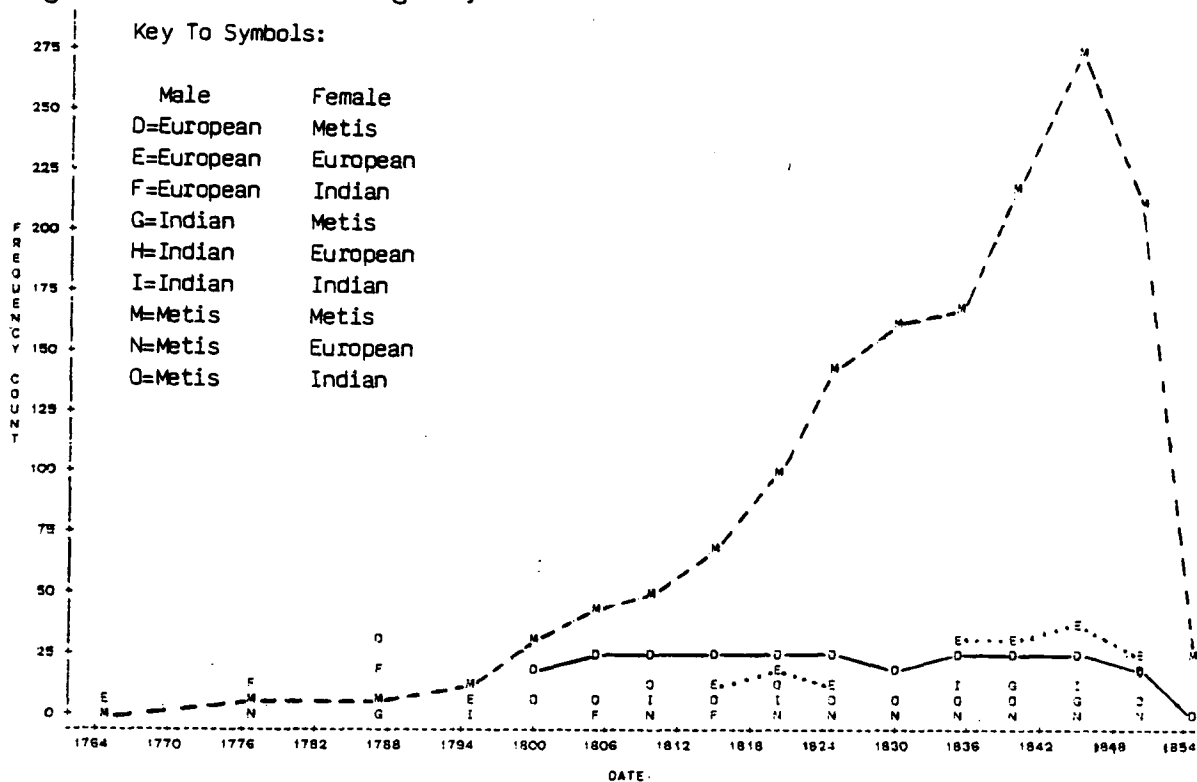


Figure 2: Red River Marriages By Birthdate of Female Partner: Count.



Although Red River was first settled by Scottish immigrants from the Parish of Kildonan, its people were predominantly mixed-blood by 1830 and by 1870 the mixed-blood element formed over 80% of the population. The hypothesis that racial prejudice explains the social structure in Red River should be considered in terms of the marriage patterns within several representative parishes. The parishes of Kildonan, St. Andrews, and St François-Xavier, all display a pattern of increasing endogamy (see Figures 3-8, pp. 104-106). Since it is known that mixed-blood Protestants and Catholics seldom intermarried and that Kildonan Scots seldom married European officers, it would appear that most of the people within these parishes married within the narrow confines of their own communities.

In terms of the argument about increasing racism in Red River, marriage patterns in the parish of Kildonan are highly significant. If racism was increasing in Red River it would appear that Company officers serving in Red River could have married Kildonan women. Since many officers were Protestants there would seem to be no reason, in terms of either race or religion, why such a marriage would have been unacceptable. But only one officer serving in Red River is known to have married a Kildonan woman in the period from 1845 to 1870. Magnus Linklater, an Orkneyman recruited as a labourer in 1836 who was a storeman at Fort Garry from 1841-45 and was promoted to the rank of clerk in 1855 and Chief Trader in 1865, is one of a handful of men who entered the Company as servants to become an officer in the period after 1821.<sup>31</sup> In July

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percentage terms while Figures 2, 4, 6 and 8 show the actual number of observations in each category. I would like to thank Virginia Green of Arts Computing at U.B.C. for her help in producing these graphs.

<sup>31</sup>Philip Goldring, "Governor Simpson's Officers: Elite Recruitment in a British Overseas Enterprise, 1834-1870," Prairie Forum, 10 (Autumn, 1985), p.261.

Figure 3: Kildonan Marriages By Birthdate of Female Partner: Percent

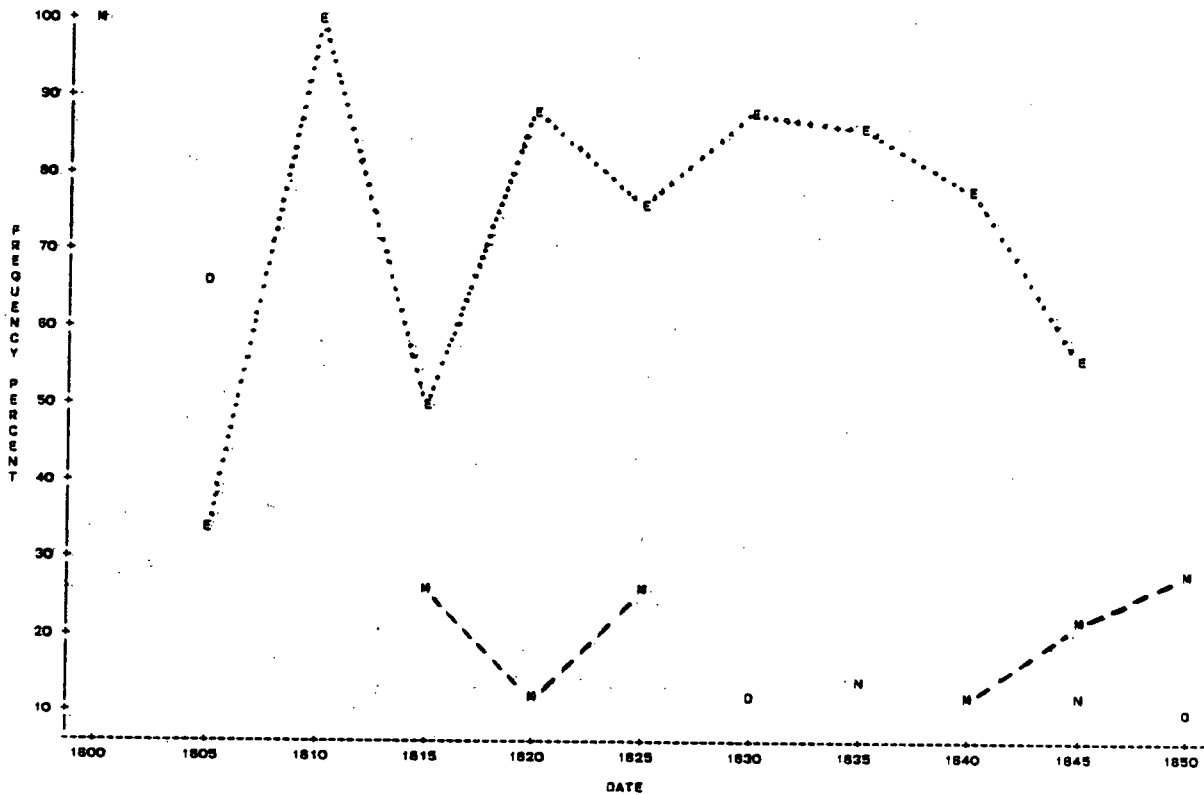


Figure 4: Kildonan Marriages By Birthdate of Female Partner: Count

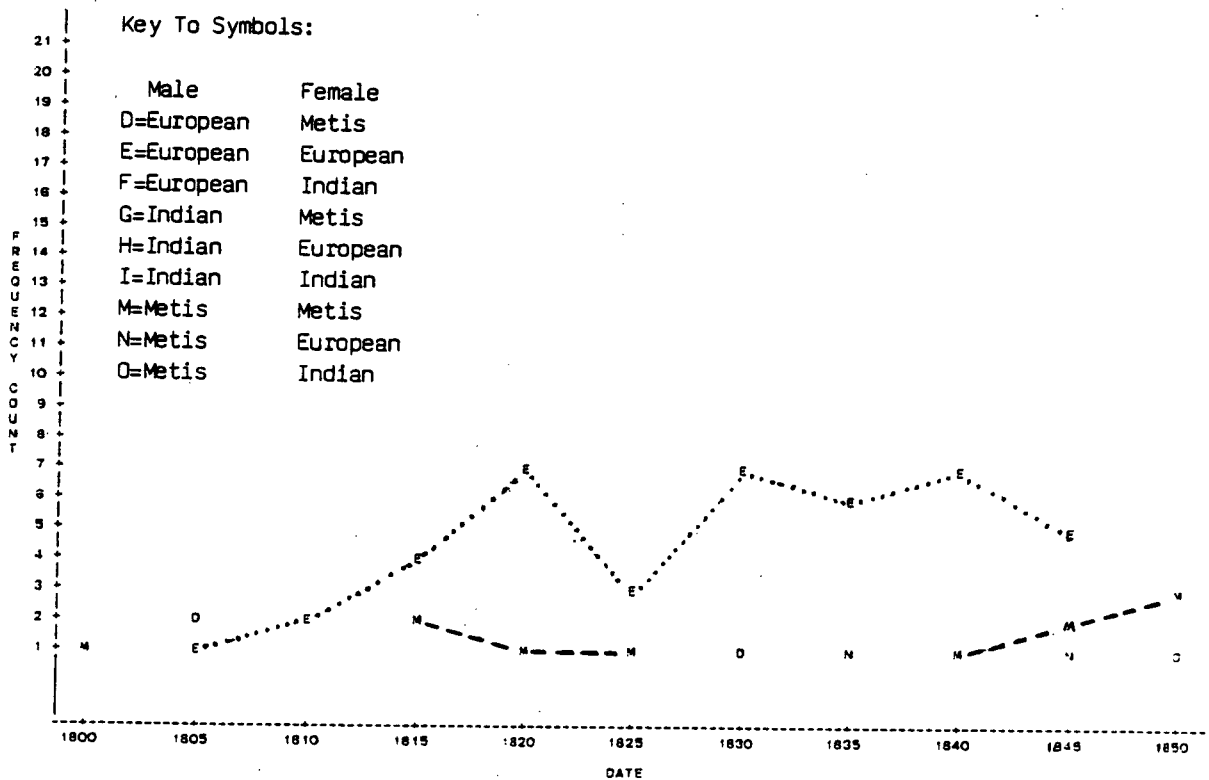


Figure 5: St. François-Xavier Marriages By Birthdate of Female Partner: Percent

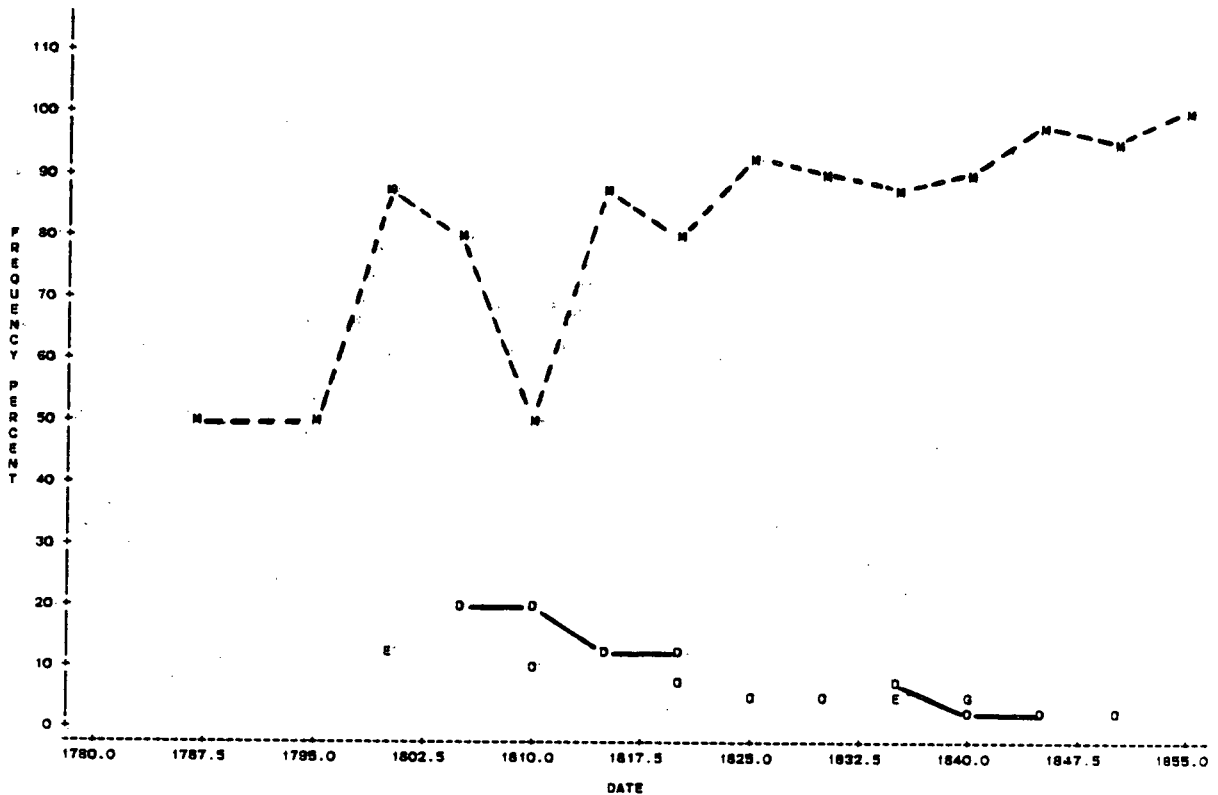


Figure 6: St. François-Xavier Marriages By Birthdate of Female Partner: Count

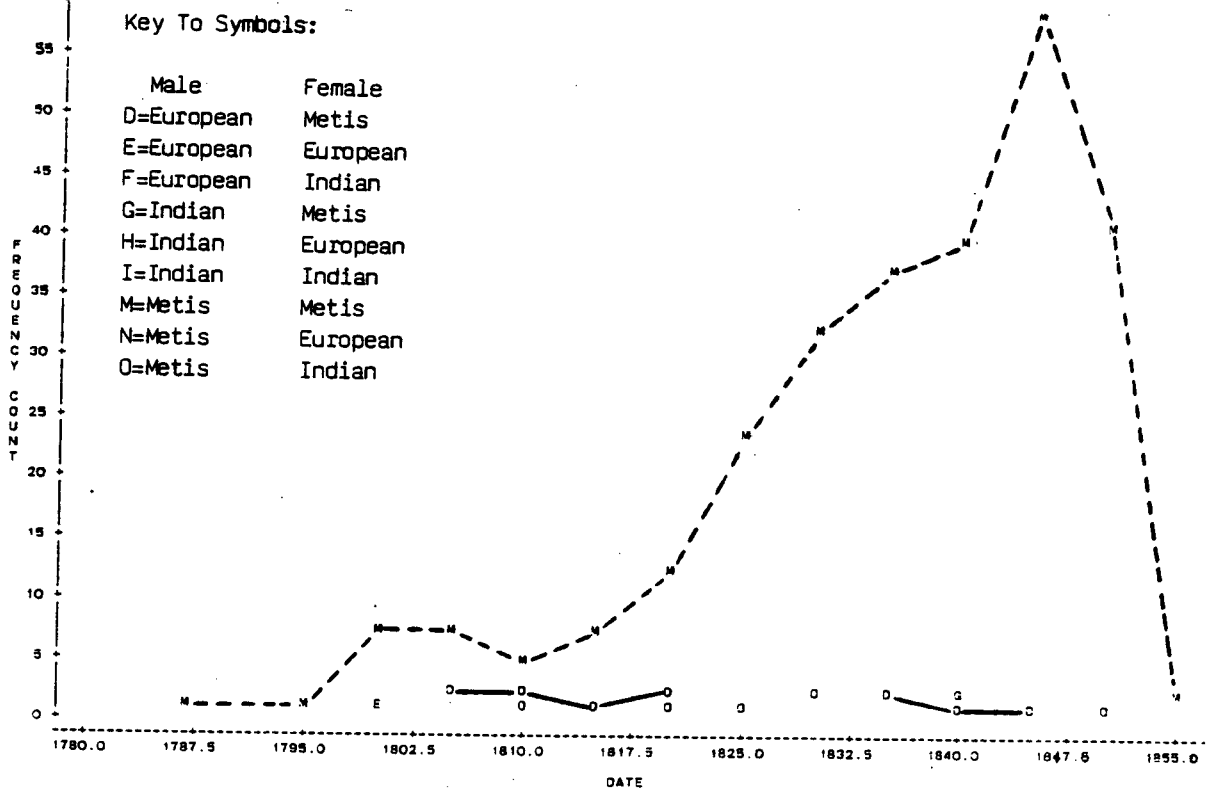


Figure 7: St. Andrew Marriages By Birthdate of Female Partner: Percent

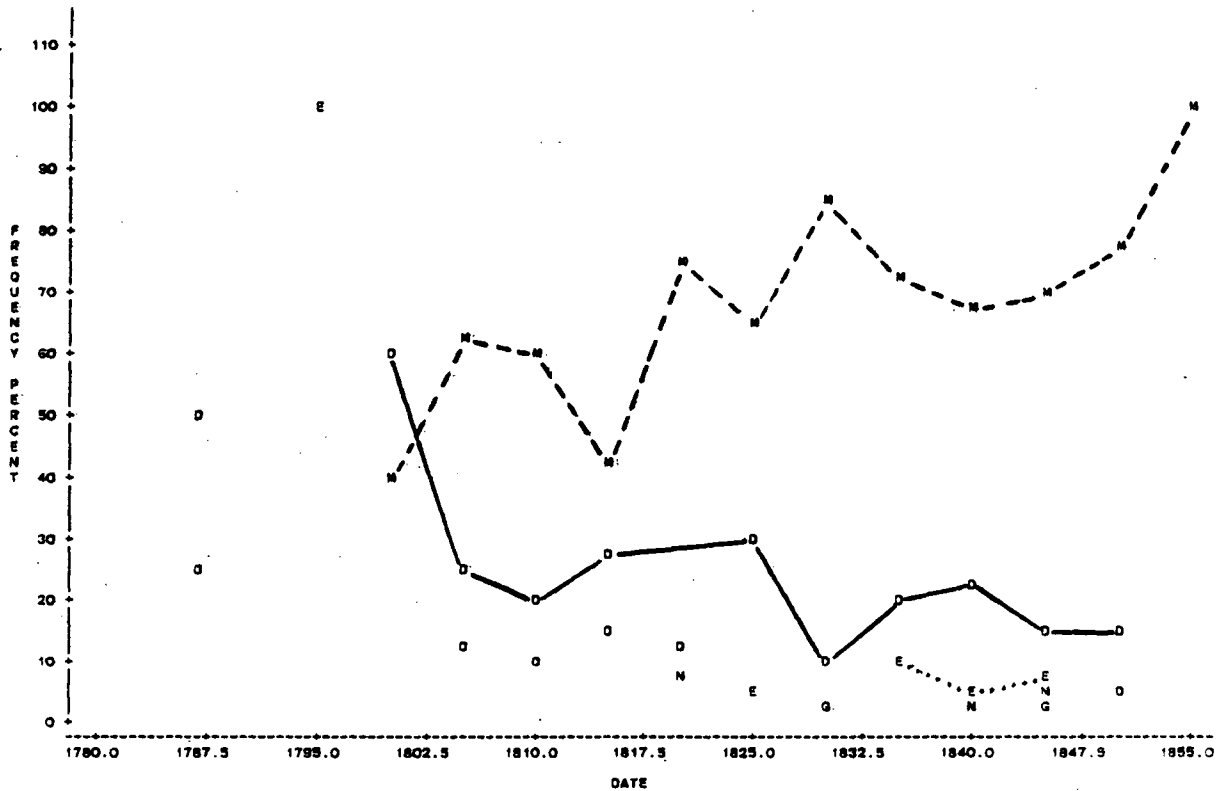
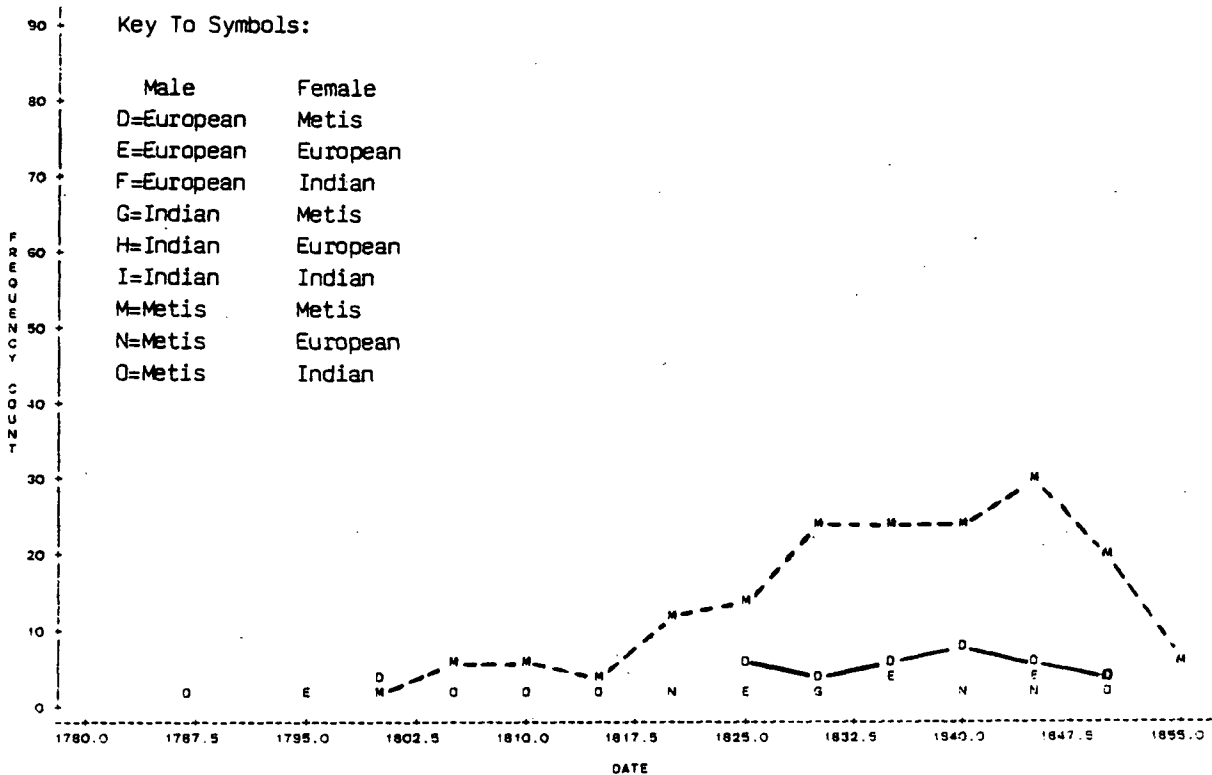


Figure 8: St. Andrew Marriages By Birthdate of Female Partner: Count



1845, Linklater married Jane Flett,<sup>32</sup> daughter of John Flett and Isabel Murray,<sup>33</sup> both of Kildonan parish. In comparison to the other officers in Red River, Linklater is an obscure figure and it may have been his own humble origins which prevented him from marrying into the merchant class.

In the absence of any solid evidence of religious and racial tension between the various communities in Red River, it seems logical to assume that the characteristic endogamy of the majority of the population in Red River was caused by a lack of social mobility rather than by racism. To understand this endogamous marriage pattern we must consider that the creation of a capitalistic labour market involved a reduction in opportunity for the great majority of men employed in the fur trade. According to Philip Goldring the number of employees dismissed by the Company from 1821 to 1826 "amounted to 1233 or a reduction to 36% of the level at the time of amalgamation."<sup>34</sup> The only practical solution for many of the employees of the Company dismissed after the merger was to accept the offer of land in Red River as an alternative source of subsistence to the fur trade. The strategy of the Company in establishing Red River did not derive from a desire to encourage settlement of the lands under Company control. From 1821 until the death of Simpson in 1860, the Company pursued what has been aptly described as a "closed door policy" in its chartered territories.<sup>35</sup> This policy led to a period of economic stagnation in Red River accompanied by unusually high profits for the Hudson's Bay Company. For over 40 years wage

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<sup>32</sup>Clifford Wilson, "Private Letters from the Fur Trade," Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, Transactions, Series III, 5 (1950), p.24.

<sup>33</sup>D.N. Sprague and Ronald Frye, comps., The Genealogy of the First Métis Nation, intro. by D.N. Sprague (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1983).

<sup>34</sup>Goldring, p.32.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p.30.

rates were kept below those existing in 1821. Within the Red River District the Company preferred to engage servants by the hour, day, or job rather than permanently; thus in the period between 1830 and 1880 the number of permanent servants it employed varied between 15 and 22 men.<sup>36</sup> The Company also hired many tripmen but these men were only employed during the brief period of open water and were forced to rely upon subsistence pursuits for the remainder of the year.

Since the French-speaking mixed-bloods were seen as a threat to Company rule, anyone marrying into the French community took a significant risk since the Company provided the only cash market for agricultural produce. The granting of credit, employment opportunities, access to the market in farm produce and pemmican, and even the ability to obtain title to the land were controlled by the Company. The physical separation of the Catholic and Protestant mixed-blood population was itself determined by the manner in which land was granted by the Company. While it was necessary for the French mixed-blood buffalo hunters and English mixed-blood farmers to trade in order to obtain a subsistence, closer relations would have met with disapproval from the Company. Nor could an individual only experienced as a subsistence farmer easily leave his own community and join the society of the buffalo hunters, which was highly stratified. Only a minority of the men who participated in the pemmican trade were hunters. Abandoning farming for the life of the hunter must have had little appeal for the Protestant mixed-blood farmers because the average participant in the hunt was perhaps even more impoverished than the farmers themselves. While the Catholic mixed-blood merchants who had contracts from the Company grew

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<sup>36</sup>Philip Goldring, Table 3.2.1, Size of Workforce Deployed in Each District and Zone, "Papers on the Labour System of the Hudson's Bay Company. . .," p.71.

rich on the profits of the trade most of the men employed in the pemmican trade had to borrow to buy provisions. The Company also had a policy of dealing only with approved hunters.

While most men in Red River were independent commodity producers and thus did not form a proletariat, it is evident that their interests were subordinated to the interests of the Company. The reluctance of the Kildonan Scots and the Protestant mixed-bloods to join the Canadian Party against Riel was conditioned by their position within the economy of Red River. Riel's support came mostly from the tripmen who were wage labourers. The seizure of Fort Garry was as much directed toward asserting local control of the economy as it was against any external threat. In the early stages of the Resistance, William Mactavish admitted that Riel is "every day strengthening himself and all our work-people are with him."<sup>37</sup> The Riel Resistance should be seen not as a result of sectarian bitterness but in relation to inequities created by the formation of a capitalistic labour market in Red River.

Sylvia Van Kirk has portrayed Red River as a society in which racial prejudice fostered by the arrival of incoming European women led to a decline in status for mixed-blood women. The conclusion presented here is that this assumption is based upon a whig interpretation of social change which originated with W.L. Morton and was further developed by Frits Pannekoek. A quantitative analysis of marriage patterns in Red River reveals both the mythical basis of the whig interpretation and the degree to which society in the Canadian west has been shaped by capitalist interests.

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<sup>37</sup>This quotation is from a "fragment of azure foolscap" recovered from a well where it had been discarded before Wolseley's entry into Red River. See, Beckles Willson, The Life of Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., vol. 1 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1915), p.398.

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