

“It’s a Landmark in the Community”: The Conservation of Historic Places in Saskatchewan, 1911–2009

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■ **At the meeting** of the City of Saskatoon School Board on 6 April 1911, it was decided that the city’s original schoolhouse, a mere twenty-four years old, was redundant and should be torn down.¹ School District Superintendent W.P. Bates, in the face of ridicule, suggested that the school be moved to some public grounds and be preserved.² Answering his call was the local chapter of the Independent Order of the Daughters of the Empire (IODE), who made arrangements with the recently established University of Saskatchewan to locate the schoolhouse on the grounds of the campus for use as museum. An impassioned plea to City Council yielded \$250 toward the cost of the move.³ In total, \$842 was spent taking the building apart, numbering the stones, and then reassembling them at the new location. A plaque to commemorate the occasion was drafted and hung upon the door. Thus was born the heritage conservation movement in Saskatchewan.

In the succeeding ninety-eight years, hundreds of monuments have been erected, buildings preserved, and other heritage conservation actions undertaken across Saskatchewan to recognize places associated with people and events that



A field crew from the University of Saskatchewan erecting the first historic marker in Saskatchewan at South Branch House in May, 1944. L-R: J.G. (Grant) MacEwan, Williard "Bud" Estey, A.S. Morton, Mr. Harrison and Lewis H. Thomas, SAB R-A 535.

are deemed significant at the local, provincial, and national levels.⁴ However, just as important to the historical record is the story of the commemoration associated with these places. Understanding what places were chosen and why, as well as how these choices and reasons have changed over time, provides important insight into the values held by the population at those moments in time. As well, understanding who was making these choices and how they were undertaken informs our understanding of the power relationships and decision-making processes within the society. This paper will consider the changing ways and means by which places have been commemorated and conserved during the past century and how the Saskatchewan experience fits within the national and international context.

The creation of heritage related to historic places involves two interdependent elements: individuals or groups who believe they have some authority, legislated or otherwise, to choose what is or is not heritage, and reasons or criteria for why a place is to be conserved. These authors of heritage related to historic places have typically been those of the political, academic, or economic elite or governing agencies. The nature of the heritage being conserved dictates this. Unlike language, customs, and personal artifacts, places are directly associated with land. Use or ownership of land in most nations requires financial investment, familiarity with legal processes, and some relationship with government officials. Not all potential authors of heritage have had knowledge or access to

these resources and, thus, their claims of heritage have traditionally not been recognized without intervention by an individual or organization with access to these resources, usually from one of the four aforementioned groups.

The reasons or criteria for why a place is to be considered an element of heritage are underpinned by the authors' belief that the historic place and its conservation have value to those involved in the process and, perhaps, to society as a whole. While often articulated with reference to the economic worth of an object, values are an inherent human framework for critique and decision making, and are applied much more broadly, including to the choice of historic places to conserve. Until recently, the values that guided heritage conservation have largely gone unarticulated, perhaps because, as Howard Green concluded, "[e]veryone knew what was important: the homes and other buildings associated with political, military, and business leaders—those who today are sometimes derided as the 'dead white men.'"⁵ The past thirty years have seen the emergence of a cultural-significance approach to heritage conservation.⁶ Underpinned by discussion and consensus building related to the values expressed for historic places, the cultural-significance approach has compelled the authors of heritage not only to articulate the values they hold for a property, but also to respond to challenges regarding the politically and knowledge-dependent processes of valuation that have evolved.⁷

Consistent within the creation of heritage has been its use by its authors to display and reinforce power relationships in society. Historic places, like museum artifacts and monuments erected for public display, serve as demarcations of victory and failure, reinforce hierarchal relationships that exist within our communities, and stand as touchstones for national identity.⁸ Places of heritage, in the words of James Scott, "produce a public transcript in close conformity with how the dominant groups would wish to have things appear" and "provide convincing evidence for the hegemony of dominant values."⁹ In this process, historic places become an extremely visual and potentially permanent element of the public transcript, thereby helping the dominants project their values across society.

Study of where Canada fits within the discussion of historic-place conservation has been limited and recent. Until the early 1990s, scholarship in this field tended to be sympathetic and celebratory, often written by individuals affiliated with government heritage programs.¹⁰ Paralleling the critique of historic-place valuation, which accompanied the development of the cultural-significance approach to conservation in Canada in the 1990s, has been an increase in historical scholarship related to the creation and management of historic places. Authored by historians in both academic and government service, as well as by scholars in other disciplines, a primary focus of this recent literature has been

to consider the efficacy and legitimacy of heritage authorship by past and present government agencies in the face of shifting political direction and competing claims of authorship.¹¹ Much of this contemporary scholarship has been national in scope or focused on specific sites or local assemblages, leaving the discussion of provincial-level activity undeveloped.

The evolution of the conservation of historic places in Saskatchewan can be broken into four chronological periods. The pre-1938 period represents the establishment of conservation activities in the province and is largely defined by the actions of Arthur Silver (A.S.) Morton, head of the Department of History at the University of Saskatchewan. In 1938 the provincial government introduced the first heritage legislation, and the years that followed were characterized by the growing involvement of local organizations and government in the conservation of places. The year 1960 ushered in a period of large government-sponsored restoration projects and a growing interest in stronger legislation to legally protect buildings and other places. In 1980 Saskatchewan introduced the *Heritage Property Act*, the province's primary heritage legislation, and with that act, the fourth and current era of historic-place conservation commenced. Each of these periods will be explored here with reference to how the Saskatchewan experience fits within the national and international world context of heritage conservation.

While activities to protect and promote historic places can be traced back to the Roman period, the modern conservation movement began in the late 1800s. In England, the United States, and Canada, societies composed of a "small knot of cultivated people"¹² formed in reaction to the changes to the physical landscape wrought by the industrial revolution and to assert a national pride and identity based on architecture.¹³ The aforementioned episode in Saskatoon fits within this national and international context. The project was spearheaded by the local chapter of the IODE, one of the groups identified by C.J. Taylor as leading early conservation efforts across Canada. The chosen property represented the establishment of Western education, the social norms of the frontier community, and the values and legacy of the previous generation's elite. The schoolhouse was, according to the IODE, "really the one historic building in the city."¹⁴

In the 1920s, other elites in Saskatchewan, notably A.S. Morton, took up the conservation challenge. Interested in the fur trade, Morton spent significant time after his 1914 arrival in Saskatchewan locating fur trade posts and visiting with people who had been present in the region during the fur trade period. During these visits, he also assisted with the organization of local historical groups across the province. The composition of these groups represented a Western form of elite membership. While Anglo-Saxon roots seemed to be an

unwritten requirement for membership, the recent emergence of the area from its frontier period resulted in a more open interpretation of “elite” compared to that of eastern North America or Europe. Most notably, these organizations tended to welcome “old-timers”—those who had arrived and persevered during the frontier period. The groups were focused on collecting documents, marking historic sites, and making public the information about the “pioneers,” and Morton’s attention validated their elite status.¹⁵

Also contributing to this validation process was the attention of the new National Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (NHSMBC) paid to these groups. Established in 1919, the NHSMBC’s initial focus was on providing physical demarcation to the growing nationalist sentiment in Canada by formal recognition of places associated with the imperialistic milestones in the nation’s history.¹⁶ When Dominion Parks Commissioner J.B. Harkin wrote to Professor Morton in 1922 to ask for assistance in identifying local resources that might be of national, provincial, and local interest and “their relative need for immediate action to preserve them from deterioration,” Morton was happy to acquiesce and link the activities of these local organizations into this national cause.¹⁷ While many of the Saskatchewan suggestions represented the fur trade, the NHSMB was more interested in places associated with national displays of power in the West, notably sites associated with the 1885 conflict and the North West Mounted Police.¹⁸ Like most other areas of the country at this time, the actions of the federal government were commemorative only; no actions were taken to manage or undertake any preservation or restoration activities at these sites.

Beyond the work done in Saskatoon in 1911, only limited conservation activity involving buildings was taken during this period. In 1924 the Town of Battleford acquired the buildings and grounds of Fort Battleford, an 1876 North West Mounted Police barracks, with the intention of establishing a museum. Similarly, in 1931 the historical society in the City of Prince Albert relocated the 1867 Nisbet Mission Church and School, the oldest building in the community, to the city’s main public park. Used by the first missionary to take up residence in the area, the church, like the Saskatoon schoolhouse, represented the arrival of European values in Prince Albert. The church was to form the centrepiece of an early Canadian example of a historic village, which was then an emerging method to present a desired view of history in a contrived context.¹⁹

In 1936 the provincial government took its first formal action in the area of heritage conservation, authorizing an annual grant to the newly formed Saskatchewan Historical Society (SHS). A provincial version of the previously discussed local historical societies, this move ushered in the second period of historic-place conservation in Saskatchewan, one that would be typified by changing authorship and audiences for historic places in the province.²⁰

At the forefront of activity during this period was the work of A.S. Morton to establish a trust to protect historic places of provincial interest. In 1938, at Morton's suggestion, the province passed an amendment to the *University Act* to establish a trust at the University of Saskatchewan for the purpose of identifying, marking, and acquiring property based on three criteria: historical importance, danger of being "ploughed up" or otherwise lost, and the interest of the people of the locality near the site.²¹ The appointment of two provincial government officials to the five-member committee overseeing the trust represented the first formal steps for the province into the role of heritage authorship heretofore dominated by the academic and social elites. While the activities of the trust were limited to the research and acquisition of a handful of fur trade sites during its seven years of operation, it initiated a trend toward greater government involvement in heritage conservation in Saskatchewan that predated the involvement of neighbouring provinces by almost a decade.²²

Provincial government involvement in the authorship of heritage grew quickly after the 1944 election of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). The CCF's centralized approach to governance was accompanied by a view that the province's historic places were important elements of a Saskatchewan form of nationalism and the post-war tourist economy. An early step in this process was the 1945 transfer of the work of the SHS and the trust to a new Crown agency, the Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB). In fulfilling the historic-marking element of its mandate, the SAB proposed to complete the work initiated by Morton to identify and mark fur trade posts but also valued "sites which are easily accessible and which can be integrated with the Government's other measures for developing the tourist attractions of the province."²³ The view of SAB officials that their work should merely "supplement" the work of the NHSMBC to mark sites reaffirmed the provincial commitment to the imperialistic nature of the national program.²⁴ That said, the 1948 statement that the building of Saskatchewan-based "memories and loyalties" among residents through a historic-marker program was "particularly desirable" hints at future directions for the commemoration of historic places.²⁵

Another step toward the province's burgeoning historic-places program was the government's 1945 acquisition of the former North West Mounted Police buildings in the town of Battleford for the purposes of establishing a police museum. Following the advice of A.S. Morton that "a historic site which should be preserved in memory of the past and for the interest of future generations should never go out of control of the Government," local MLA Joe Phelps, the powerful and impulsive minister of natural resources, at that time had his ministry acquire the property and, in partnership with a local heritage group, undertake modest restoration and research to operate the site as a tourist attraction.²⁶

Developed to present the imperialistic themes of conquest and governance promoted in the National Historic Sites, the government's foray into building ownership and restoration was a significant departure from the marking programs that typified historic-place conservation outside of Eastern Canada.²⁷

However, by 1950 Phelps was out of cabinet and the costs associated with managing and restoring the Battleford museum were not sitting well with provincial officials. Fortunately for the province, officials with the National Historic Sites program contacted the Government of Saskatchewan to inquire about the possibility of transferring the site, which was already designated by the NHSMBC, to their program for operation as the province's first National Historic Park.²⁸ The transfer was completed in 1951, and the government of Saskatchewan was out of the restoration business. The move proved to be fortuitous for the federal authorities as a response to the 1951 *Massey Report*, which was particularly critical of the work of the NHSMBC in Saskatchewan in regards to the preservation of buildings and sites.²⁹

Provincial interest in historic-place conservation did not end with the transfer of the Battleford park. In fact, the years preceding and into the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the province, the Golden Jubilee in 1955, was one of the most significant periods in the history of the sector. The Golden Jubilee was a chance, according to historian Michael Fedyk, to cast off the hardships and insecurities wrought by depression and war and to build anew the perception of Saskatchewan as a promised land.³⁰ In defining and celebrating this new Saskatchewan, the strong association of identity-building and nationalism with historic places previously identified was not lost on provincial officials. Prior to the commencement of Jubilee activities in 1952, a number of defining activities related to heritage conservation were already underway. The historic site work of the Saskatchewan Archives Board was transferred to the province's Department of Natural Resources in 1950 to increase the potential scope and reach of the program, and the *Provincial Parks and Protected Areas Act* was amended to include historic site protection. The department soon established an advisory committee on provincial historic sites comprising government and public members to foster local interest in sponsoring historic sites and developing "a distinctive provincial historic sites marker."³¹ The important role that archaeology plays in building nationalist pride was also recognized when one of the first provincially sponsored archaeology programs in Canada was established in 1951.³²

In 1953 J.D. Herbert, formerly in charge of the Fort Battleford operation, was named director of historic sites and loaned to the Jubilee's Subcommittee on Historic Sites and Publications.³³ The Subcommittee built on past initiatives and quickly set out an aggressive program of site marking that, as James Opp

suggests for the entire Jubilee program, “both relied on and challenged federal institutions and national symbols.”³⁴ Publicly promoted as a program to stimulate feelings of national unity, a majority of the more than fifty places marked followed the traditional themes of the national program.³⁵ However, that these promotional materials also requested public nomination of sites easily accessible to tourists reflected a new inclusion of the public in the authorship process and the heightened importance of tourism in the valuation process. The expressed interest in places associated with immigrant settlement and the 1953 designation of a three thousand-year-old First Nations campsite as one of the first historic sites defied the traditional approach to incorporate places that reflected the relationship between people and the local environment, a key theme in the new Saskatchewan identity.³⁶ It is also worth noting that the dominant role of government officials on the subcommittee marked a shift from academic elites as the primary authors of heritage related to historic places.³⁷

In the years immediately following the Golden Jubilee, resources for historic-place work was limited and primarily directed to completing the ambitious research and marking programs brought forward in 1953. It was not until the early 1960s, when a new province-wide celebration was in the offing, that new energy and focus ushered in the next phase of historic-place conservation.

In his book *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Canada's National Historic Parks and Sites*, C.J. Taylor characterizes the 1960s as “The Era of Big Projects.” During these years, large projects driven by government were common across North America as methods to address social issues and stimulate economic growth. Historic places, viewed primarily as an economic generator through job creation and tourism, benefitted from this trend. Canada's centennial in 1967 and the province's Diamond Jubilee in 1965 presented an opportunity to revisit historic sites as entities that could authenticate the celebrations and the government's projections of identity.

The Saskatchewan Diamond Jubilee and Canada Centennial Corporation, the agency created to coordinate the celebratory activities, called for more informative markers, a series of interpretive displays at places where more information should be provided, and “more extensive development” at a handful of fur trade posts, sites associated with the 1885 conflict, and other places associated with traditional national themes.³⁸ At four of the historic parks established through this work, development featured the reconstruction of several historic buildings, a popular approach to historic-place conservation during the era of “big projects.” In addition to creating jobs and increasing tourism potential, these reconstructions represented images of power and political messages in ways that plaques could not.³⁹ The extensive archaeological research done in advance of these developments, combined with inclusion of a handful of First

Nation sites related to commemorations, reflects a continued interest in the Saskatchewan-rooted identity promoted during the Golden Jubilee.⁴⁰

Another provincial agency that was driven to perpetuate the Saskatchewan identity promoted in 1955 through historic places was the Western Development Museum (WDM). The WDM was established in 1949 to collect artifacts associated with the economic and cultural development of Western Canada. With branches in North Battleford, Saskatoon, and Yorkton, the WDM was influenced by the historic village trend in the United States. The same J.L. Phelps who had been associated with the Fort Battleford project in 1946 became chair of the WDM and announced his intention for the WDM to create a "typical" village at the Saskatoon branch with actual buildings from the 1884 to 1912 period.⁴¹ Progress on this vision was slow, with only the Colony House, the oldest residence in Saskatoon, being relocated to the museum's Saskatoon location. However, a village was established at the North Battleford branch in 1965, and by the late 1970s, almost two dozen buildings had been relocated or reconstructed at this location.⁴²

Federal government activity to conserve Saskatchewan's historic places continued through this period. The NHSMBC designated ten properties between 1960 and 1980, many of which represented previously unrepresented themes in Saskatchewan, such as architectural significance and pre-contact history.⁴³ As well, the National Historic Sites branch began acquiring some of the lands associated with the NHSMBC designations, notably at Batoche, Fort Walsh, and Motherwell Homestead. The branch also undertook research and restoration work to restore many historic buildings at these sites and improve the facilities for public interpretation. In 1970 the growing national interest in architectural significance was given a boost through the launch of the Canadian Inventory of Historic Building, which initiated a systematic process of evaluating pre-1914 buildings. Administered in Saskatchewan as a partnership between the federal and provincial historic sites programs, the most notable impact of this inventory was its work to record urban historic places, which, aside from a handful of government structures, had not fit into the agendas of either the national or provincial historic sites programs to this point in time. The inventory program highlighted the heightened importance assigned to authenticity of place that took hold during this period. Until this time, the historic-marker programs of both the provincial and federal governments centered on the power of the message communicated by the marker, which was merely placed in the general vicinity of the actual place where the events occurred. Increasingly in this period, the focus shifted to a model in which physical place formed the basis of power.

Other developments in the 1970s included a broadened approach to historic-place conservation at the provincial level. In 1975 a new thematic framework

for site recognition was introduced that formally articulated the Saskatchewan identity theme related to the association of people with the land. The theme was divided into four concepts: the land, response to the land, Saskatchewan institutions, and wealth of the land.⁴⁴ Also in that year, the province introduced the Regional Historic Site Implementation Policy to support and encourage the care and recognition of locally significant historic buildings. While the program was designed to share heritage authorship with the community, the public role in this process was minimized by the requirement for assessment by provincial officials regarding the relative significance of the property.⁴⁵ Also notable was the establishment of formal linkages between tourism and the historic parks through the placement of the program within the new Ministry of Tourism and Renewable Resources in 1974.

The other significant action of 1975 was the introduction of the province's first heritage legislation that specifically protected historic places, the *Saskatchewan Heritage Act (SHA)*. Legislation was also *en vogue* elsewhere during this period as the United States passed its *National Historic Preservation Act* in 1966 and UNESCO created the World Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1972, which Canada ratified in 1976. In Saskatchewan, the new legislation was, in part, the result of the calls by local heritage groups. In the urban locales, the push for urban redevelopment in the 1960s and the subsequent demolition of several potential heritage buildings resulted in calls from environmental and heritage organizations for legislation and government action to protect buildings. Most vocal was the Saskatoon Environmental Society, whose concerns about buildings in the central business district resulted in an invitation by city council to this organization to get formally involved with the identification of significant buildings.⁴⁶ These local advocacy activities were supported at the national level by the new Heritage Canada Foundation, which was established in 1973 to "work to engage as many Canadians as possible, demonstrate good conservation practices, and catalyze local action and investment."⁴⁷ An early focus for Heritage Canada was to work directly with all provincial governments to implement heritage legislation, a task they accomplished by 1980.⁴⁸

Under the *SHA*, the responsible minister could designate heritage properties owned by the provincial government and create an appointed advisory board to assist with the decision-making process. The province did designate five buildings as "protected property" between 1975 and 1980, four of the five being properties predominately associated with provincial governance.⁴⁹ While a step in the right direction, the *SHA* did not satisfy those urban heritage groups that wanted to ensure the protection of non-government-owned buildings in their communities. In fact, it seems to have furthered their resolve to push for legislation that would allow for local recognition of historic places.

The passage of the *Heritage Property Act* in 1980 ushered in a new period of historic-place conservation in Saskatchewan. The act detailed a tremendous scope of values by which a property could be recognized, and it provided both the province and municipal governments with significant powers to fund, promote, regulate, and designate heritage historic places as heritage property.⁵⁰ While these changes addressed the concerns of community groups and heritage organizations, a by-product of the new legislation was the further governmentalization of heritage authorship in Saskatchewan. Frits Pannekoek has described this process as “the rise of the heritage priesthood.”⁵¹ During the past phase, the provincial government had emerged as the key author of heritage, with support, advocacy, and engagement from a diverse range of community groups. Under the act, a formal relationship was established between the province and municipal governments on issues involving historic places. As well, the authorship of local heritage involving local historic places through the designation process became a municipal council decision. At the provincial level, the Heritage Resources Branch hired many historians and architects to go around and explain the act and to work with municipal officials to help them determine reasons for designation, what interventions to undertake, and generally how to proceed with heritage conservation in their communities.⁵²

However, the records of the Provincial Heritage Resources Branch suggest that for the most part, the needs of individual property owners and community officials were met by the legislation and were honoured to have their local historic places listed on the provincial register.⁵³ As of June 2009, almost 300 of Saskatchewan’s 789 municipalities have designated a heritage property at some point since the act was introduced, and a total of 742 have been designated as municipal heritage property.⁵⁴ The values that the municipalities hold for these properties, articulated in the reasons for designation on the formal bylaw, vary but tend to focus on interpretations of the Saskatchewan identity related to the relationship with the surrounding environment, including relative age of the building within the community and the association with local activities, organizations, and individuals. The most significant association is with religious practices, as over one-third of the municipal heritage properties are religious in nature. By far the most common reason for designation is the simple yet value-laden statement “It’s a landmark in the community.”

The provincial designation program to recognize a place’s significance to the province was initially a closed program; only projects researched by government staff would be forwarded to the minister responsible for consideration. Despite the broad range of themes that were incorporated in two frameworks that were developed by provincial officials to guide the designation process, a high percentage of the early designations were power-laden symbols of pro-

vincial authority: court houses, land titles offices, and government office buildings.⁵⁵ The evaluation form, criteria, and guidelines, except for a few minor corrections and term clarifications, remained unchanged until 2002. In that year, the process of nominations for provincial heritage property was changed to facilitate and encourage the submission of complete nominations from the general public, in place of the former system of department staff researching and preparing all submissions. With this change, it became apparent that the existing quantitative evaluation system presented challenges, as it relied too heavily on “expert” analysis of architectural and economic viability, and offered limited opportunities to draw out the community values that were driving the nominations. As well, the previous system was not easily adapted to archaeological sites, landscapes, and movable property, all eligible for designation under the act. An overhaul of the evaluation process resulted in the quantitative scoring system being replaced by three broad categories of evaluation for proposed provincial heritage properties: conveyance of heritage-related value; representation of important social, cultural, economic, or political history; and demonstration of historical association with persons or events of significance to Saskatchewan.⁵⁶ This shift to a cultural-significance approach and a willingness to share the heritage authorship with the general public appears to be meeting with success. Since 2002, the number of provincial heritage property designations has increased by 40 percent, with the majority initiated by public nominations.

In 2003 Saskatchewan joined the pan-Canadian Historic Places Initiative (HPI). Initiated by the federal government in 2001, the program is focused around the cultural-significance approach and is intended to engage and encourage Canadians to take a more active role in the conservation of historic places. Participation in the HPI provides federal funding to the province’s Heritage Resources Branch to undertake a variety of research and community-engagement activities to build local capacity to protect and promote historic places. As this is a step away from increasing governmentalization of heritage authorship in Saskatchewan during the past fifty years, the full impact of the program remains to be accessed. More time is necessary to determine if this government-public partnership will significantly advance community involvement.

In addition to the federal government’s contribution to historic-place conservation through the HPI program, the NHSMBC recognized twelve additional sites during this period. Most of these places are located in large urban centres.⁵⁷ Some, such as Wanuskewin and Last Mountain Lake Bird Sanctuary, and Seager Wheeler’s Maple Grove Farm, reflect the broader interpretations of heritage value suggested by the cultural-significance model developed by Parks Canada during this period. At the National Historic Parks, Parks Canada com-

pleted the restoration work at Motherwell Homestead and opened the site in 1983. Significant redevelopment was undertaken at Batoche in the early 1980s to refocus the interpretation of the site on post-1885 Métis culture rather than on the conflict itself. This shift of interpretation demonstrates how the authors of historic-place heritage can change their values and use the same place and resources to tell a new story.

Other activities in Saskatchewan have focused on attempts to increase the values represented in the authorship process. The provincial historic parks program followed a similar course to its federal counterparts to change and expand the interpretive messages—most notably through a partnership at Fort Carlton with the Beardy's Okamasis First Nation to interpret the First Nations role in the fur trade at the fort. In 1986 a non-profit organization, the Saskatchewan Architectural Heritage Society, was established to promote the conservation of buildings in the province. Although the society has struggled to maintain membership, it has undertaken a number of initiatives to support the rehabilitation of historic places.⁵⁸ These efforts were complemented in 1991 by the establishment of Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation (SHF) as a provincial crown agency to promote and support local heritage conservation through grant funding and the acquisition of properties to hold in trust. Since its inception, the SHF has acquired and partially rehabilitated one property, the Claybank Brick Plant, and contributed to the successful rehabilitation of hundreds of local historic places through its various grant programs. Also contributing to this work to promote local historic places has been a handful of community-based heritage societies, notably in Regina and Saskatoon.



AS WE APPROACH THE HUNDREDDTH ANNIVERSARY of historic-place conservation in Saskatchewan, the body of work of the authors of heritage related to historic places can be seen in hundreds of communities across the province. In the establishment of these places, Saskatchewanians have been part of, and occasionally led, national and international approaches to the protection and promotion of historic places. In creating these places, the authors of heritage both reflect and convey a set of values that they hope will find resonance in the future. In this resonance exists a power: the power to define what represents a society and to validate the societal norms and relationships that have enabled the individual or group the opportunity to create this heritage. The conservation of historic places creates a public transcript of these values and power relationships. The history of heritage conservation related to places in Saskatchewan fits well within this story. What began as individual actions

led by academics and the “Western elite” morphed in the 1940s into a government-driven process steeped in community support and then into legislation-based activity dependent on professionals. Historic places represent traditional themes of imperialistic power that dominated the choice of places by both federal and provincial officials until the 1970s. Also included are a growing number of places that embody the relationship between Saskatchewan’s people and its environment, and the role of historic places as tourism destinations, both elements of public policy during and following the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the 1950s. The result today is group of historic places that represent a small but growing group of themes and the personal values of a handful of academics and professionals. However, because of the significant but understudied role that historic places play in informing and influencing the values of the public and their perceptions of history, it remains to be seen whether the places that have been recognized to date are truly representative of the values held by the community or merely reflect what the public has been told are appropriate locations to represent our values and our history. Further work in this area will provide additional insight into the values and power relationships embodied within our heritage and the contributions these landmarks in our communities make to the historical record. *

Notes

- 1 *Daily Phoenix*, 7 April 1911, 8.
- 2 Saskatoon Public Library Local History Room (hereafter cited as LHR), Schools—Little Stone School, William P. Bate, “The Little Stone School,” n.d.
- 3 City of Saskatoon Archives (hereafter cited as CSA), D500 II.17, letter, L.A.R. Straton and W.W.W. Morgan to City Council, 18 April 1911; CSA D500 IV.13, “Finance Committee Reports 1910–1912,” report dated 17 July 1911.
- 4 In this essay, the word *heritage* is defined as those visions, processes, and objects of the past that we choose to engage with and perpetuate for the future. *Conservation* is considered here to be all actions taken to protect and promote places and objects, or elements of those places or objects, that are important for their association with past people, events, ideas, or lifeways. It includes not only efforts to physically repair, restore, or maintain the place or objects, but also activities to identify, recognize, regulate, and raise awareness of and appreciation for the place or object.
- 5 Howard Green, “The Social Construction of Heritage Significance,” *Preservation of What for Whom? A Critical Look at Historical Significance*, ed. Michael A. Tomlan (Ithaca, NY: Council for Preservation of Education, 1998), 87.
- 6 The cultural-significance approach was first articulated in the *Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance*, authored by the Australia chapter of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in 1979, and has subsequently been implemented in most Western nations.

- 7 The Canadian and international scholarship on this topic has grown significantly during the last decade, including Alastair Kerr, "Considerations for a Values-Based Approach to Heritage Conservation in Canada" (unpublished manuscript); Christina Cameron, "Value and Integrity in Cultural and Natural Heritage: From Parks Canada to World Heritage," in *Capturing the Public Value of Heritage: Proceedings of the London Conference*, ed. Kate Clark (London: English Heritage, 2006): 71–78; Randall Mason, "Fixing Historical Preservation: A Constructive Critique of 'Significance,'" *Places* 15, no. 1 (2003); Green, "Social Construction," 85–94; Richard Striner, "Determining Significance: Mind over Matter," in Tomlan, *Preservation of What for Whom*, 137–42; Uffe Juul Jensen, "Cultural Heritage, Liberal Education and Human Flourishing," in *Values and Heritage Conservation: Research Report*, Erica Avrami, Randall Mason, and Marta de la Torre (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 2000), 38–43; Ned Kaufman, "Historic Places and the Diversity Deficit in Heritage Conservation," *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* 1, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 68–85; Kate Clark, "Preserving What Matters: Value-Led Planning for Cultural Heritage Sites," *GCI Newsletter* 16, no. 3 (Fall 2001).
- 8 The relationship between museums, monuments, and historic places and projections of power have been discussed by several authors, notably Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 1991), 163–87; "Introduction," in *Museums and the Making of "Ourselves": The Role of Objects in National Identity*, ed. Flora Kaplan (New York: Leicester University Press, 1994), 1–16; Tony Bennett, "The Expeditionary Complex," in *The Birth of the Museum* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 59–88; Stephen Ames, *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992), 3–24; David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 35–73.
- 9 James Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 2–4. Scott defines the public transcript as the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate.
- 10 Examples include W.F. Lothian, *A Brief History of Canada's National Parks* (Ottawa: Environment Canada–Parks, 1987); C.J. Taylor, *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Canada's National Historic Parks and Sites* (Montreal: McGill–Queen's University Press, 1990). The articles featured in the special issue of *Prairie Forum* 15, no. 2 (Fall 1990) focus on heritage conservation in Western Canada.
- 11 This literature has included several publications focused on the challenges of federal heritage agencies to promote a national identity, including Shannon Ricketts, "Cultural Selection and National Identity: Establishing Historic Sites in a National Framework, 1920–1939," *The Public Historian* 18, no. 3 (Summer 1996): 23–41; Yves Yvon J. Pelletier, "The Politics of Selection: The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and the Imperial Commemoration of Canadian History, 1919–1950," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 17, no. 1 (2006): 126–50; Walter Hildebrandt, *Views from Fort Battleford: Constructed Visions of an Anglo-Canadian West* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1994); Alan McCullough, "Parks Canada and the 1885 Rebellion/Uprising/Resistance," *Prairie Forum* 27, no. 2 (Fall 2002): 161–98; and Claire Campbell, "On Fertile Ground: Locating Historic Sites in the Landscapes of Fundy and the Foothills," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 17, no. 1 (2006): 235–64. In "Heritage and Authenticity: The Case of Ontario's Sainte-Marie-among-the-Hurons," *Canadian*

- Historical Review* 85, no. 3 (September 2004): 507–31, Alan Gordon considers the sometimes tenuous relationship between history and heritage as it relates to the management of a provincial historic site. James Opp and Michael Fedyk both consider the key role of historic sites in the new provincial identities being promoted in Saskatchewan and Alberta during the 1955 Golden Jubilee celebrations in recent articles: James Opp, “Prairie Commemorations and the Nation: The Golden Jubilees of Alberta and Saskatchewan, 1955,” in *Canadas of the Mind*, eds. Norman Hillmer and Adam Chapnick (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007), 214–33; Michael Fedyk, “The Dream Still Lives: Promised Land Narratives during the Saskatchewan Jubilee,” in *The Prairie West as Promised Land*, eds. R. Douglas Francis and Chris Kitzan (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2007), 379–404. Geographers Randy Widdis, Brian Osborne, and Patricia Wood published multiple articles on the power relationships among identity, place, and heritage, and landscape architect Susan Buggey reminds us that the discussion of historic places has not been limited to buildings in “Historic Landscape Conservation in North America: Roaming the Field over the Past Thirty Years,” *APT Bulletin* 29, no. 3-4 (1998): 37–42.
- 12 William Morris, *Collected Works of William Morris* (London: Longmans Green, 1914), 22, 316, as in Christopher Miele, “‘A Small Knot of Cultivated People’: William Morris and Ideologies of Protection,” *Art Journal* 54, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 73–79, http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_mo425/is_n2_v54/ai_17326658/pg_9.
- 13 In England, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (1877) and the National Trust (1895) are the dominant groups. In the United States, local societies dominated the heritage movement, with Daughters of the American Revolution (1890) and Colonial Dames of America (1889) as key national coordinating agencies. In Canada, like the United States, the action of local societies and chapters were complemented by national agencies, such as the Royal Society of Canada (1882) and the National Landmarks Association (1907). See Michael Wallace, “Reflections on the History of Historic Preservation,” in *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and The Public*, eds. Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier, and Roy Rosenzweig (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 172–73; Charles Dellheim, *The Face of the Past: The Preservation of the Medieval Inheritance in Victorian England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 88–92; Charles Hosmer, *Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the U.S. before Williamsburg* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s and Sons, 1965), 21–272; Taylor, *Negotiating the Past*, 3–31.
- 14 CSA, D500 II. 17, letter, L.A.R. Straton and W.W.W. Morgan to City Council, 18 April 1911.
- 15 Don Kerr, “In Defence of the Past: A History of Saskatchewan Heritage Preservation, 1922–1983,” *Prairie Forum* 15, no. 2 (Fall 1990): 279. At least four historical groups formed during this period were involved in identifying sites suitable for “marking” (Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Battleford, and Kamsack). University of Saskatchewan Archives (hereafter cited as USA), Morton Papers MG 2, I.3, letter, A.S. Morton to Thomas Davis, 3 February 1923; letter, W. McWhinney to Dr. Morton, 30 May 1924; University of Saskatchewan Library, Special Collections: MSS C555.2.10.35, letter, A.S. Morton to the Committee of the Prince

- Albert Historical Association appointed to locate fur-traders posts in the region under the care of the Association, 11 Nov. n.y.; Colonel F.C. Jamieson, *The Alberta Field Force of '85* (Battleford, SK: Canadian North-West Historical Society, 1931), front inside end sheet.
- 16 See Ricketts, "Cultural Selection"; Pelletier, "Politics of Selection"; and Taylor, *Negotiating the Past* for expanded discussion on this topic. Although a government-sponsored heritage agency related to built heritage was a rarity prior to World War II, the academic and social elite credentials of the NHSMBC's members resulted in an organization more similar to its national and international contemporaries.
 - 17 USA, Morton Papers MG2 I.3, letter, J.B. Harkin to A.S. Morton, 11 January 1922.
 - 18 While the NHSMBC did recognize three fur-trade sites—Fort a la Corne (1926), Cumberland House (1924), and Fort Carlton (1925)—the majority of sites commemorated were associated more directly with imperialistic themes, including Batoche (1923), Fort Battleford (1923), Battle of Cut Knife Hill (1923), Battle of Duck Lake (1924), Frenchman Butte (1929), Fort Walsh (1924), and Fort Livingston (1923). *List of Designations of National Historic Sites* (Ottawa: Parks Canada, March 2005).
 - 19 USA MSS C555/2/10.3 r, Circular from the Prince Albert Historical Society, 3 March 1931. The "traditional village" approach was epitomized by those constructed in the United States at Colonial Williamsburg (1927) and Greenfield Village (1933).
 - 20 USA MG 2, I.28, letter, Zachary Hamilton to A.S. Morton containing list of Standing Committee members of the SHS, 20 January 1942.
 - 21 USA MG 2, I.28, Minutes of the Provincial Trust Committee, 19 July 1938.
 - 22 Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB) R190.2, file 3.1.3.2, "Memorandum on the Administration of Historic Sites in Saskatchewan, Held in Trust by the University of Saskatchewan," n.d. Manitoba government involvement can be traced to the establishment of a historic sites advisory board in 1946, while the Alberta government's formal role did not begin until 1952 with its historic site identification program. See Jean Friesen, "Heritage: The Manitoba Experience," *Prairie Forum* 15, no. 2 (Fall, 1990): 214, and Mark Rasmussen, "The Heritage Boom: Evolution of Historical Resource Conservation in Alberta," *Prairie Forum* 15, no. 2 (Fall, 1990): 240.
 - 23 SAB R 190.2, file 2.1.3.2, memo from L.H. Thomas to W.R. Pearn, 3 December 1946.
 - 24 Ibid.
 - 25 SAB R-1902 311, "Archives Board Minute," 13 May 1948.
 - 26 SAB R 190.2 3.3, letter, A.S. Morton to J.L. Phelps, 9 September 1944. Phelps was one of the strongest proponents of social ownership of business in the CCF and acquired many companies for his ministry related to resource development. His interest in acquiring and operating the Battleford site would seem to fit this pattern. See Bill Waiser, *Saskatchewan: A New History* (Calgary: Fifth House, 2005), 346–48.
 - 27 SAB R-190.2 3.1, "NorthWest Mounted Police Memorial and Indian Museum," promotional brochure, July 1949.

- 28 Ibid. In 1955 National Historic Sites also acquired the Rectory and Middleton Trench properties at Batoche National Historic Site. See *Batoche National Historic Site Management Plan* (Parks Canada, 1982), 8.
- 29 Taylor, *Negotiating the Past*, 133–34. At the time, Saskatchewan had just 2 percent of the 388 National Historic Sites across the country. During the remainder of the period, the board designated a further six sites in the province, all related to the fur trade, treaty signing, or the 1885 conflict. Even today, Saskatchewan still has the lowest number of sites per capita, with 42 of 943 National Historic Sites, only 4.4 percent of the total. Parks Canada, *Directory of Designation of National Historic Significance*, http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/lhn-nhs/page3_E.asp?locateinp=&nhsprov=allprov&nhschoice=nhsdesig&list4=Generate+List; The Royal Commission on the National Development in Arts, Letters and Sciences, chap. 20, “Historic Sites and Monuments,” <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/massey/h5-447-e.html>.
- 30 Fedyk, “Dream Still Lives.”
- 31 SAB R190.2 File 3.1.3.2, memo, G.A.L. Hogg to J.B. Brockelbank, 17 February 1950.
- 32 Olga Klimko discusses the tangible, unique, and authentic base for nationalistic thought that archaeology has provided for Western Canada in “Nationalism and Growth of Fur Trade Archaeology in Western Canada,” in *Bringing Back the Past: Historical Perspectives on Canadian Archaeology*, eds. Pamela Jane Smith and Donald Mitchell (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1998), 203–14. Other articles in this book suggest that archaeology was primarily the domain of amateurs, universities, and the federal government until the 1960s, when the majority of the provincial programs were established.
- 33 Kerr, “In Defense of the Past,” 284.
- 34 Opp, “Prairie Commemorations,” 215.
- 35 Saskatchewan Golden Jubilee Committee, “Information on Marking and Preservation of Historic Sites” (1953) and “A Letter to the People of Saskatchewan: A Report on Historic Sites” (1954).
- 36 Ibid.; SAB R-190.2 file 2.94, memo, J.D. Herbert to Subcommittee on Historic Sites, Maps and Publications, 24 July 1953; Jim Wright, *Saskatchewan: The History of a Province* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1955), ix–xi.
- 37 This shift of authorship caused concern for at least one member of the committee, as J.D. Herbert noted in an April 6th memo to Everett Baker. In his reflections on the challenges of timelines and expectations of the Jubilee program, he stated, “[T]he selection of markers, the choice of sites, and above all the wording of inscriptions, imposes a discretionary authority which must sooner or later be challenged. In many cases we have to admit that the choice was simply six of one and half dozen of the other.” SAB R 563 III.16.
- 38 SAB R 229, box 9 51, Saskatchewan Diamond Jubilee and Centennial Corp., “1965–66 Capital Budget Presentation: Historic Sites Division”; SAB R-561 29(a), “Centennial Program: Suggestions for Historical Aspects”; *Guide to Historic Sites and Points of Interest* (Saskatchewan Diamond Jubilee and Canada Centennial Corporation, 1965), 3.

- 39 Shannon Ricketts, "Reconstructions as a Heritage Conservation Tool: Reconstructing Canadian Identity 1950–2000," in *Proceedings: Round Table on Conserving Historic Places: Canadian Approaches from 1950-2000* (University of Montreal, 11–13 March 2009), 1183–87, http://www.patrimoinebati.umontreal.ca/pdf/PV_Table_ronde_2009.pdf
- 40 Volume 8 of *Saskatchewan Archaeology* (1987) features several articles on the history of archaeological research in Saskatchewan, most of which touch on government-sponsored work during the 1960s related to historic sites. SAB R 229 box 9.51, "1965–66 Capital Budget Presentation: Historic Sites Division."
- 41 *The StarPhoenix*, "Long Range Development Plan for Museum Outlined by Phelps," 23 April 1956. The records of the WDM contain several letters to museum organizations in the United States, a 1946 brochure from the Greenfield Village in Dearborn, and a 1954 newspaper feature on the Harold Warp Pioneer Village at Minden, Nebraska. SAB WDM Collection, box 33, file 334, "Pioneer Village Drawings and Ideas."
- 42 SAB WDM Collection, box 21, file 182, "Pioneer Village Correspondence, 1956–1962"; box 56, file 609 "Pioneer Village N.B."
- 43 *Directory of Designation of National Historic Significance*.
- 44 SAB R 1069 VII 3, "Thematic Study of Saskatchewan Heritage," attachment to memo from Joe Jozsa, Director, Tourism and Recreation Planning Branch, to Ian Dyck, Museum of Natural History, 12 May 1975.
- 45 SAB R 1069 VII 3, "Regional Historic Sites Implementation Policy, Appendix E: Historical Considerations in Assessing a Regional Historic Site," attachment to memo from Joe Jozsa to staff, 7 February 1975.
- 46 William Delainey, "The Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee: The Main Issues and Events that Led to Its Development, 1970–1981," *Saskatoon History Review* 14 (1999): 3.
- 47 Natalie Bull, "The Heritage Canada Foundation: Helping Canadians Keep Historic Places Alive," in *Proceedings: Round Table on Conserving Historic Places*, 173.
- 48 Marc Denhez, personal communication, 21 February 2008.
- 49 The list includes the Regina Land Titles Building, the Legislative Building, Saskatchewan Government Insurance Office, and the Saskatchewan Revenue Building. The only non-government property was the Bank of Commerce building in Regina, which was situated in the midst of a government-sponsored retail development.
- 50 The *Heritage Property Act* defines heritage property as "(i) archaeological objects, (ii) palaeontological objects, (iii) any property that is of interest for its architectural, historical, cultural, environmental, archaeological, palaeontological, aesthetic or scientific value; and any site where any object or property mentioned in sub clauses (i), (ii) or (iii) is or may reasonably be expected to be found." It affords both the minister for the act and all municipal councils in Saskatchewan the power to designate heritage property, to regulate changes to properties so designated, and to establish committees, programs, funds, tax concessions, and tools to support

and promote heritage conservation activities. Saskatchewan, *Heritage Property Act*, <http://www.qp.gov.sk.ca/documents/English/Statutes/Statutes/H2-2.pdf>.

- 51 Frits Pannekoek, "The Rise of the Heritage Priesthood or the Decline of Community Based Heritage," *Historic Preservation Forum* 12, no. 3 (Spring 1998): 4–10. In this article, Pannekoek warns of the disconnect between the public and historic places that is occurring as a result of growing authority being placed in the hands of professionals.
- 52 Frank Korvemaker, interview by author, 11 April 2008.
- 53 Heritage Resources Branch, Municipal Heritage Property Files.
- 54 *Saskatchewan Directory of Heritage Property*, <http://www.tpcs.gov.sk.ca/heritage-property-search>.
- 55 Mark Rasmussen. "The Initiation of a Heritage Resource Systems Plan for Saskatchewan: Evaluative Framework" (unpublished draft, 1983); Frank Korvemaker, *A Thematic Framework for Managing Saskatchewan's Historic Sites and Structures* (Saskatchewan Municipal Affairs, Culture and Housing, 1999). Of the thirty-five places designated a Provincial Heritage Property through 2002, seventeen were associated with national, provincial, or local government.
- 56 "Guide to Preparing a Provincial Heritage Property Nomination," <http://www.tpcs.gov.sk.ca/guide-to-PHP-nomination>.
- 57 *Directory of Designations of National Historic Significance of Canada*, http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/lhn-nhs/index_e.asp
- 58 Al Gill, personal communication, February–April 2008.