

## Introduction

ALVIN FINKEL, SARAH CARTER, AND PETER FORTNA

■ **The very first history conference** attended by co-editor of this book Sarah Carter, then a Master of Arts student at the University of Saskatchewan, was the 1977 ninth annual Western Canadian Studies conference held at the University of Calgary: “One Century Later: The Native Peoples of Western Canada since the ‘Making’ of the Treaties.”<sup>1</sup> Presenters included people from the Treaty Six and Seven nations, such as Harold Cardinal, Chief John Snow, Marie Smallface Marule, and Stan Cuthand. Arthur J. Ray gave a paper that has been used in courses and readers ever since: “Fur Trade History as an Aspect of Native History.” George F. Stanley—whose monumental 1935 study, *The Birth of Western Canada*, remained in 1977 the most sustained academic treatment of the Métis and First Nations—was also a presenter, shedding light on the neglected history of the Dakota in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. As Ian A.L. Getty and Donald B. Smith, editors of the volume of papers from the conference, commented in their introduction, the conference not only highlighted the work then being done but also pointed to the “topics that [cried] out for further study” such as the history of the implementation of the treaties and “Indian policy” of the twentieth century, drawing on documentary sources but also oral histories.<sup>2</sup>

A tremendous sense of energy and vitality infused the 1977 gathering, including important exchange and dialogue across disciplines and vocations among the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal delegates. The conference was also more accessible for graduate students studying in Western Canada than those held in the active conference regions such as Ontario. Yet when Carter's advisor, Ted Regehr, introduced her to David Bercuson, one of the Western Canadian specialists at the University of Calgary, Bercuson immediately asked how an MA student could possibly afford to attend a conference. (She was too embarrassed to stammer in reply that she had piggybacked on her parents' visit to Calgary and Banff, which happened to coincide.) Conference attendance was, and remains, expensive for graduate students, and a conference outside of the Prairie provinces would have been well beyond the means of most at the West's universities. Yet conference attendance is critical for graduate students. It would be difficult to exaggerate the impact this gathering of more than five hundred students, teachers, and the general public had on Carter, who was casting about for a thesis topic and knew virtually nothing about the history of the Aboriginal people of the West. The conference helped lead her to and shape the topics and approaches she pursued in her graduate work and beyond. Ten years later, as a newly minted PhD, Carter gave her first conference paper at a Western Canadian Studies conference held at the University of Saskatchewan. It was close to home (at that time Winnipeg) and manageable, as her one-year-old daughter could be left with family in Saskatoon.

These conferences ended in 1990, after a stretch when they were no longer annual and were no longer always held at the University of Calgary. The last one, held in Banff, was on the theme of women's history.<sup>3</sup> Why they ended is not clear, but the suspects include conference burnout on the part of the Calgary organizers and collection editors, funding drought, fewer Western Canadian specialists hired to academic positions, Western Canadian specialists deserting the field for other areas of study, new Western Canadianists' unwillingness or inability to grab the baton, a changing political climate with less focus on region in favour of other identities, and a burgeoning of other academic networks with conferences on diverse areas of focus such as the fur trade, labour/working-class history, women's history, and Native Studies. Conferences were still being held in and about the West, but the Western Canadian Studies banner disappeared, even though British Columbia Studies and Atlantic Canadian Studies continued to flourish.<sup>4</sup> A focus on provincial history in the years leading to the centennials of the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan in 2005 drew attention away from the broader region. But the three interdisciplinary Prairie conferences—held at St. John's College at the University of Manitoba in 1998, 2001, and 2004—helped to revive interest in a broader regional and

interdisciplinary approach. Three collections of essays have resulted from these conferences.<sup>5</sup> Important collections of essays on Western Canadian history that were not the product of conferences have also been published.<sup>6</sup>

The main goal of “The West and Beyond: Historians Past, Present and Future,” held at the University of Alberta, 19–21 June 2008, was to determine whether there was interest in reviving the Western Canadian Studies conferences that began in 1969 and ended in 1990. The first then-annual Western Canadian Studies Conference was launched at the University of Calgary in 1969, but its spiritual forebear was the 1967 Centennial Conference on the history of the Canadian West, held in Banff.<sup>7</sup> At the Banff gathering, presenters included many distinguished scholars and writers of the time, such as W.L. Morton, (“A Century of Plain and Parkland”), L.G. Thomas (“Historiography to 1867—The Fur Trade Era”), J.C. Ewers (“Cultural Conflicts on the Prairie: Indian and White”), W.J. Eccles (“New France and the Western Frontier”), and W.O. Mitchell (“The Canadian West in Fiction”). The lieutenant governor of Alberta, historian Grant MacEwan, gave the keynote address at the banquet.<sup>8</sup> Although papers from this conference were never brought together in a publication, many were published elsewhere and had long-lasting significance.

Described as the founder of the Western Canadian Studies conferences, David P. Gagan, at that time with the University of Calgary history department, explained in his preface to the volume of papers from the 1969 inaugural gathering that the specific objectives were to have “an informal, broadly interdisciplinary exchange of views on regional problems” and “to contribute, in a meaningful way, to western Canadian historiography.”<sup>9</sup> Organizers wanted to involve and inform the community and have “more general appeal than scholarly deliberations usually enjoy.” Regional politics of the late 1960s—Western “alienation” arising from the neglect and interference of national governments—provided the catalyst. Gagan explained that the first annual meeting was timed to “take advantage of the undercurrent of interest in the Prairie region” evoked by recent events, including the federal-provincial constitutional conferences and the national debate on bilingualism and biculturalism, which created a “crisis of confidence in Confederation.” Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau was particularly disliked for his policies and his perceived indifference and indignities toward the West. In the summer of 1969, several hundred protesting farmers greeted Trudeau on the Regina stop of his Western tour, heckling his speech and holding placards that read “Flour Power” and “Hustle Grain Not Women.” The annual conference born that year was intended to “cast new light on the origins and nature of the Prairie regional identity which now, as has happened so frequently in the past, seems to be aggressively reasserting its presence.”<sup>10</sup> Discontent and indignation with federal governments fueled the Western Ca-

nadian Studies conferences long after Trudeau's 1969 confrontation with Regina farmers. As David Bercuson wrote in his introduction to the proceedings of the fifth conference in 1973: "Without any significant political muscle and overshadowed by the confrontation of French and English, Western Canada has been ignored, patronized, wooed, and scolded but never satisfied."<sup>11</sup>

The first two conferences focused on the Prairies, and the first two collections of papers were entitled *Prairie Perspectives*. Thereafter efforts were made to include a broader region, including British Columbia, the North, and Western Ontario (and *Prairie Perspectives* became *Western Perspectives*). The conferences were always interdisciplinary, including presenters from political science, sociology, literature, geography, economics, fine art, education, and other fields although a heavy emphasis on history predominated. Both academic and popular historians, such as Hugh Dempsey and Grant MacEwan, presented papers. Speakers included participants in key events, such as Hon. Justice Emmett Hall, who helped forge Medicare, and Cree activist John Tootoosis (1983). There was generally a closing banquet with keynote speakers from the non-academic world, including Tommy Douglas (1979) and Roy Romanow (1983). Many of the conferences had broad and sweeping themes with the goal of deepening understanding of the West while challenging assumptions and stereotypes. David Bercuson explained in his introduction to the fifth conference that the goal was to demonstrate that the West was both ancient and modern. The region had a long history of "civilization" that began with its Native people and involved more than just the French and the British, as it was built by people of much more varied ethnicities. Nor was it a rural backwater that could be ignored. The region had been urbanized since the late nineteenth century, and its metropolitan centres were among the largest in Canada. Other conferences focused on more specialized themes: the fourth (1972) on "The Unknown Decade: The Twenties in Western Canada"; the "One Century Later" conference in 1977 mentioned above; the eleventh (1979) on the "Dirty Thirties in Prairie Canada"; the twelfth (1980) on "The New Provinces: Alberta and Saskatchewan," an event coinciding with the seventy-fifth anniversaries of those provinces; and the 1983 conference on "The Making of the Modern West: Western Canada Since 1945."

Attendance waxed and waned due to many factors. While the 1977 "One Century Later" gathering had more than five hundred delegates, the conference the year before had only sixty-three formally registered though many more attended the free sessions.<sup>12</sup> The low attendance in 1976 was apparently due to declining financial support, as travel grants could no longer be offered. But it was reported at the business meeting that the University of Calgary would increase its support if other funding failed. This must have happened, as the conference was once again on solid ground the next year.

An important legacy of the conferences is the fourteen volumes of papers that were very quickly produced, edited, and given introductions, mainly by the University of Calgary historians.<sup>13</sup> A historiographical analysis of these would be a worthwhile and interesting project. The topics were diverse but there was a heavy emphasis on political history and the agricultural settlement era. Women's history first emerged in the 1976 volume of the eighth conference, with Sheilagh S. Jameson's "Women in the Southern Alberta Ranch Community, 1881–1914." Women presenters were relatively few, but they gained momentum. Patricia Roy of the University of Victoria appears to have led the way with her paper at the 1972 gathering on "The Oriental 'Menace' in British Columbia." At the time of the 1984 conference, held at the University of Victoria, on "The Forgotten Majority: A Conference on Canadian Rural History," papers were given by Eliane Leslau Silverman, Nancy M. Sheehan, and Cecilia Danysk. Susan Trofimenkoff was the only woman to edit a volume of conference papers. These publications ended in 1993 with the volume edited by R.C. Macleod, *Swords and Ploughshares: War and Agriculture in Western Canada*. The volumes as a whole constitute a remarkable record of these gatherings. As Anthony Rasporich wrote in his introduction to *The Making of the Modern West* from the 1983 conference: "From their very inception a decade and a half ago, the Western Canadian Studies Conferences have made a considerable contribution to mapping the historical landscape of the *terra incognita* of the western interior of Canada.... When one thinks of the mindscape of the West before this enterprise began in 1968 [sic] and its strong self-consciousness today, it is to some degree a reflection on the willing efforts of western academics, writers and thinkers who have sown and reaped a bountiful crop."<sup>14</sup>

Organizers of the 2008 Western Canadian Studies meeting thought that it was time for a new crop of academics, writers, and thinkers to rise up, evaluate, and appraise the state of Western Canadian history, acknowledging and assessing the contributions of historians of the past and present while at the same time showcasing the research interests of the next generation. The meeting was meant to encourage a dialogue among generations of historians of the West and among practitioners of diverse approaches to the past. It was hoped that such a meeting would facilitate conversations across disciplinary and professional boundaries.

The field of Western Canadian history has expanded in multiple directions in the last twenty-five years. New histories of the West emphasize its diverse social landscape. Reflecting interdisciplinary approaches, these histories stress plural perspectives, inequality, relationships of power, human agency, and the environment. Recent histories have uncovered both the ancient and modern history of the region, moving beyond an emphasis on the settlement era. Themes

of memory and commemoration—how we have constructed our visions and myths of the West—have been explored by a new generation of scholars. Influenced by developments in the field nationally and internationally, recent histories of Western Canada draw on postmodern, cultural, feminist, environmental, and post-colonial approaches, methods, and theories. The conference organizers felt it was time to pause and take stock of this energetic and imaginative range of scholarly activity; as this collection attests, the field of Western Canadian history has stretched its reach in a number of different directions.

While developing the conference, the organizers felt it was important to include a wide variety of people and opinions with the goal of hosting a conference that reflected the interests and perspectives of those in the field. This engagement was initiated in the winter term of 2007, when more than one hundred scholars active in the field of Western Canadian history were asked about the possibility of reviving the Western Canadian Studies Conference series. They were also asked what the main purpose and objectives of such a meeting should be. This initial email was followed by a very lively gathering at the Saskatoon meeting of the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences in June 2007. In both instances, tremendous support was expressed for the concept and the timely need for such a conference. The organizers learned about the areas of research the responders wished to see explored, and these were reflected in the meeting. Respondents also made known the distinct need to assess the historiographical development of the field. In addition, they urged the conference organizers to recognize a number of new fields in the scholarship, including the social and physical diversity of the West, memory and commemoration, environmental history, medical history, and the development of the modern, post-World War II West. As a result of our consultations, organizers decided not to define the West and not to limit the West to Prairie Canada, but rather to recognize multiple Wests and to include British Columbia, northern Ontario, Northern Canada, and the borderlands with the United States. These choices led to a wide range of presentations that attempted to define their “West” in a number of innovative and exciting ways; the editors are pleased that the collection reflects this variety.

The conference was designed to assess the work of historians past and present, and to showcase the work of a new generation of scholars. Our plenary session speakers—Adele Perry, Lyle Dick, and Gerald Friesen—addressed the overarching historiography of the West. Two of their papers have been collected for this publication, and all of their presentations are available as podcasts (<http://digiport.athabascau.ca/wcsc>). A number of specialized panels of established and emerging scholars were also initiated to address major historiographical themes and developments.<sup>15</sup> These were an outstanding success, and

a number of their presentations have been collected as podcasts and as papers for this publication. Of particular note is the roundtable discussion “‘Settlement’—An Environmental History Perspective,” sponsored by the Network in Canadian History and Environment (NiCHE). The discussion, hosted by NiCHE and available as a podcast,<sup>16</sup> provides a critical examination of the term *settlement* when considering the populating of the West. NiCHE also hosted a number of the other conference presentations related to environmental history that offer an important window into the development of the field within a Western Canadian context. Other panels provided a rich and wide sampling of the depth and diversity of the new and exciting research, and many of these are available as podcasts on the Western Canadian Studies Conference website or as articles in this collection.<sup>17</sup>

The conference also provided an opportunity to evaluate the importance of Western universities in fostering the development of the field. The year 2008 marked the centennial of the University of Alberta, which has been an important centre for the teaching, mentoring, and writing of Western Canadian history. In the session of 1949–50, Lewis G. Thomas introduced a course on the history of Western Canada, which was for many years the only such course at any university in Canada. Generations of Alberta undergraduates learned of their own history through this course. Thomas was also an important mentor to many of the most distinguished scholars in the field, including the late John Foster, Sylvia Van Kirk, Frits Pannekoek, T.D. Regehr, David Breen, and others. The importance of Thomas’ scholarship and mentorship was recounted in a keynote presentation given by one of his most accomplished and respected students, R.C. Macleod. The presentation provided Macleod with an opportunity to recognize and assess Thomas’ achievements and the important role of the University of Alberta’s history department in shaping our understanding of the history of Western Canada. The presentation has been brought into the public realm as a podcast accessible on the Western Canadian Studies Conference website.<sup>18</sup>

The conference organizers also felt that the meeting should recognize more than the contributions made by academic historians. A number of sessions were therefore organized to consider the important role that public history has played in the development of the field, with a particular focus on the role of public historians, institutions, discourses, and writers. These sessions culminated with the performance of Catherine Cole, Maria Dunn, and Don Bouzek at the Royal Alberta Museum. Taking the closure of the Great West Garment Company as their subject, the performers were able to effectively demonstrate the power of a story in the hands of artists with a historical conscience. Together, these presentations offer an important perspective that, as Lyle Dick’s

article suggests, is too often forgotten in the academic discipline of history. In this vein, the editors are pleased that they are able to make such a large volume of the material produced at the conference public through the Athabasca University's Open Access model. As the digital landscape expands opportunities to disseminate information, it is important that scholars—privileged in their seats of authority—do all they can to make the information they produce as accessible as possible. In this way, they will demonstrate their relevance and continue to make important contributions to the public discourse. The conference organizers, contributors, and editors are excited that Athabasca University Press has provided them with this opportunity.

Finally, the editors hope that the collected material and published collection of papers will make an important contribution to scholarship within the region. They hope the forum will help to revitalize and expand the field and bring together a new generation of scholars—both actually and virtually—who can share and build on each other's work.

Our collection begins with three introductory essays that develop themes discussed in keynote addresses at the conference. Gerald Friesen's "Critical History in Western Canada, 1900–2000" outlines five broad stages of scholarly writing on the Canadian West. Beginning with a concentration on the achievement of self-government before World War I, regional history shifted to an interwar focus on the West as a hinterland of Central Canada. After the war, Central Canadian influence in the region was treated more critically, and greater emphasis was placed on alleged regional particularities. A fourth stage, beginning in 1968, rejected much earlier writing as too concerned with regional elites and turned the spotlight to social history, placing women, Aboriginals, workers, and immigrants at the forefront. A fifth stage, beginning about 1989, treated the notion of regions as problematic and tended to locate both the social and political histories of Western Canada within global developments and to view them through the lens of postmodernist discourse.

Lyle Dick's essay, "Vernacular Currents in Western Canadian Historiography: The Passion and Prose of Katherine Hughes, F.G. Roe, and Roy Ito," argues that non-scholarly historians were providing some voice for non-elites in the period when scholarly historians narrowly focused on elites and their various nation-building and region-building agendas. Archivist Hughes' biography of Father Lacombe included the Aboriginal response to the nation-building plans of the Canadian elites. Farmer and worker Roe challenged "expert" claims that Aboriginal people had hunted the buffalo to near-extinction, while Ito's work on Japanese Canadians who served during two world wars gave direct voice to internees, furnishing a challenge to official scholarship that had justified the evacuation of the Japanese from their coastal homes in 1942.

Winona Wheeler's essay, "Cree Intellectual Traditions in History," explores the persistence of oral history traditions in defining Cree identity. Just as Dick demonstrates that non-academics assembled evidence that provided perspectives that challenged conservative, elitist social constructions espoused by early professional historians of Western Canada, Wheeler asserts the importance of history recognizing "other ways of knowing," including the Aboriginal oral methods. "Accuracy, precision and procedural protocols," she notes, rather than anecdote, characterize the work of the Elders responsible for transmission of the stories of the people.

Part 2 of *The West and Beyond* examines ways in which both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people have attempted to portray the millennia-long history of Aboriginal people in the West and their interaction with non-Aboriginal people. Matt Dyce and James Opp study the gaze of the European newcomers on Aboriginal people. That gaze shifted over time, as their study of two early Edmonton professional photographers and their work in the Athabasca-Mackenzie River Basin suggests. Both Charles W. Mathers, the dean of Edmonton photographers, and his successor, Ernest Brown, were mainly interested in Natives only to the extent of their compatibility with the changing economic order represented by colonialism. Mathers initially photographed what he viewed as ethnographic portraits of traditional Aboriginal people, but later fastened on the development of the resource economy, portraying Aboriginal people as labourers along the river system whose work was helping to shape an emerging capitalist economy. Brown went further in subordinating the place of Aboriginal people within the territories that they had long inhabited, giving only circumscribed roles to Natives and the Hudson's Bay Company with which they had long traded. Northern river systems, so important to Mathers, largely vanished in favour of Euro-Canadian settlements, with the North reduced to a hinterland of Edmonton and with Aboriginal peoples pushed to the margins of the story of Euro-Canadian economic development that Brown extolled.

Though colonial-minded photographers constructed a new West in which Euro-Canadians dominated while Aboriginal peoples seemed to disappear, Aboriginal peoples in fact persisted. They attempted as best they could to maintain their cultures and underlying beliefs. This often led to conflicts with the colonialist authorities who claimed to govern them. Kathryn McKay traces such conflicts in the area of mental health in her article, "The Kaleidoscope of Madness: Perceptions of Insanity in British Columbia Aboriginal Populations, 1872–1950." McKay observes that both colonialism and psychiatry embody discourses that label groups and individuals as normal or abnormal. Examining patient files from the Department of Indian Affairs, she demonstrates the ways in which racial constructions were important in the "treatment" that

was offered to Aboriginal people. Cultural beliefs at the root of Aboriginal understandings, such as communication with spirits, were labelled signs of madness. The department's psychiatrists seemed as well to believe that the more Aboriginal blood an individual had, the less likely he or she was to respond to treatments other than long-term institutionalization. Individuals categorized as being mixed-race were more likely to be the subject of aggressive treatments than individuals categorized as fully Aboriginal.

The characterization of Aboriginal lives and Aboriginal spaces as marginal and dangerous continues to the present. Amber Dean reflects on such characterizations in "Space, Temporality, History: Encountering Hauntings in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside." Observing that the so-called Downtown Eastside was Coast Salish territory before the imposition of a colonial regime, she views it in its current form as the continuation of colonized territory. Within its boundaries, many prostitutes from various backgrounds, but with a significant over-representation of Aboriginal women, have gone "missing" and may be presumed to have been murdered. She challenges depictions of the area as a latter-day Western frontier and suggests that there is a clear historical line from colonization to the poverty of the area and the murder of women who have been marginalized, victims of both racial and gender stereotypes.

Finally, this section closes with a story of an Aboriginal woman who was named Calgary Stampede Queen in 1954. Susan Joudrey's "The Expectations of a Queen: Identity and Race Politics in the Calgary Stampede" traces the story of Evelyn Eagle Speaker, who won the Stampede beauty contest in 1954. Eagle Speaker had entered the contest in an effort to combat stereotypes of Native people as uneducated and unwilling to contribute to Canadian economic development. A high school graduate and experienced rancher, Eagle Speaker was embraced by the five Treaty 7 Southern Alberta Nations, who named her "Princess Wapiti" and sponsored her entry into the Stampede contest. While Eagle Speaker won, discussions in the media during and after the contest indicated how difficult it was for many non-Aboriginals to accept her self-depiction as both a proud Aboriginal and a cowgirl. Questions of whether this beauty queen should be attired in Native or cowgirl garb filled newspaper columns and letters to the editor for a considerable period.

If the place of First Nations in the discourse of region and nation has been controversial, so has the place of working people as opposed to the entrepreneurs and farmers that settlement literature has favoured. Part 3 examines "The Workers' West." Jeffery Taylor opens the section with "Capitalist Development, Forms of Labour, and Class Formation in Prairie Canada." Taylor portrays Prairie capitalist development as just one part of the larger development of capitalism in Europe and the colonies of European powers. While the capi-

talist mode of production co-existed with traditional kin-ordered First Nations economies during the fur trade period, the settlement period marginalized the latter and placed independent commodity production on the farms side by side with capitalist exploitation in the emerging industrial sectors.

Elizabeth Jameson furthers Taylor's analysis with a comparison of class and labour developments across the U.S.–Canada borders. She notes that workers' real lives, reflected in migrations, demonstrated the porousness of national and regional borders. Complex economic transformations and the imposition by governments of class, racial, and gender legislation all put restrictions on the possibilities for control over the lives of individual working people, including homemakers. Overarching theories such as Turner's frontier theory (in the U.S.) and Innis' staples theory (in Canada) fail to explain most things about the real lives of people in either country. We need to explore more of their individual stories and to expand our paradigms rather than our myths.

Esyllt Jones provides one such paradigm in her exploration of "Disease as Embedded Praxis: Epidemics, Public Health, and Working-Class Resistance in Winnipeg, 1906–19." While public health authorities, reinforcing elite ideology, claimed that disease was common in working-class quarters because of lack of cleanliness on the part of working-class families, the trade union movement, representing workers, argued that low wages leading to poor housing and nutrition lead to weakened working-class bodies. Workers' desire for some measure of freedom from interfering authorities sometimes led to anti-vaccination campaigns but also to demands for a fairer distribution of wealth. The higher death rate among working people during the 1918–19 influenza epidemic heightened class conflict.

In 1919 Winnipeg's workers launched a general strike that spread to many cities across the country. John Willis examines a previously unexamined group of strikers, Winnipeg's postal workers, and uncovers the extent to which these workers challenged management's right to set work rules. The strikers proposed their own rules for sorting and delivering the mail in order to create greater equity among workers. The federal government responded by dismissing the most militant workers and asserting its right to impose whatever work regime it wanted.

Part Four examines the efforts of other marginalized groups to challenge regional and national narratives that excluded them. Dan Cui and Jennifer Kelly analyze an African-Canadian newspaper column that appeared at various times in the 1920s in both Edmonton daily newspapers. Called "Our Negro Citizens," the column provides, according to these authors, "an example of everyday citizenship practices." The elite members of the African-Canadian community who wrote this column used it to counter dominant negative stereotypes of Af-

rican Canadians as violent and lazy. As Evelyn Eagle Speaker attempted for Aboriginal communities, they tried to focus on community members who were educated and making a contribution to society. The focus on “racial uplift,” while conservative and tending to downplay the impact of racism on creating social justice, co-existed with efforts in the column to fight systemic discrimination, appealing to readers’ notions of Canadian justice and fair play.

Another submerged group that gradually emerged from the shadows of illegality to demand justice and fair play were gays and lesbians, whose presence has until recently been barely mentioned in a Western Canadian historical tradition that tends to assume universal heterosexuality. Valerie Korinek’s “A Queer-Eye View of the Prairie” attempts to reorient Western Canada’s history, especially its urban history, to make it more inclusive. She traces the efforts by gays, lesbians, and transgendered people to carve out spaces for themselves, sometimes simply as quiet couples or as participants in gay social clubs, but also sometimes as gay activists. While homosexuals, like heterosexuals, were divided by class and race and did not create homogeneous cultural communities, the lives and communities that they created help to nuance the stereotype of Prairie families as uniformly heterosexual and nuclear.

Dominique Clément’s article places the gradual acceptance of difference in Western Canada in long-term perspective with his outline of the emergence of human rights law in British Columbia, emphasizing its impact on sexual discrimination in the province. In the period before human rights legislation was introduced in British Columbia, employers freely and habitually discriminated against women in employment in every imaginable way. But the introduction of legislation that would protect women from discrimination occurred quite unevenly, benefitting from New Democratic Party periods in government and then becoming gradually unravelled each time conservative parties took office. Throughout, suggests Clément, a focus on individual rights as opposed to systemic discrimination placed limits on the efficacy of the “human rights state” in creating greater social equality.

Part Five turns to critical pieces on “Cultural Portrayals of the West.” Robert Wardhaugh looks at writer Margaret Laurence and historian W.L. Morton as representatives, albeit with views at variance on many subjects, of small-town mid-twentieth century white Anglo-Canadian southwestern Manitoba. Both focused on the region of the mind that constituted the authentic expression of Prairie culture for them. For Morton, that culture, while resisting control by Central Canada, was British and agricultural, and immigrants troubled him when they did not sufficiently assimilate into WASP Prairie culture. Laurence both embraced and critiqued that culture but gave a special place in her thoughts and writing to Aboriginal culture, particularly that of the Métis. Both,

however, were united in their devotion to views of region that accord with the third phase of Prairie historical writing observed by Gerald Friesen.

At a more local level and in a limited era, Lauren Wheeler pinpoints one variant of a WASP-identified West in “The Banff Photographic Exchange: Albums, Youth, Skiing, and Memory Making in the 1920s.” Photographic collections document identity formation and the coming of age of WASP middle-class boys in Banff as they took up skiing, and their later introduction of the sport to their girlfriends and wives.

Robyn Read finds a somewhat broader notion of Prairie culture in “Eric Harvie: Without and Within Robert Kroetsch’s *Alibi*.” Harvie’s desire to collect artifacts of interest knew no bounds, and the regional museum that he founded, the Glenbow, became a repository for his multi-themed collections. In turn, Kroetsch, while focused on Prairie individuals and landscape, creates “carnavalesque fictions” that collect fragments of lives and events, and avoid boundaries, both territorial and mental.

The book ends with a consideration of what is deemed to have sufficient “cultural significance” to result in preservation of historic sites and events. Focusing on Saskatchewan, Bruce Dawson’s “‘It’s a Landmark in the Community’: The Conservation of Historic Places in Saskatchewan, 1911–2009” traces the determination of landmarks in that province from a decision to preserve Saskatoon’s initial school rather than tear it down in 1911 through to recent provincial programs that involve both provincial and municipal authorities, along with community groups, in deciding which sites will be constituted as heritage sites and preserved. As Dawson suggests, values and power relationships are reflected both in decisions about what to preserve and what not to preserve and in the rationalizations given for these decisions. \*

## Notes

- 1 Ian A.L. Getty and Donald B. Smith, eds., *One Century Later: Western Canadian Reserve Indians Since Treaty 7* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1978).
- 2 *Ibid.*, xi–xii.
- 3 A collection of papers from this conference was to have appeared in the *Journal of Canadian Studies*, but this did not materialize due to factors beyond the control of the journal, so there are few traces of this conference.
- 4 Examples of the conferences held on the West from the mid 1980s include the CCF–NDP history conference held in Saskatoon (1983); the Winnipeg General Strike conference (1984); “1885 and After” held at the University of Saskatchewan (1985), and a conference held later that year, also on the theme of 1885, at the University of Alberta; the 1991 symposium of the Women and History Association

of Saskatchewan and Alberta (WASH); “The Canadian Cowboy,” held at the Glenbow Museum, Calgary (1997); and “Unsettled Pasts: Reconceiving the West through Women’s History,” held at the University of Calgary (2002). Organizing for the 2005 centennials of the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan likely dissipated the energy of those who worked on the earlier conferences. A 1987 conference in Red Deer on the Alberta centennial was organized to put in place plans for research and publication for the centennial. The focus on provinces led to a decline of a broader regional perspective. In 2001 a “Centenary Symposium on the Labour Movement in Saskatchewan” was held at the University of Regina, and in 2002, there was another “Centenary Symposium on the Labour Movement in Saskatchewan” held at the University of Regina. From the mid 1980s, the Centre for Rupert’s Land Studies of the University of Winnipeg held bi-annual symposiums on fur trade-era history.

- 5 Robert Wardhaugh, ed., *Toward Defining the Prairies: Region, Culture and History* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2001); Alison Calder and Robert Wardhaugh, eds., *History, Literature and the Writing of the Canadian Prairies* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2005); Len Kuffert, ed., *The Prairies Lost and Found* (Winnipeg: St. John’s College Press, 2007).
- 6 See, for example, Catherine Cavanaugh and Jeremy Mouat, eds., *Making Western Canada: Essays on European Colonization and Settlement* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1996); R. Douglas Francis and Chris Kitzan, eds., *The Prairie West as Promised Land* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2007).
- 7 A.W. Rasporich and H.C. Klassen, eds., *Prairie Perspectives 2* (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973), 1.
- 8 “Notes and Correspondence,” *Saskatchewan History* 20, no. 1 (Winter 1967): 40.
- 9 David P. Gagan, “Preface,” in *Prairie Perspectives*, ed. David P. Gagan (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), iv. David P. Gagan is described as the “founder” by Rasporich and Klassen in their introduction to *Prairie Perspectives 2*, p. 1.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 3.
- 11 David Jay Bercuson, ed., *Western Perspectives 1* (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974).
- 12 Keith Stotyn, “Western Canadian Studies Conference 1976,” *Archivaria* 1976, 79–80.
- 13 Gagan, *Prairie Perspectives*; Rasporich and Klassen, *Prairie Perspectives 2*; Susan Trofimenkoff, ed., *The Twenties in Western Canada* (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1972); Bercuson, *Western Perspectives 1* (1974); A.W. Rasporich, ed. *Western Canada: Past and Present* (Calgary: McClelland and Stewart West, 1975); Henry C. Klassen, ed., *The Canadian West: Social Change and Economic Development* (Calgary: Comprint Publishing Company, 1977); Getty and Smith, *One Century Later* (1977); Howard Palmer, ed. *The Settlement of the West* (Calgary: Comprint Publishing Company, 1977); David Jay Bercuson and Philip A. Buckner, eds., *Eastern and Western Perspectives* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981); R.D. Francis and H. Ganzevoort, eds., *The Dirty Thirties in Prairie Canada* (Vancouver: Tantalus Research, 1980); Howard Palmer and Donald B. Smith, eds., *The New Provinces: Alberta and Saskatchewan, 1905–1980* (Vancouver: Tantalus Research, 1980); A.W.

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- 14 Rasporich, *Making of the Modern West*.
- 15 Panels were specifically solicited on the topics of politics, women and gender, Aboriginal history, ethnicity and immigration, social class, borderlands and comparative, environmental history, and African-Canadian history.
- 16 <http://niche.uwo.ca/audio-video/wcsc2008>.
- 17 <http://digiport.athabascau.ca/wcsc>.
- 18 Ibid.