

**EXPLORING A SHARED HISTORY:
Indian-White Relations Between
Fishing Lake First Nation and Wadena, 1882-2002**

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ABSTRACT

A great deal of literature exists that documents the nature and development of relations between Native and Newcomer groups in what is today the Eastern and Maritime regions of Canada. By comparison, however, studies which examine interaction between these two groups in Canada's prairie region are considerably lacking. Although a sufficient amount has been written about prairie Indian peoples and their experiences with government officials and policy, relatively little is known about relations between Indian reserve communities and neighbouring immigrant communities, particularly during the early years of settlement. A survey of existing sources suggests that during this time Indian people were simply settled on reserves and immigrant towns grew up around them, each, it seems, operating in complete isolation from the other.

This thesis aims to fill this gap in the historical literature by attempting to draw out the essence of the integrated and intertwined elements of the history shared by two prairie communities. The basic aim of this study is to trace the nature and development of relations between Fishing Lake First Nation and Wadena, located in the east central portion of Saskatchewan, from the 1880s to the present. *Exploring a Shared History* seeks to provide a more thorough understanding of and broader perspective on an important, yet much-neglected, facet of the region's history.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Over five hundred years ago in what are today the Eastern and Maritime regions of Canada, Aboriginal peoples inhabiting these areas first came into contact with peoples of European descent. Initial contact and subsequent relations between the two groups have been well documented in the secondary literature. By comparison, however, contact between Aboriginal peoples and Europeans in what is today the prairie region of Canada occurred at a much later time. Although just as significant, secondary literature regarding contact and relations between Aboriginal and European groups in the prairie west is considerably lacking. Works dealing with these two groups from the settlement period on, are all but absent. Judging from the current literature, it appears as though Indian peoples were simply settled on reserves and immigrant towns and communities grew up around them, each, it seems, operating in complete isolation from the other. Much has been written about the relations between prairie Indian peoples and the government, and even between immigrant groups and the government, yet virtually nothing is known about the interaction between Indian and immigrant communities.

Although Indian-White relations in the prairie region, and specifically in Saskatchewan, are for the most part neglected in the secondary literature, there are a handful of sources from which at least some knowledge of this topic can be gleaned. First, there are the more general histories that have been written on the prairie west.

However, these works tend to either completely overlook Indians post 1885, or if Indians do make it into the twentieth century, they are dismissed as an isolated and peripheral population. Indicative is John Archer's *Saskatchewan: A History*,¹ which would have one believe that Indian peoples somehow disappeared from the landscape after 1885. T.D. Regehr's *Remembering Saskatchewan: A History of Rural Saskatchewan* relegates Native people to the "periphery of the new society which the homesteaders created on the prairies."² Similarly, Gerald Friesen's *The Canadian Prairies: A History* also fails to comment on relations between Natives and non-Native settlers because of the supposed "virtual isolation of the Indians" from non-Native society.³ Although Friesen does a commendable job of providing a documented history of the prairie region, which, up to that point was absent from the literature, he fails to examine interaction between Natives and non-Natives in the post-treaty signing era. He does include a discussion of Native-White relations during the fur trade and also in the Red River Colony, but much of this tends to revolve around the Canadian government's dealings with and policies set out for Aboriginal people. In his book, the author includes two chapters entitled "Prairie Indians" and "Immigrant Communities," bringing into sharp focus the often assumed separation of these two groups by historians. This points to the need for a comprehensive synthesis of the shared experiences and history of Native and non-Native communities in the prairie west.

Second are those works that deal with Indian-White relations either on a broad, national scale, or on a regional basis. Olive Dickason's *Canada's First Nations: A*

¹ John Archer, *Saskatchewan: A History* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980).

² T.D. Regehr, *Remembering Saskatchewan: A History of Rural Saskatchewan* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, Extension Division, 1979), 26.

³ Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984).

*History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times*⁴ is exemplary of this category. Here the author traces the history of Aboriginal people in Canada, focusing on how they have responded to colonial pressures, and emphasizing that they have always been active participants in the development of the nation. Indeed, their active participation was essential to European success. Overall, Dickason's work is very much an analysis of Indian-government relations, as she spends a significant amount of time detailing government legislation, such as the Indian Act, directed towards Indian people, or its relations with them in its attempts to gain title to their lands, for instance during the signing of the numbered treaties and the negotiation of the province of Manitoba into Confederation.

Like Dickason's study, Arthur Ray's *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began: An Illustrated History of Canada's Native People*⁵ attempts to document the history and development of Aboriginal people in Canada. Sprinkling throughout his narrative origin and creation stories, Ray chronicles the impact of European intruders on Aboriginal societies, their responses to them, and their persistence and determination to survive as distinct societies. Ray does provide at least some small glimpses, although usually economic in nature, of Native/settler relations, citing examples of Indian people being included in fairs or stampedes, and being hired out as seasonal farm hands. However, these examples tend to be sparse and general, and in no way supply an integrated

⁴ Olive Dickason, *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997; 1st ed. 1992).

⁵ Arthur Ray, *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began: An Illustrated History of Canada's Native People* (Toronto: Lester Publishing and Key Porter Books, 1996).

analysis of the shared history between Native and non-Native communities in the prairie region.

A final addition to this group of works is J.R. Miller's *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*.⁶ Throughout his narrative Miller weaves two dominant strands of thought: that the motives for contact and sustained relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people were what shaped the nature of their interaction, and that Native peoples were not passive victims, but active and assertive agents in their relations with Europeans and later Euro-Canadians. Although a general history, a significant amount of attention is paid to the western part of the country, yet, much of this discussion is centred around government policies and legislation unique to Indian people in this specific region. Miller's work is nevertheless extremely useful in that it provides existing generalizations regarding Indian-White relations which can be tested by more specific studies.

An example of this includes David Stymeist's *Ethnics and Indians: Social Relations in a Northwestern Ontario Town*.⁷ Part of the Canadian Experience Series, Stymeist's work is in general a study of ethnic relations in a Northwestern Ontario town, and in particular, an investigation of interaction between "White ethnics" (Poles, Italians, Ukrainians, etc.) and Indians. The author does identify some important observations regarding Indian-White relations. Through his research he found that Indians are regarded as people who have no real place in the community. As well, almost all Whites are united in opposition to Indians. Ethnic differences which may pertain in

⁶ J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*, rev. ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991; 1st ed. 1989).

⁷ David Stymeist, *Ethnics and Indians: Social Relations in a Northwestern Ontario Town* (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates Limited, 1975).

other circumstances are forgotten in the face of confrontation between Whites and Natives; Whites will bond together to “protect” themselves. Curiously, in this context, even Chinese, East Indian, or Pakistani individuals are considered “White”; all non-Natives are lumped together and seen as a whole when compared to Native people. Aside from these significant and interesting findings, Stymeist’s study is still limited in its usefulness. As it is less than one hundred pages and a sociological, rather than historical, inquiry, it is by no means extensive or in-depth. Stymeist’s findings need to be expanded upon and further investigated. This can be done through a comparative study, set in the prairie region and in some sort of historical context, that takes into consideration circumstances and conditions singular to the prairies, as well as contemporary concerns and issues such as land claims and treaty rights.

Ken Coates’ *Best Left as Indians: Native-White Relations in the Yukon Territory, 1840-1973*⁸ is an important regional account of Native/non-Native interaction in the Canadian North. Coates focuses on economic relations, the nature of social contact, the interaction of church, state, and Native people, and finally the rapidly changing nature of Native-White relations in the post-war era. A number of observations can be drawn from Coates’ study with regard to the social relations between Natives and Whites. While for the most part Indian people were relegated to the reserves on the edge of town, denied or limited in access to schools and hospitals, and often scorned as drunks, this was occasionally tempered by more positive forms of interaction. For instance, Natives were welcomed into towns for celebrations, such as the Discovery Day Festival

⁸ Ken Coates, *Best Left as Indians: Native-White Relations in the Yukon Territory, 1840-1973* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1991).

in Dawson, a number of Indian veterans joined the Dawson City Legion, and an attempt was made in 1948 to form a Native-White community association, although it quickly foundered. As well, the 1960s saw more interracial marriages because of increased contact and interaction. Significantly, Coates found that sports, sex, and liquor served as important meeting grounds and means to foster relations between Natives and non-Natives. Coates's survey, while beneficial in some respects for broadening our understanding of Native-White relations, still devotes much attention to the nature of government-Indian relations in that particular region. As the author quite rightly admits, there are fundamental differences between the Yukon and more southern regions of the country, such as the prairies, where agricultural settlement, resource development, and urbanization combined with Native dispossession on reserve lands to undermine the hunting/trapping option, unlike in the North. As well, the transient non-Native population, characteristic of the Yukon in particular and the North in general, made for an altogether different atmosphere in which Native-White relations occurred, as compared to the more permanently located non-Native population of the prairies. These different circumstances of region and environment point to the need for a study analogous to this but located in the prairie region and more focused on an overall examination of the relations between Native and non-Native communities.

The work of Kerry Abel is likewise set in the northern regions of Canada. *Drum Songs: Glimpses of Dene History*⁹ reconstructs significant moments in Dene history in order to demonstrate how Dene people have maintained their cultural distinctiveness in the face of economic, political, and cultural pressures from European Newcomers. To a

⁹ Kerry Abel, *Drum Songs: Glimpses of Dene History* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993).

large degree, Abel examines the responses and interaction between the Dene and fur traders, government officials, and missionaries. As does Coates, Abel makes clear the many and varied circumstances that set the North apart from southerly regions of Canada, noting for example non-Native transiency, and observing that unlike in the prairie region, the soils and climate of the North kept farmers out. Therefore, for the Dene, the threat did not stem from direct competition for land from agricultural immigration, but rather from non-Native trappers and game laws. For these reasons, similarly expressed in the review of Coates' work, the existing literature would stand to profit from historical inquiries into Native-settler interaction in the Canadian plains region.

A similar study, although set in a different region, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890*,¹⁰ conducted by Robin Fisher in 1977, provides an account of the impact White settlement had on Native-White relations in British Columbia. Fisher's argument, based on a sharp distinction between the fur trade and settlement frontier, supports the view that the maritime fur trade had a limited effect on Native people and was a mutually beneficial economic endeavour. It was not until after 1858 that a pattern of White dominance began to emerge and adversely affect the indigenous population. He maintains that the quintessential conflict between Indians and settlers was over land. He concludes that non-Native settlers developed the frontier in a manner that did not involve Indian people and that Indians became largely inconsequential in the province's development after 1890. His monograph does,

¹⁰ Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890*, 2nd ed. (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992; 1st ed. 1977).

however, include one chapter in particular that probes beyond the realm of official government despatches and examines the views of the wider population through traders' accounts and writings of residents. Fisher's work, while of benefit to some understanding of Native-White relations in British Columbia, still contains a great deal of discussion on government and colonial policy and administration with respect to Indian people in that province, and obviously tells us little about contact and conflict in the prairie region. Has land been the essential aspect over which conflict has arisen between settlers and Indians in the prairies as well? Is it accurate to assume, as Fisher and other historians do, that Native people on the plains and elsewhere did not contribute to the growth and development of their respective regions or provinces? A parallel study situated in the prairie west would provide an opportunity to test the validity of these and other assertions and assumptions.

Also writing on the history of British Columbia Native/non-Native relations, although within a larger framework, is Jean Barman with her *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia*.¹¹ She examines some of the fundamental changes experienced by British Columbia Aboriginal people as a result of European settlement, and emphasizes the tenacity with which they were able to maintain their dignity and way of life in the face of intrusion into their territories. She contends that the fate of Aboriginal people in British Columbia was one of disregard, rather than conquest or elimination. Many Europeans viewed them as inferior and, consequently, not deserving of rights, or any respect for their rights if they were acknowledged at all, especially those pertaining to land. The author does, however, provide the reader with a few

¹¹ Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia*, rev. ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996; 1st ed. 1991).

insights into the nature of Native/settler relations. Barman includes the words of one pioneer settler which reveal that on the frontier, everyday relations between Indians and Whites "long remained close."¹² As well, she comments on the Chinook jargon, a unique blending of Nootka, Chinook, French, and English, that enabled and supported communication and interaction among Natives and non-Natives. Although the author does include at least some discussion of Native/settler relations, a significant portion of her work is centred around Indian involvement with the government and extensions of it, including residential schools, and, as is clearly apparent, it reveals nothing of prairie Indian/settler relations, as the study is a history of the "west beyond the west," and not the prairie west.

Finally, there are those studies, few as they are, which focus specifically on interaction between Natives and non-Natives in the prairie west. Niels Winther Braroe's *Indian and White: Self-Image and Interaction in a Canadian Plains Community*¹³ is one such case. Braroe, an anthropologist, using the participant observation technique, spent almost two years, spread over almost a decade (1963-1971), in the community of Short Grass, a fictitious name given to an actual ranching and farming community located in the southwestern Canadian plains, and the Indian reserve located twenty miles southeast of the town. Using the theoretical perspective of social psychology termed symbolic interactionism, Braroe's study is an inquiry into the process of self-identification among the people of Short Grass and the Indian reserve located near it. His task was to discover what conceptions Indians held of their social selves in various situations and

¹² Barman, *The West Beyond the West*, 168.

¹³ Niels Winther Braroe, *Indian and White: Self-Image and Interaction in a Canadian Plains Community* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975).

discover what conceptions Indians held of their social selves in various situations and how these were formed and modified. Part of his investigation focused on how Indians, moral outcasts vis-à-vis Whites, attempted to sustain a morally defensible image. Through his study, Braroe was able to uncover some significant trends with respect to Indian-White relations.

Braroe's work reveals that generally, Indians were excluded from the community life of Short Grass. They were not involved in organizations such as churches, saddle clubs, or the Chamber of Commerce. They rarely made use of the credit union, livestock auctions, the lawyer, or certain small businesses, such as beauty salons, the bakery, gift and floral shops, or furniture or jewelry stores. Some token gestures were, however, made by the residents of Short Grass. An elderly Indian man was invited to a banquet of the Old-Timer's Association in celebration of the province's Diamond Jubilee, and the Rotary Club at one time organized a Christmas party for Indian children. Reciprocally, Whites from the community of Short Grass were seldom present on the reserve. The only real places of interaction were pubs, cafes, and other public places. Over the years there were perceptible changes in the way Whites and Indians interacted and regarded each other. During the very early years of settlement settlers were somewhat fearful of their Indian neighbours. This gradually gave way to a view of Indian people as exotic objects of curiosity. Eventually, some interaction did occur through, for example, barn or fiddle dances, which were attended by both Whites and Indians, and White men, but not women, would often attend dances on the reserve. After World War II, however, the two communities became increasingly isolated from one another.

Although Braroe's study is one of the very few that attempts to uncover the essence of the relationships between Natives and non-Natives in the Canadian plains region, and does provide fodder for further expansive studies, it is still substantially lacking in some respects. First, his study is quite dated. Issues such as land claims and the recognition of treaty rights have since come to the fore. As relatively new variables in the Native/White equation, their impact on Native/non-Native relations is of tremendous importance and must be explored. Second, Braroe's work is couched within the disciplines of anthropology and sociology, as opposed to history. A study is needed that is placed within a historical context with a wider frame of reference that analyzes political, social, and economic relations, and that moves away from the sociological questions that Braroe addresses, such as how Indians cope with their "profane status." This type of an academic investigation would challenge the commonly held assumption of our separate, rather than shared, history, however invisible it may appear on the surface.

The studies done by Keith Regular provide perhaps the most abundant historical material on Native/non-Native interaction in the prairie region. Regular's MA thesis "Red Backs and White Burdens': A Study of White Attitudes Towards Indians in Southern Alberta, 1896-1911,"¹⁴ for instance, examines a number of facets of White concerns with Indian lifestyle in southern Alberta between 1896 and 1911. He focuses on White attitudes towards Natives as expressed through the Department of Indian Affairs and its agents, the North West Mounted Police and law enforcement, and the

¹⁴ Keith Regular, "Red Backs and White Burdens': A Study of White Attitudes Towards Indians in Southern Alberta, 1896-1911," (MA thesis, University of Calgary, 1985).

expression of popular concerns in the press. Regular argues that Indians were the “first Canadian nationals to become subjected to a concerted and prolonged attempt at remodelling human nature and behaviour.”¹⁵ He pays particular attention to an examination of these various attempts and provides an evaluation of their success or failure. Finally, he attempts to prove that though the cultural assault on Indians continued in some areas throughout the period under discussion, Indians were able to resist being totally overcome by White society. He discusses Indian participation in exhibitions and fairs, noting that fairs made Indian culture relevant for another social group, which went a long way towards keeping it alive and meaningful. These events provided those rare occasions where the interests of both society at large and Indian people coincided. Indians enjoyed the freedom to mix with their White neighbours, as well as the economic benefits of participation. Similar to Braroe’s work in that he is mainly concerned with White views of Indian people, Regular’s study tends to examine these views through the lenses of government agencies. In no way a comprehensive undertaking, as it spans only fifteen years, this study fails to tell us much about the shared economic, political, and social history of Indians and non-Native settlers in the prairies, pointing again to the imminent need for such a study.

Keith Regular’s PhD dissertation, “‘Trucking and Trading With Outsiders’: Blood Indian Reserve Integration into the Southern Alberta Economic Environment, 1884-1939, A Case of Shared Neighbourhoods,”¹⁶ is distinctive in that it is perhaps the first

¹⁵ Regular, “‘Red Backs and White Burdens,’” iii.

¹⁶ Keith Regular, “‘Trucking and Trading With Outsiders’: Blood Indian Reserve Integration into the Southern Alberta Economic Environment, 1884-1939, A Case of Shared Neighbourhoods,” (PhD thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1999).

historical inquiry that attempts to venture into the realm of prairie Native/settler relations. Regular examines the economic association between the Blood reserve and the surrounding region of southern Alberta from the 1880s through to the 1930s. The author's intent was to ascertain how an immigrant population encountering a host Native culture fit together at economically significant points of encounter, such as land, products from the land, labour, and monetary exchange. He blows apart the uncritical acceptance by many historians of the perception that Native people and their lands played only a minor role in the development of their region. He argues that the potential for Native populations and their land bases to influence developments among immigrant populations has not been recognized. He is also critical of the sustained belief that the policy of Native isolation and exclusion severed reserves from the mainstream social, political, and economic milieu. Surrounded on reserves by immigrant groups, Native people apparently had nothing to gain or contribute to this association. As he correctly notes, the assumption that there was no movement of people and materials to and from reserves is unrealistic. Although the government had tried to isolate the Bloods from the emerging surrounding communities, it had failed to prevent Natives' interaction with Newcomers.

Ultimately, Regular found that economics proved more potent than social attitudes and prejudice, and was a unifying, rather than divisive, force. The author contends that, unfortunately, scholarship focusing on Native/Newcomer relations assumes a marginalized Indian existence and usually casts Native interactions with Whites in a negative mold. In his eyes, historians tend to fit Aboriginal Canadians into Eurocentric history, rather than seeing particular aspects of Canada's development in the late

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as a common shared heritage. Regular's work provides a springboard from which comparable studies can be launched, in order to more fully develop our understanding of Native/settler relations in the prairie region. As the author stresses, the size and location of the Blood reserve may make it difficult to apply all his conclusions to other Native communities, although there is no reason to assume that the Bloods were exceptional in responding to the challenges of the post-buffalo period. As well, he states that there is much about the nature of relationships between Natives and non-Native settlers for this time and place yet to be examined. Social relationships, for instance, also require analysis. It is clear that relations are not determined by an economic agenda alone; social, political, legal, and cultural factors are equally important.

It seems curious that any survey of the associations between Native people and non-Native Newcomers in a region, and particularly a province such as Saskatchewan, with such a high proportion of Native people is so conspicuously absent from the secondary literature. Much work remains to be done before a fully developed picture of the role and impact of Aboriginal people and their land bases on non-Native communities will emerge and can be determined with any degree of accuracy. Research that attempts to draw out the essence of the integrated and intertwined elements of the history shared by Native and non-Native people in Canada's prairie west will prove timely, given the changing demographics of the region and the province especially. It will serve not only important academic purposes, but also social and pragmatic ones, in hopes of improving relations between the two groups.

Chapter 2

People and Place

The basic aim of this study is to trace the nature and development of relations between the communities of Fishing Lake First Nation (see map, Appendix One) and Wadena (see map, Appendix One) from the early 1800s to the present. In order for such an undertaking to be properly executed, the case study approach has been employed. Pioneered by social scientists, yet widely used by historians, the case study method explores specific problems by utilizing particular communities, the hope being that these result in representative samples.¹ Historian Paul Voisey makes the point that "...some topics simply cannot be studied at all except through the case study. How can the history of community development or neighbourhood social relations be explored except through specific communities?"² This is especially relevant then for the study at hand.

Also, for the purposes of this thesis, it is assumed and significant to note that a reserve community (Fishing Lake First Nation) cannot exist in isolation. It is certainly integrated into the broader community. Despite the fact that reserves are legally defined spaces with fixed boundaries, they are still inextricably bound to the wider political and economic community.³ This is an exploration, then, of the "shared neighbourhoods"⁴ of

¹ Paul Voisey, "Rural Local History and the Prairie West," in R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer, eds., *The Prairie West* (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1992), 498.

² Voisey, "Rural Local History and the Prairie West," 502.

³ Peter Carstens, *The Queen's People: A Study of Hegemony, Coercion, and Accommodation Among the Okanagan of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 103.

⁴ Keith Regular, "'Trucking and Trading With Outsiders': Blood Indian Reserve Integration into the Southern Alberta Economic Environment, 1884-1939, A Case of Shared Neighbourhoods," (PHD thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1999).

both the Native population of Fishing Lake and the non-Native population of Wadena.

Before any analysis of the interaction between these two communities is discussed, a sound understanding of the historical development of not only these two communities, but also the larger region, is required. The wider area in which both communities are situated, now known as Canada's prairie West, was originally inhabited by Aboriginal people, belonging mainly to the Cree, Assiniboine, Blackfoot, and Saulteaux nations. Prior to the middle of the nineteenth century, the image of this region held by the Canadian government was one of a distant, sub-arctic wasteland, unsuitable for agriculture or settlement. It was viewed as a wilderness suited only for the fur trade. By the early 1850s, however, certain factors combined which resulted in a re-evaluation of this image. To begin with, the growing population of eastern Canada prompted many to look westward, largely due to an increasing lack of farmland. Commercial interests as well acted as an incentive to look more closely at the value of the west. Railway construction in the Canadas prompted the Toronto business class to envision "a hinterland carved out of the Northwest, supplying the railway with produce and returning eastern goods to the west."⁵ The perception of the west had by this time, then, undergone a transformation. No longer seen as a vast, frozen desert, it was considered not only of critical importance to the idea of Confederation, but indeed as necessary for it. It would take only two years from the time of Confederation on 1 July 1867 for Prime Minister John A. Macdonald and his Conservative government to begin the process of acquiring the western interior and imposing Canada's national design upon it.

⁵ Doug Owsram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 49.

In 1870, Rupert's Land, the 7.7 million square kilometers of land drained by the rivers flowing into Hudson Bay, was transferred from the Hudson's Bay Company to the new Dominion of Canada. Negotiations ensued thereafter between the Canadian government and the Aboriginal inhabitants of the region with respect to land title and use. For Metis residents, negotiations resulted in the successful entry of Manitoba as a province into Confederation, and for First Nations groups, the signing of eleven numbered treaties. The numbered treaties signed by First Nations and the government was one arm of the Macdonald government's plans for the newly acquired territory, embodied in what has been termed the National Policy. Other central tenets of this Policy included the creation of the North West Mounted Police, the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway, protective tariffs, freight rate agreements, and settlement. However, these future plans for the west could not be realized until Indian title to the land was extinguished.

The government's desire to obtain title to western lands was fuelled mainly by its need to secure the west for settlement, but also by its fear of American annexation or costly "Indian wars," as seen south of the border. First Nations at this time were also motivated to negotiate treaties, although for quite different reasons. Their decisions were based on fear of starvation, due to the decline of the buffalo economy, disease, especially smallpox, and the fear of incoming settlers illegally occupying their lands. Differences played themselves out not only in motivating factors, but also in interpretations of what the treaties meant to each party. For government negotiators they were largely enormous real estate transactions. First Nations tended to view them more as a framework outlining how resources and land were to be shared and the

perpetual relationship and responsibilities that would be borne not only by those who negotiated and signed the treaties, but also the future generations and descendants of the original signatories. Instead, the post-treaty era was marked by the creation of the reserve system and a general loss of autonomy, the result of an overarching Indian Affairs administration established by the government, with policies and laws defined in the *Indian Act* and enforced by Indian agents.

So with Indian people safely out of the way, and the Mounted Police and Canadian Pacific Railway firmly established, the government had only now to import prospective settlers in order to begin the large scale agricultural development of the west. This influx materialized in the period between 1896 and 1914 when the western interior experienced by far the largest infusion of immigrants in its history. It is within this larger setting that the communities of Fishing Lake and Wadena are to be found and their story of interrelations is to be told.

The area surrounding the communities of Wadena and Fishing Lake began to be inhabited by those belonging mainly to the Plains Ojibway, or *Saulteaux*, nation during the eighteenth century. The *Saulteaux*, Algonquian-speaking Ojibway peoples, moved west with the fur trade into lands vacated by the westward-moving Woods Cree. They moved westward gradually, encountering and successfully pushing southward Dakota Siouan peoples along the way, and eventually moved onto the plains in what is today southern Manitoba and Saskatchewan. As previously noted, the government at this time was anxious to remove all Indian title to lands in order for its dream of an agricultural eden to be fully realized. Consequently, on 24 August 1876, at Fort Pelly, North-West Territories, Yellow Quill's band adhered to Treaty 4, originally signed in 1874 in the

Qu'Appelle valley between representatives of the Queen and of the Assiniboine, Cree, and Saulteaux nations. Chief Osāwikwan or Yellow Quill and two headmen, Kenistin (meaning Cree, because he enjoyed the company of his Cree neighbours and could speak Cree)⁶ and Ne-pin-awa (Summer Fir),⁷ signed the adhesion, which provided that reserves would be set aside "of sufficient area to allow one square mile for each family of five, or in that proportion for larger or smaller families."⁸ There is some question over whether or not this Chief Yellow Quill was the same man who had adhered to Treaty 1 in 1871 in Manitoba. Most likely it was not. Chief Yellow Quill of Manitoba lived along the valley of the Assiniboine River at a place known as the Indian Gardens.⁹ The Chief Yellow Quill of what was then the district of Assiniboia was actually identified as osāwaskōkwān-nāpēw or "blue/green (quill) man"¹⁰ at Fort Pelly during the adhesion to Treaty 4, and was the head of one of many Saulteaux bands who had been living in the area since the early nineteenth century.

On 14 October 1876, Indian agent McKay reported to the Minister of the Interior that some of Yellow Quill's people desired a reserve near Fishing Lake, because "they had been settled in that part of the country for a long time and had farms and gardens there."¹¹ This particular site was also attractive because of its proximity to a large lake, called pakitahwāwin, meaning "fishing with nets" and was hence translated into Fishing

⁶ Jack Funk, ed., "...And They Told us Their Stories": *A Book of Indian Stories* (Saskatoon: Saskatoon District Tribal Council, 1991), 13, and Bill Barry, *People Places: Saskatchewan and its Names* (Regina: University of Regina, Canadian Plains Research Center, 1997), 18.

⁷ Funk, "...And They Told us Their Stories," 13.

⁸ *Treaty No. 4 between Her Majesty the Queen and the Cree and Saulteaux Tribes of Indians at Qu'Appelle and Fort Ellice* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1966).

⁹ Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 40.

¹⁰ Barry, *People Places: Saskatchewan and its Names*, 18.

¹¹ Funk, "...And They Told us Their Stories," 13.

Lake.¹² In September 1881, John C. Nelson, Dominion Land Surveyor, surveyed reserves for the Yellow Quill band at Fishing Lake and Nut Lake. After completing the survey at Nut Lake, Nelson proceeded to Fishing Lake “where some families of Yellow Quill’s band had already settled,” and surveyed a reserve of 22, 080 acres.¹³ The location of this reserve was suitable for farming, he reported, the soil being very rich and there being plenty of good timber. The reserves at Fishing Lake and Nut Lake were confirmed by Order-in-Council on 17 May 1889 and were withdrawn from the operation of the *Dominion Lands Act* on 12 June 1893. The first recorded census for the band was in 1901 with a population of 77.¹⁴ By 1911 that figure had increased to 118.¹⁵ The surveying of Fishing Lake reserve in 1881 signalled a time of change for the band, as well as other prairie reserve communities. Besides adjusting to a post-treaty era characterized by unfulfilled treaty promises, retrenchment, and excessive and oppressive administration of Indian peoples, First Nations also had the added pressure of determining how their relationships with incoming non-Indian settlers were to proceed. For Fishing Lake residents, their first White neighbours were the Milligans.

Joshua Milligan (see photograph, Appendix Two) and his eldest son Henry, later known as Harry, left Massie, Ontario in the fall of 1881. By the spring of 1882 they had arrived at what is today known as Milligan Creek, located a few miles southeast of present-day Wadena, Saskatchewan. A year later in 1883 Joshua Milligan brought his wife Frances and three daughters, Annie, Sarah, and Margaret, as well as another son,

¹² Bill Barry, *People Places: The Dictionary of Saskatchewan Place Names* (Regina: People Places Publishing, 1998), 129.

¹³ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1882, Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 13 December 1881, vol. 15, no. 6, 133.

¹⁴ Canada, Census and Statistics Office, *1911 Census of Canada, Vol. 1, Areas and Population by Provinces, Districts and Subdistricts* (Ottawa: Department of Trade and Commerce, 1912), 135.

¹⁵ Canada, Census and Statistics Office, *1911 Census of Canada, Vol. 1, Areas and Population by Provinces, Districts and Subdistricts* (Ottawa: Department of Trade and Commerce, 1912), 135.

Joshua, Jr., to their new home. For the next ten years, until the death of Joshua Milligan, Sr. in 1893, the Milligans homesteaded as virtually the sole White residents in the area, enduring the typical pioneer hardships of severely cold winters with snow piled so high as to make travel almost impossible. Joshua, Sr.'s eldest son Harry married and homesteaded for a few years before moving into Wadena, a small community that was just beginning to boom due to its location on the Canadian Northern Railroad line.

Wadena was recognized as an organized village in 1905 and officially became an incorporated town in 1912. The name Wadena was suggested by the Tolen and Swedberg families, early homesteaders in the district, after their former home in Minnesota, a trading post on the Crow Wing River. "Wadena," an Ojibway word, means, "little round hill," probably referring to the round outlines of the Crow Wing bluffs at the Wadena, Minnesota ferry.¹⁶ The first homestead entry was made in 1902 although the name of the settler is not available. The first recorded census for Wadena was in 1906 with a population of 141.¹⁷ In 1911 that figure jumped to 255, an 80% increase.¹⁸ Prior to 1900, of the few White settlers in the area, most had come from Eastern Canada, the British Isles, Scandinavian countries, and Germany. After this time, the ethnic composition of the population became much more varied. Between 1902 and 1905 a number of Americans migrated from the northern United States. Icelanders came between 1904 and 1906, as did a large number of central Europeans, such as Ukrainians and Poles. 1911 saw an influx of French settlers and in 1918 Russian settlers began to arrive. This population explosion was followed not

¹⁶ Wadena History Book Committee, *Remembering Times: Wadena and Area Dating Back to 1882* (Wadena: Wadena History Book Committee Inc., 1992), 44.

¹⁷ Wadena History Book Committee, *Remembering Times: Wadena and Area Dating Back to 1882*, 67.

¹⁸ Wadena History Book Committee, *Remembering Times: Wadena and Area Dating Back to 1882*, 67.

surprisingly by an economic boom. A general store, lumberyard and the Canadian Bank of Commerce were all built in 1904. The first school and community hall were opened in 1906, followed by the first Royal North West Mounted Police detachment in 1907. 1910 saw the construction of the first closed-in skating rink and two-sheet curling rink. The Wadena Hotel (purported to be the largest between Saskatoon and Winnipeg at the time) was erected in 1912, and a year later the Empire Theatre opened its doors. The town finally received its own hospital in 1920 when the Wadena Union Hospital was built.

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups had entered the specific area under study at different times, yet both have remained right down to the present day. Each possessed differing languages, values, traditions, and worldviews that would sometimes present challenges to the relationships forged between them. By the early twentieth century, then, the communities of Fishing Lake and Wadena were both fairly well established markers on the prairie landscape, each contributing to the development of the other, as well as the prairie region as a whole. Despite differences, interaction was already evident. Here marked the beginning of a relational journey of two communities that would be informed and changed as much by the twists and turns in the path as by the two communities themselves.

Chapter 3

“Proving to be Good Neighbours”: Early Relations, 1882-1929

A reading of the literature that documents the early development of the prairie region results in the perception of two solitudes. The uncritical acceptance by some historians of the isolation and separation of Native and non-Native communities from each other at this time is a remarkably prevalent theme woven throughout the pages of their works. The assumption is that Indian peoples were confined to reserves and immigrant towns simply sprang up around them, each, it appears, existing in total seclusion from the other. Thorough examination and close scrutiny of the historical evidence, however, renders this assertion untenable and suggests instead the presence of not only interaction, but also positive, mutually reciprocal and co-operative relationships between these two groups during this period. Such was the case in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century between residents of Fishing Lake and early White settlers in the area, and later, those residing in what would become by 1912 the town of Wadena. The surveying of the reserve at Fishing Lake in 1881 not only signalled the beginning of reserve life for the band, but also foreshadowed the entrance a year later of the first White settlers into the Fishing Lake area. This event would indelibly transform the ethnic face of the region, thus requiring the determining of mutually acceptable social and economic relationships and methods of land resource use between both groups.

To a large degree, early relations between members of the band and the first White settlers to enter their neighbourhood were set by the band's leader at the time, Chief Sabitawasis, probably from the Cree word *sākitawāsis*, meaning "a little place of meeting waters"¹ and Joshua Milligan, head of the first White family in the district. Sabitawasis, born about 1864, was remembered as a "stately, dignified and quiet gentleman."² Assuming leadership of the band during the final years of the nineteenth century, he remained in this position until his death in 1956. Speaking seldom and in a quiet manner, Sabitawasis was highly respected by not only his band, but also the White settlers of the area, many of whom often entertained him in their homes during his visits to other reserves such as Nut Lake and Day Star. In the 1920s the name Sabitawasis was given to a strip of beach land along Fishing Lake by the Wadena Outing Club who had purchased the land.

Equally influential in the forging of early relations was Joshua Milligan. Milligan, his wife, three daughters and two sons were the first Newcomers to the Fishing Lake area. They homesteaded for about ten years virtually isolated from White settlement, with only the occasional settler passing through. Contact with Indian travellers was much more frequent, with many often making use of the hospitality of the Milligan home along the way. The Milligan's log dwelling was a popular stopping place for Indian and White alike. Both were always welcome. Even the Metis leader Louis Riel was reputed to have been a guest of the Milligans.³ With regard to the Resistance in 1885, it is often alleged that many of the young men from Fishing Lake were becoming

¹ Bill Barry, *People Places: Saskatchewan and its Names* (Regina: University of Regina, Canadian Plains Research Center, 1997), 18.

² Wadena History Book Committee, *Remembering Times: Wadena and Area Dating Back to 1882* (Wadena: Wadena History Book Committee Inc., 1992), 22.

³ Wadena History Book Committee, *Remembering Times: Wadena and Area Dating Back to 1882*, 7.

restless and wanted to join in the cause of the Metis. Apparently some of the older men from the reserve went to Milligan for advice. Milligan's response was to aim and fire at a small stone, with the words, "Now I have two sons who can shoot equally as well as I can and there are a thousand White men not far from here who can all do the same, but they do not want to fight you. They want to be at peace with you, so go home and tell your young men what I have told you."⁴ Milligan even went so far as to promise the band a reserve of their own in an effort to secure the loyalty of the band.⁵ Because of the respect that residents of Fishing Lake had for this "snow-haired" White man then, government officials had no reason to fear any involvement of the Fishing Lake band in 1885.

To some extent, the relationship cultivated between the band and the Milligans, and the desire to maintain that relationship, were presumably contributing factors to the band's lack of participation during the days of the Resistance. As a signatory to Treaty 4, the decision to remain uninvolved was most likely an extension of the band's treaty promise to maintain peace and good order between themselves and Her Majesty's non-Indian subjects. More recent interpretations of Indian involvement in 1885 have therefore characterized Indian participation in general as minimal, sporadic, and isolated, largely due to this treaty responsibility.⁶ Aside from the treaty pledge of loyalty to the Queen, First Nations people remained on the sidelines of the 1885 playing field mainly because Indian leadership was more interested in their own strategies for revision of the treaties at this time than in the activities of Riel. Hence, despite the

⁴ Wadena History Book Committee, *Remembering Times: Wadena and Area Dating Back to 1882*, 7.

⁵ Wadena History Book Committee, *Remembering Times: Wadena and Area Dating Back to 1882*, 78.

⁶ For a detailed discussion of this topic see Blair Stonechild and Bill Waiser, *Loyal till Death: Indians and the North-West Rebellion* (Calgary: Fifth House Publishers Ltd., 1997).

favourable relations between Milligan and the band, his role in preventing the Fishing Lake Indians from joining Riel and the Metis seems rather exaggerated. Leaders of the band would have been quite capable of governing their own people and surely would have had more sway over their own members than Milligan. As well, Milligan's generous offer of a reserve for the band appears somewhat bizarre and presumptuous, as the band already had a reserve surveyed four years prior in 1881, and even if they hadn't, Milligan had absolutely no authority to grant a reserve to the band anyway.

On a social and recreational front, then, relations between the two groups continued to develop and progress as the nineteenth century drew to a close and the twentieth century began. More settlers began to trickle into the area, augmenting the White population by their presence, as well as by the children they would have. Imperative to the birthing process was of course the assistance of midwives. For early settler women, births were attended by Indian midwives. Documentary evidence makes reference to an Indian woman named Mrs. Phable, who was aptly nicknamed "The Doctor." She could not speak English, but was accompanied by a young Indian girl who acted as her interpreter. Mrs. Phable was credited with ushering many a new settler into the world, including the grand daughter of Joshua Milligan, Sr., daughter of his son Harry and Harry's wife Alice.⁷

Early settlers in the area also took advantage of traditional Indian medicinal knowledge. Effective for the treatment of diphtheria, for instance, was to paint the back of the throat with a trimmed feather dipped in the scent gland of a skunk.

Reciprocally, advances made in western medical technology were available to band members through the services of Dr. L.T. Ainley, Wadena's first doctor, and also Dr. N.

⁷ Wadena History Book Committee, *Remembering Times: Wadena and Area Dating Back to 1882*, 301.

Rollins. Indian agent Murison reported in 1908 that due to an outbreak of scarlet fever on the reserve, "Dr. Ainley of Wadena was called in and attended to those requiring his services."⁸ Similarly, Dr. N. Rollins, who provided medical services for residents of Fishing Lake for over 35 years, was described as being closely connected with the Fishing Lake band, often enduring long, cold drives in the winter and almost impassable roads in the summer, in order to minister to band members.

Recreationally, residents of both communities enjoyed and participated in sports days and fairs. On 12 July 1905 a Sports Day and picnic were held in the village of Wadena. Indian participants were described as "spectacular...with their colourful dress and decorated ponies."⁹ Two years later, local Indian people were credited with giving "a fine Pow-wow as entertainment" at the 1907 Sports Day. Year by year the annual Sports Day increased in popularity and was heralded as a huge success. By 1909, it grew to include an Indian Parade, described as a unique and colourful display. Keith Regular, in his MA thesis "Red Backs and White Burdens': A Study of White Attitudes Towards Indians in Southern Alberta, 1896-1911," comments on the significance of the celebration of fairs and exhibitions for promoting and fostering interaction between settlers and Indian people, and for providing a medium for the display, expression, and sharing of Indian culture. He notes, "in their participation at exhibitions and fairs the Indians found a way to draw White society at least part way into their culture. The fairs made Indian culture relevant for another social group, and so went a long way towards keeping it alive and meaningful....The celebration of fairs and exhibitions seemed to be one of those rare occasions where the interests of both

⁸ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1909, Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 31 March 1908, vol. 43, no. 27, 156.

⁹ Wadena History Book Committee, *Remembering Times: Wadena and Area Dating Back to 1882*, 337.

society at large and the Indians coincided. The Indians enjoyed the freedom to mix with their White neighbours, along with the economic benefits of participation.”¹⁰

Presumably this too was the case with those from Fishing Lake. The *Wadena Herald* not only praised the dancing and highly decorated outfits and ponies of Indian participants in sports days and fairs, but also their outstanding performance in horse and foot races. Indian competitors took part in one mile and half mile Indian races, and also in those races open to both Indian and non-Indian contestants, where they often placed first and second.¹¹

Another aspect that can be considered in this recreational vein of relations was the sale of alcohol. As set out in the 1876 *Indian Act*, the sale of liquor to Indians was forbidden and illegal. However, evidence borne out in reports of the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) and the North West Mounted Police clearly indicates that the flow of alcohol did exist as a connective stream between the two communities. Inspector J.A. McGibbon of the North West Mounted Police “B” Division Detachment reported on 30 November 1893, “On the 17th May J. Milligan, of Quill Plains, was fined \$100 and or two months’ imprisonment for selling liquor to Indians of the Fishing Lake Reserve.”¹² Similarly, in reference to intoxicants, Indian agent W. Murison of the Touchwood Hills Agency reported on 9 April 1907, that members of Fishing Lake Reserve had “no difficulty in obtaining all they can afford to buy at the neighbouring towns.”¹³ Here it can be assumed that one of these neighbouring towns was Wadena. What may have

¹⁰ Keith Regular, “‘Red Backs and White Burdens’: A Study of White Attitudes Towards Indians in Southern Alberta, 1896-1911,” (MA thesis, University of Calgary, 1985), 181 and 179.

¹¹ *Wadena Herald*, 3 August 1911.

¹² Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1894, Annual Report of the North-West Mounted Police, 1893, vol. 27, no. 15, 53.

¹³ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1907-08, Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 31 March 1907, vol. 42, no. 27, 146.

motivated especially Joshua Milligan, Jr., due to the friendly relations cultivated between his family and those from Fishing Lake, but also perhaps those from Wadena, to sell alcohol illegally to Indians from Fishing Lake may have stemmed from a sense of inequality or sympathy. By the same token, it may have simply been for the purpose of economic gain. Quite possibly it was the result of some combination of the two.

In many cases, then, in terms of social or recreational interaction at this time, there was, as observed in the local newspaper, "good fellowship and neighbourliness between the two."¹⁴ A Mrs. Jim Bole, an early pioneer in the area, gives an example as testimony to this. She tells the story of how as a young bride she was frequently left alone at home while her husband was out haying, but, she recalled, she was seldom alone. She often had visits from local Indian residents, communication with whom was facilitated by sign language: "Many times, one or two Indians spent the night with us," she reminisced.¹⁵ Overall, the settlers whose homes bordered the Fishing Lake Indian reserve were "proving to be good neighbours."¹⁶ However, this, at first glance, does not appear to be the case described by employees of the Department of Indian Affairs.

Reports of DIA employees often commented on the band's extraordinary reluctance to associate with the White Man. Indicative is correspondence penned in 1905 by James Campbell, DIA employee, to the Deputy Minister of the Department, Frank Pedley, stating, "probably a [land] surrender could be readily obtained as these Indians have apparently more than the usual aversion to contact with White men."¹⁷ The validity of this observation, however, may be linked more to the government's desire to secure a

¹⁴ *Wadena News*, Jubilee Edition, 1955.

¹⁵ *Wadena News*, Jubilee Edition, 1955.

¹⁶ Wadena History Book Committee, *Remembering Times: Wadena and Area Dating Back to 1882*, 22.

¹⁷ National Archives, RG 10, vol. 4020, file 280,470-2, James J. Campbell, Deputy of Indian Affairs, to Deputy Minister, Department of Indian Affairs, 20 July 1905.

land surrender than to the reality of the situation. The government had its eye on the band's land as early as 1892 because of its value in terms of suitability for White settlement: "The land in this reserve is good, and as the present location of the Manitoba and North Western Railway passes through it, it would become a very desirable place for settlement, if the Indians who occupy it could content themselves to remain with the rest of their tribe or remove to Touchwood where their children would have an opportunity of acquiring an education."¹⁸ Similarly, the benefits of the Fishing Lake band's land base did not go unnoticed by Indian agent H.A. Carruthers, when he wrote in 1906, "the reserve is an excellent one for agricultural purposes; its rich soil and proximity to three railway stations tends to make it a most valuable one."¹⁹ The band's apparent "aversion" then to White settlers was quite probably an exaggeration fabricated by the government in an attempt to obtain a land surrender, motivated perhaps by its own "aversion" to Indian people occupying agriculturally productive land in a prime location.

Another DIA employee, William M. Graham, Indian agent and Commissioner, had his recollections and experiences in these capacities published in a monograph entitled *Treaty Days: Reflections of an Indian Commissioner*.²⁰ "Chapter Nine, Trip to Prince Albert, 1907," focuses solely on the Nut Lake, Kinistino, and Fishing Lake bands and Graham's efforts to secure a surrender of a portion of apparently unoccupied land held in common by all three bands. Interestingly, reference is made to both the Kinistino and

¹⁸ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1893, Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the Year 1892, vol. 26, no. 13, 55.

¹⁹ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1906-07, Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 30 June 1906, vol. 41, no. 27, 140.

²⁰ William M. Graham, *Treaty Days: Reflections of an Indian Commissioner* (Calgary: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1991).

Nut Lake bands' wish to remain apart from incoming White settlement, although no mention is made of the Fishing Lake band expressing similar sentiments. While visiting the Kinistino band, Graham was told by the chief that he and the members of his band "did not want the Government to send White settlers into the country as they would drive out the game and the Indians would starve....the White men were already encroaching upon their territory and...the land they were occupying was no good for White men, neither was the land surrounding the reserve....They were a peaceful people and all they asked was to be left alone..."²¹ As well, during his stop at Nut Lake to speak with the Yellow Quill band, he again listened to grievances related to White settlers taking wood and building logs from their land base, which they had no right to do, and White men using poison to kill fur-bearing animals. This band, too, was of the view that their land was "no good as farming land and should be left to them."²² This is not to imply that the Fishing Lake band was not at all concerned about depletion of wildlife resources or encroachment on land, as these were concerns generally for most prairie bands at this time. The fact that any mention of these issues in Graham's account by the Fishing Lake band is non-existent does suggest though that perhaps these were not significant problems that the band was experiencing with its White neighbours at that particular time. This was especially true in matters regarding land.

The boundaries of the Yellow Quill band's reserve at Nut Lake, for instance, proved to be a source of conflict between band members and nearby White settlers. If settlers were confronted by reserve residents for taking resources from the Yellow Quill land base, they claimed that the lines that bound the reserve were not well defined, often

²¹ Graham, *Treaty Days*, 68.

²² Graham, *Treaty Days*, 63.

giving the excuse that they did not even know that they were on reserve land.²³ By contrast, when a similar situation arose involving the re-survey of the south boundary of the Fishing Lake reserve, W. Murison, Indian agent, reported on this matter, stating, "...as far as I know there have been no disputes between the Indians and the White settlers holding the adjoining lands."²⁴ At this point in the history of relations between the communities of Fishing Lake and Wadena, land was not a contentious issue between both groups, despite the fact that residents of Wadena were involved both directly and indirectly in the surrender, selling, and acquisition of Fishing Lake land.

In 1900, the Canadian Northern Railway Company's application for a right of way over a section of the Fishing Lake reserve was approved. Five years later, the Railway Company appealed to the government to have the northern portion of the reserve opened for settlement. The government consented and on 9 August 1907, 13,170 acres of land from the Fishing Lake reserve were surrendered.²⁵ The implications of this surrender for the band and its relationship with Wadena would be far reaching, culminating in the band's submission of a specific land claim eighty years later, arguing that the 1907 surrender had been obtained through duress and undue influence, as an unconscionable agreement, and that it had been acquired without strict compliance with the provisions of the *Indian Act*.²⁶ Although the town of Wadena or its residents were not actually directly acquiring this land, they were certainly compliant and involved in facilitating the process of the surrender of Fishing Lake land.

²³ Graham, *Treaty Days*, 76.

²⁴ National Archives, RG 10, vol. 6704, file 121A-3-2, W. Murison, Indian agent, Touchwood Agency, 10 February 1914.

²⁵ National Archives, RG 10, vol. 6704, file 121A-3-2, 9 August 1907.

²⁶ Canada, Indian Claims Commission, *Inquiry into the 1907 Surrender Claim of the Fishing Lake First Nation* (n.p., 1997), 1.

To begin with, it was a resident of Wadena who provided a line of communication between government officials and Fishing Lake band members. In an effort to secure the surrender, the government hired Reverend John McDougall, a Methodist missionary to the Stoney people in Alberta, "to do special work for the Department [of Indian Affairs] in negotiating the surrender of portions or the whole of certain Indian reserves."²⁷ Part of McDougall's work would include aiding in the negotiating of the Fishing Lake surrender. A meeting between McDougall and the Fishing Lake band was planned for 31 July 1906. Frank Pedley, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, telegraphed Indian agent Carruthers to "[s]end word at once to Indians to assemble on that date without fail. This must be attended to without fail."²⁸ This telegram was then sent to and received by Acting Indian agent Fred Fischer on the evening of 28 July. Fischer subsequently "sent a message to a local man in Wadena to notify the Indians at...Fishing Lake of McDougall's impending visit."²⁹ Therefore, although he did not acquire the land himself, this local resident of Wadena, to some degree, actively assisted the government through his role as a conduit through which information flowed from it to the band. This man's role was therefore essential to the process that would eventually lead to the surrender of a portion of the Fishing Lake reserve.

Finally, once the land had been officially surrendered, the town of Wadena became the vendor that would facilitate the disposal of it. Most of the 13,170 acres of Fishing

²⁷ National Archives, RG 10, vol. 4020, file 280,470-2, Frank Oliver, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, to Frank Pedley, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 3 July 1905.

²⁸ National Archives, RG 10, vol. 4020, file 280,470-2, Frank Pedley, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, to H.A. Carruthers, Indian agent, 27 July 1906.

²⁹ National Archives, RG 10, vol. 4020, file 280,470-2, Fred Fischer, Acting Indian agent, to Frank Pedley, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 31 July 1906.

Lake land were sold at three public auctions in 1909 and 1910. These took place on 23 June 1909, 8 June 1910, and 7 December 1910.³⁰ So, again, although the town and its residents were not recipients of the land, they did provide assistance in the surrender and selling of the land. A few years later, however, a group of Wadena citizens would actively pursue the acquisition of a parcel of land located on the Fishing Lake reserve.

Correspondence between J. Harvey Hearn, Barrister and Solicitor, to J. G. Mitchell, Private Secretary to the Minister of the Interior, on 7 December 1914, read:

There are quite a few of us in Wadena who are interested in the north shore of Fishing Lake as a summer place, and they have asked me to take up with you the matter of obtaining this land by purchase or otherwise from the Department. It is part of the Fishing Lake Indian Reserve and in conversation with Mr. Murrison, [*sic*] [Indian agent], he gave us some intimation as to the procedure that must be gone through in order to have this land obtained. Will you kindly let me know just exactly what will be necessary for us to doIt was the purpose, I believe, to organize a Citizen's Outing Club, who would be the Purchasers of this land and who would be in a position to have this land subdivided and allott [*sic*] certain portions of it to its members and allott [*sic*] certain portions for public purposes.³¹

Nowhere in the documentary evidence are the views of the members of the band regarding the piece of land directly expressed. Hearn, however, assumed that "the small piece appears to be of very little value to the Indians."³² Indian agent Murison arrived at the same conclusion: "I may say that I am familiar with the piece of land in question and as it is of no practical value to the Indians, being separated from the main portion of the reserve...I brought this matter to the attention of the Indians some time ago and they

³⁰ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1911, Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 31 March 1910, vol. 45, no. 27, xxxi, and Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1911, Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 31 March 1911, vol. 46, no. 27, xxix and xxx.

³¹ National Archives, RG 10, vol. 4080, file 474, 917, J. Harvey Hearn, Barrister and Solicitor, to J. G. Mitchell, Private Secretary to the Minister of the Interior, 7 December 1914.

³² National Archives, RG 10, vol. 4080, file 474, 917, J. Harvey Hearn, Barrister and Solicitor, to Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of Indians Affairs, 20 January 1915.

seemed to be willing to part with the land.”³³ In a memorandum dated 5 March 1915, Murison wrote to the Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Duncan Campbell Scott, that he had brought the matter up “before the Fishing Lake band in Council at a full meeting of the Band and they gave their consent to Surrender, providing that they receive \$100.00 per acre for the land”; Murison also noted that that amount per acre seemed well worth it for the purpose for which it was required.³⁴ A voters’ list of the Fishing Lake band indicates that of 29 voting members, 19 voted in favour of the surrender of about 20 acres, 1 was opposed, and 9 were listed as absent.³⁵

By June, the Outing Club decided that it wished to purchase only 8, instead of 20, acres, and, even though the Band had consented to \$60.00 per acre, instead of the initial \$100.00, the Club found that price nevertheless to be “very excessive,” but still willing to pay it in order to obtain the land.³⁶ The sale was finally concluded on the basis of 12 acres at \$60.00 per acre and a payment of \$720.00 was made; letters patent were finally issued in June 1922 in the names of James A. Mooney and John M. Burns for 11.5 acres of land.³⁷ Cottages, a large dance pavilion with refreshments and grocery counter, and another attached dance floor extending out to the water’s edge were all built soon after. A bathhouse, boathouse, wharfs, diving platforms, and electric lights were also added. The 100 yards or so of wide, sandy beach was named Sabitawasis beach in honour of Chief Sabitawasis of the Fishing Lake band. This was symbolic perhaps not only of the

³³ National Archives, RG 10, vol. 4080, file 474, 917, W. Murison, Indian agent, to Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of Indians Affairs, 5 February 1915.

³⁴ National Archives, RG 10, vol. 4080, file 474, 917, W. Murison, Indian agent, to Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of Indians Affairs, 5 March 1915.

³⁵ National Archives, RG 10, vol. 4080, file 474, 917, Voters’ List of Fishing Lake Band, 14 August 1915.

³⁶ National Archives, RG 10, vol. 4080, file 474, 917, J. Harvey Hearn, Barrister and Solicitor, to J.D. McLean, Assistant Deputy and Secretary, Department of Indians Affairs, 28 June 1915.

³⁷ National Archives, RG 10, vol. 4080, file 474, 917, J.C. Caldwell, Lands and Timber Branch, Department of Indian Affairs, 15 June 1922.

generally friendly relations between the Chief and his band and early town residents, but also quite possibly a gesture made in thanks to him and his people for granting town residents access to and use of Fishing Lake land. It appears, then, that the surrender of the land in 1922 was not a contentious issue between residents of Fishing Lake and Wadena. However, land would remain a prominent feature of the relationship between these two communities, proving in later years to be a source of conflict and dissension among members of these two groups. At this particular point, though, land, and especially the resources of the land, were of essential importance in that they were responsible for the forging of economic relations between the band and early settlers and town residents.

Economic associations formed between residents of Fishing Lake and early settlers in the area can best be described as mutually beneficial, introducing new sources of income to Fishing Lake members, and providing essential goods and services for Newcomers to the district. Not surprisingly, this type of interaction began with the band's first White neighbours, the Milligans. Reference is made to a small store run by Joshua Milligan, Jr. and his sisters. Milligan acquired the mail at Sheho, the location of the nearest post office, and hauled supplies from Yorkton. Early settlers would buy supplies and pick up their mail from Milligan's store. Mention is also made of Indians coming to trade at his store, presumably from Fishing Lake, and perhaps from elsewhere.³⁸

Also of equal benefit for both the Milligans and the band was the selling of hay. Inspector of Indian Agencies, Alex McGibbon, reported in 1899 that for that year on the Fishing Lake reserve "hay was short," but that "Mr. Milligan was supplying the Indians

³⁸ Wadena History Book Committee, *Remembering Times: Wadena and Area Dating Back to 1882*, 24.

at a reasonable price to be paid out of next treaty money.”³⁹ The hay supply for the band was also short in 1902, and McGibbon again wrote, “...the Milligans, who are neighbours, are always willing to lend or sell any hay required.”⁴⁰ These commercial transactions between band members and nearby residents, the Milligans, provided the band with much needed hay for their cattle when it became scarce, and an extra source of income for the Milligans.

Reciprocally, the arrival of the Milligans and later other settlers also increased the ability of band residents to procure supplementary earnings. This did not escape the attention of Indian agent Murison in his 1907 report for the Touchwood Agency, in which Fishing Lake, along with four other reserves, was included: “The great influx of settlers into the neighbourhood of the reserves has opened up sources of income which these Indians did not enjoy in the past and many of the Indians have shown a fair amount of energy in taking advantage of the opportunities as they presented themselves.”⁴¹ Accounts of government officials indicate that aside from hunting and fishing, which were the main sources of income for the band, reserve residents also earned “considerable money by...sale of firewood and willow posts,”⁴² presumably sold to settlers, and through “working for settlers and “working out at threshing, &c.”⁴³ Stan Cuthand makes reference to other prairie reserve residents also involved in these not uncommon commercial activities with nearby settlers, noting that “many sold dry wood

³⁹ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1900, Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 30 June 1899, vol. 34, no. 14, 204.

⁴⁰ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1903, Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 30 June 1902, vol. 37, no. 27, 201.

⁴¹ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1907-08, Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 31 March 1907, vol. 42, no. 27, 147.

⁴² Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1910, Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 31 March 1909, vol. 44, no. 27, 162.

⁴³ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1911, Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 31 March 1910, vol. 45, no. 27, 152.

to the farmers and town folk in the winter...[and] cut brush most of the summers and were busy with harvesting in the fall.”⁴⁴

Overall, members of Fishing Lake and early settlers in the area both enjoyed equally advantageous economic relations at this time, with band members providing goods, such as firewood, and a source of labour, and settlers supplying a market for Indian products and labour, as well as some goods, such as hay. Both groups therefore contributed to the general development of the region, not just the Newcomers, as is often the story found in accounts documenting the historical development of the prairies.

About a year after a reserve was surveyed for the Fishing Lake band in 1881, their first White neighbours appeared. The next half century would see the arrival of hundreds more, resulting in the establishment of hamlets, villages, and towns, including the town of Wadena in 1912, in what had previously been an area inhabited almost exclusively by Saulteaux First Nations peoples generally, and those belonging to the Fishing Lake band specifically. To characterize Indian/non-Indian interaction in this precise locality as non-existent would be fallacious at worst and unreasonable at best, as the documentary evidence definitely points to the contrary. Not only was association present between these two groups, but, at this particular point in the shared history of these two communities, it was also relatively positive. This was in all probability attributable to two important factors.

First, the geographical location of the Fishing Lake reserve allowed for its members to retain a great deal of economic self-sufficiency. Located in the northern reaches of the grain belt, or parkland, reserve residents were not forced to rely so heavily upon

⁴⁴ Stan Cuthand, “The Native Peoples of the Prairie Provinces in the 1920’s and 1930’s,” in Ian A.L. Getty and Donald B. Smith, eds., *One Century Later: Western Canadian Reserve Indians Since Treaty 7* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1978), 38.

agricultural production as those located in more southerly reserve communities. Annual reports of the DIA speak to this band's ability to secure earnings through the avocations of hunting and fishing until at least a decade into the twentieth century, earning them the designation of "too independent" by one dismayed Indian agent. The 1895 report stated that the Fishing Lake band lived "principally by hunting and fishing, and they have sold over 6,000 dollars' worth of fur during the year. They get very little assistance from the government."⁴⁵ A more detailed account the following year cites \$12, 000 as the value of furs sold during that year by the Fishing Lake band, a success both celebrated and admonished by the local Indian agent as he went on to wryly point out that "...as long as the hunting keeps good, it will be impossible to get this band to settle down on a reserve."⁴⁶ In true rational government fashion, however, his next sentence reads, "These Indians get very little assistance from the department," adding that partly because of this, the department was able to "effect a saving of one hundred and sixty sacks of flour, and about two thousand four hundred pounds of bacon, compared with the previous year."⁴⁷ It wasn't until the first ten years of the twentieth century had passed that settlement began to considerably limit the band's ability to employ hunting and fishing as a means of livelihood. In 1909, band members were said to be "just turning their attention to grain-raising as a means of support,"⁴⁸ and by the next year the

⁴⁵ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1896, Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 30 June 1895, vol. 29, no. 14, 67.

⁴⁶ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1897, Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 30 June 1896, vol. 31, no. 14, 211.

⁴⁷ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1897, Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 30 June 1896, vol. 31, no. 14, 211.

⁴⁸ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1910, Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 31 March 1909, vol. 44, no. 27, 162.

band had harvested its first crop, producing more wheat than any of the other bands in the Touchwood Agency.⁴⁹

What is important here is not only the natural resources available in this specific area, but also the necessary skills possessed by members of the band for harvesting those resources, skills that had sustained the band for as long as they had occupied this area, and would prove just as essential for the survival of many early settlers. Because of the band's ability to utilize the wildlife resources of the area for an extended period of time, they were able to remain economically self-sufficient and concomitantly provide an essential product to nearby emerging settler communities. As a result, residents of Fishing Lake occupied at least an equal position from which to guide and influence the development of relationships between themselves and early settlers.

Stemming from this point is the second factor that helps to explain why initial interaction was relatively favourable, that being the necessity of mutual co-operation. Certainly for newly arrived settlers the skills and knowledge of, and partnership with, the host Native community they encountered would have been necessary in many cases for their survival. Large-scale agricultural activity in this area and at this time could not sustain settler families, because it had just barely begun. Newcomers to the area had the especially difficult and time-consuming task of clearing the brushy land before it would be fit for growing crops. In addition, the financial resources of some settlers allowed for the purchase of only a few acres of land, not nearly enough to support themselves. Hunting and fishing, therefore, often provided an important part of many families' food supply. Trapping also allowed some settlers to obtain a cash income. Whether it was

⁴⁹ Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1911, Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs for the Year Ended 31 March 1910, vol. 45, no. 27, 161.

the actual wildlife products or the skills needed to harvest them, settlers would have depended on the assistance and co-operation of their Indian neighbours for these. Reciprocally, especially as hunting began to recede due to settlement and agriculture gained in importance, residents of Fishing Lake would also benefit from co-operation with Newcomers to the district. When band members tried their hand at cattle raising and hay was in short supply, it was often purchased or lent to them by nearby settlers. The settler population also opened up new economic opportunities for the band, providing a market for goods such as firewood and willow posts, as well as their labour.

By 1929 the foundation upon which future relations would be built between Fishing Lake and Wadena had been laid. For the next thirty years the relatively positive connections fostered between the two communities would continue to grow and strengthen, as the long arm of change and advancement encompassed both and the hand of history drew them even nearer.

Chapter 4

The "Golden Years": 1930-1959

Relations between the members of the Fishing Lake band and residents of Wadena continued to develop along positive lines during the middle decades of the twentieth century. That this was the case was the result of not only the people from each community themselves, but also to a large degree regional and international events, which served to mould, shape, and reinforce the bonds between both. This lag of the journey was determined as much by the nature of the path itself, as by those who walked upon it. Although events such as Sports Days and Fairs continued to bring both groups closer, it was the outbreak of World War II and the agricultural development of the district that proved to be of instrumental importance in the formation of such a favourable relationship between these two neighbours.

Demographically, both communities had experienced increased growth by this time. Wadena's population had more than doubled its 1911 figure of 255 and stood at 582 in 1931.¹ Fishing Lake's growth was more modest with a recorded population of 183 in 1939² as compared to its 1911 figure of 118. The number of people resident in each community would continue to increase over the next twenty years so that midway

¹ Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *1931 Census of Canada, Vol. 1, Summary* (Ottawa: Department of Trade and Commerce, 1936), 188.

² Canada, *1939 Census of Indians in Canada* (Ottawa: Department of Mines and Resources, Indian Affairs Branch, 1940), 32.

through the century, Wadena's population stood at 1081 in 1951³ and Fishing Lake's at 271 in 1954.⁴

As they had since the very first Wadena Sports Day, those from Fishing Lake continued their participation in this annual event. There were competitions, such as the relay race and track and field events, that were open to all contestants, both Indian and non-Indian. Indian competitors from Fishing Lake often finished as first, second, or third place winners. For instance, the Wadena Sports Day of 1948, held on 1 July, saw Lawrence Desjarlais place first in the relay race and Joe Desjarlais place third.⁵ This pattern held for the next two years with Nessel, M. Desjarlais and W. Desjarlais placing first, second, and third respectively in the 1949 Wadena Sports Day relay race,⁶ and John Cyr, Lawrence Desjarlais, and Ted Pataquachan capturing the first, second, and third spots respectively in the relay race for the 1950 Wadena Sports Day.⁷ Indian participants also excelled in horse racing events. On 8 July 1948 the *Wadena News* reported that Joe Desjarlais of Fishing Lake had won second place in the one mile open running horse race a week earlier during that year's Wadena Sports Day.⁸ A year later, J. Desjarlais took first place in the same race for the 1949 Sports Day.⁹ Track and field events, again open to both Indian and non-Indian alike, also provided those from Fishing Lake with an opportunity to showcase their talents and skills. In 1944, A. Slippery took first place in the Boys fourteen years and under category, with N. Smoke placing second

³ Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *1951 Census of Canada, Vol. 1, Population – General Characteristics* (Ottawa: Department of Trade and Commerce, 1953), 41/73.

⁴ Canada, *1954 Census of Indians in Canada* (Ottawa: Department of Mines and Resources, Indian Affairs Branch, 1955), 37.

⁵ *Wadena News*, 8 July 1948.

⁶ *Wadena News*, 7 July 1949.

⁷ *Wadena News*, 6 July 1950.

⁸ *Wadena News*, 8 July 1948.

⁹ *Wadena News*, 7 July 1949.

and P. Slippery placing third in the Boys sixteen years and under events.¹⁰ A couple of years later, the 1946 Wadena Sports Day saw Jimmy Nataucappo capture first in the Boys fourteen years and under events and Ned Smoke won the 100 yard dash.¹¹ Finally, the potato race, which consisted of two horses and riders as a pair, and sometimes even three of each, was also a competition often won by Indian participants. For instance, in 1948 the J. Cyr, M. Desjarlais, and H. Tataquasan trio earned top spot at that year's Sports Day, with W. Desjarlais, A. Paquachin, and P. Slippery rounding out third.¹² Again in 1952, the *Wadena News*, reporting on that year's annual Sports Day, published the winners of that year's potato race as J. Cyr and Tataquason.¹³ All of this is indicative of the involvement and participation of Fishing Lake residents in the annual celebration of the Wadena Sports Day. By taking part in these events they no doubt brought entertainment and excitement to the crowd, and a certain amount of pride and prestige to themselves.

In addition to these competitions, there were also those that were open to Indian contestants only. These included the Indian pony race and Indian wagon race. In 1935, there was even an "Indian girls' race" for female Indian participants, with three dollars awarded for first prize and two dollars for second. The inclusion of "Indian only" events points to the obvious importance ascribed to the attendance and participation of Indian people from Fishing Lake by residents of Wadena. Their often outstanding performance probably drew quite a crowd. Therefore, their participation would have been a factor in

¹⁰ *Wadena News*, 19 July 1944.

¹¹ *Wadena News*, 17 July 1946.

¹² *Wadena News*, 8 July 1948.

¹³ *Wadena News*, 10 July 1952.

the overall success of the Sports Day, something that most likely did not escape the attention of organizers.

The parades that usually accompanied Sports Days, as well as other events and celebrations, would also have encouraged the attendance of many, and again, those from the reserve figured prominently here too. In 1939, for instance, the Fishing Lake Indians, along with the Ellis Drug Store float, were awarded prizes for their contribution to the Sports Day parade.¹⁴ During Saskatchewan's Golden Jubilee celebrations in 1955, the *Wadena News* reported, "the Indians of Fishing Lake Reserve had entered whole heartedly into the preparations for the parade and contributed three pieces, a travois with horse led by an Indian in feathered headdress, a camp scene built around a teepee painted with figures...One of the Indians, riding a horse, was dressed in the costume of a Chief."¹⁵

The inclusion of Indians in these parades most likely attracted the attention of onlookers not only because of their brilliantly coloured and decorated outfits and horses, but also because they called up a certain vision of the past. As author Pierre Berton explains, while describing a similar parade in Regina,

The two groups who received the loudest cheers in Regina's great parade were also the most colourful and the most romantic, the reminders of an era past: the Indians and the Mounted Police...The cheers rang out not only for the men on horseback – the Indians on mottled cow ponies, the Police on jet black steeds – but also for what these gaudy riders represented: the romantic version of the West, the Old West of nostalgia...Many of those who watched on the sidelines as the riders cantered past had been seduced by that image: feathered and painted natives....¹⁶

¹⁴ *Wadena News*, 5 July 1939.

¹⁵ *Wadena News*, 7 July 1955.

¹⁶ Pierre Berton, *The Promised Land: Settling the West, 1896-1914* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1984), 210.

This line of thinking is revealed through the pages of the *Wadena News* in its account of the 1938 Sports Day, stating, "Dusky Indians, remnants of once great tribes, came from all parts of the surrounding country to lend variety to the crowd with their multicolored costumes and paraphernalia."¹⁷

For non-Indians, this must have been a somewhat difficult image to reconcile with the emerging reality of First Nations people adopting many aspects of the majority Anglo-Canadian population. Expanding on this notion, Berton states, "When it came to White festivals, parades, and celebrations, the Western attitude towards the Indians underwent a transformation. The same people who wanted them to abandon their rituals for hard work and to dress and act like White men suddenly wanted them to take time off, don feathered bonnets and buckskin, perform tribal dances, and lead the parade."¹⁸ So although the local newspaper, and essentially town residents, were at this time lauding the successes, especially in terms of agricultural production, of reserve residents, they were at the same time still intent on clinging to an outdated and largely imaginary conception of Indian people in their description of their participation in celebratory events.

Cultural ossification aside, as noted before, Sports Days, Fairs, and parades still provided one of the few opportunities for Indian people to share aspects of and draw non-Native society into their culture.¹⁹ What is of relevance here is the meaning attached to inclusion in these celebrations for band members. Fear of being viewed as historical relics of a by-gone age was presumably not a concern for those from Fishing

¹⁷ *Wadena News*, 13 July 1938.

¹⁸ Berton, *The Promised Land*, 216.

¹⁹ Keith Regular, "'Red Backs and White Burdens': A Study of White Attitudes Towards Indians in Southern Alberta, 1896-1911," (MA thesis, University of Calgary, 1985), 181.

Lake, as they were likely too caught up in the amusement and excitement of the festivities. Therese Desjarlais, a member of the Fishing Lake band, recalled with fondness, "it used to be nice though, long ago when they used to have Sports Day. All the Indians used to go in free, long ago. We used to join their parades long ago, but we don't do that anymore."²⁰

Part of the enjoyment of attending Sports Days was perhaps in fact the chance to reconnect with a past way of life. The paper frequently commented on the arrival of Indian people from Fishing Lake and other reserve communities and their subsequent erecting of traditional lodging. In 1936, for example, the *Wadena News* recounted such happenings: "A large number of Indians from surrounding districts attended the celebration, as usual, they beginning to arrive early in the forenoon and at once commenced putting up their tents and making themselves comfortable for the day."²¹

Similarly, the paper reported next year in 1939 that "as usual, the night before the event, many of the Indians from the [Fishing Lake] Reserve came to town and camped at the grounds...."²² Therese Desjarlais also affectionately remembers those days: "We used to camp right in Wadena, where the hospital is, that's where we used to have our tents; we used to camp there. It used to be nice. I liked it!"²³ With a hint of grim humour in his voice, her husband, Lawrence Desjarlais, also a member of the band, added, "Oh, the horses used to make a mess!"²⁴

²⁰ Therese Desjarlais interview, 30 April 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

²¹ *Wadena News*, 8 July 1936.

²² *Wadena News*, 5 July 1939.

²³ Therese Desjarlais interview, 30 April 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

²⁴ Lawrence Desjarlais interview, 30 April 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

Overall, the annual Wadena Sports Day continued in its capacity as a facilitator and encourager of interaction between the communities of Wadena and Fishing Lake.

Indian attendees were able to demonstrate their athletic abilities and showcase their culture, a definite asset for town residents hoping to attract record crowds. This was also an opportunity for members of both groups to mix with their neighbours in a social setting. Here again, as with so many other aspects of their relationship, association was the result of mutual benefit.

Participation in Sports Days had, however, become reciprocal in nature by 1931. That year marked the first Sports Day hosted by the Fishing Lake band on their reserve. Just as band members had so enthusiastically supported Wadena Sports Days, so too did those from Wadena partake of the entertainment afforded by the Sports Days sponsored by their neighbours to the south. The first "Indian Sports Day," held on 20 July, was touted as a "huge success," with "quite a number of visitors" in attendance.²⁵ The Wadena band was apparently on hand for the occasion and gave a number of "splendid selections during the day."²⁶ And the refreshment booth, in the capable hands of Mr. Neilson of the Wadena Bakery, gave "general satisfaction to all."²⁷ An estimated 1200 to 1500 Indians attended the 1948 Fishing Lake Sports Day from surrounding reserve communities. Chief Sabitawasis, or Sabot, as he was sometimes referred to, and his band were hosts to "Chief Keniquan and his band from Daystar Reserve near Wishart...Chief Kittiwinnie of Nut Lake at Rose Valley...Chief Desjarlais of

²⁵ *Wadena News*, 29 July 1931.

²⁶ *Wadena News*, 29 July 1931.

²⁷ *Wadena News*, 29 July 1931.

Moscawequan Reserve at Lestock and to many from the Cote Reserve at Kamsack.”²⁸ The Fishing Lake Sports Days were described as offering “all the attractions of the White man’s sports days,”²⁹ such as baseball tournaments, horse racing, track and field events, and a dance. A good deal of work had gone into the building of a new softball diamond, complete with wire screening to protect spectators, and the construction of a new half-mile race track and open-air dance floor. In addition, the 1949 Sports Day included a “merry-go-round, midway, a trick horse, and an airplane from Yorkton.”³⁰

For the Fishing Lake band, however, their Sports Days were about more than just ball tournaments and horse races. They also included significant cultural features. For instance, the large contingent of Indian people who were present at the 1948 Sports Day stayed not only for the sporting events that were held on Thursday, but also for “a pow-wow on Friday and a rain dance Sunday.”³¹ The rain dance was in all likelihood restricted to Indian participants only, as a result of it being a sacred ceremony among First Nations people and one of many that had in fact come under close scrutiny and even legal banishment by the Canadian federal government in past years.³² But again, as with the Wadena Sports Days, this would have been a time to allow non-Native visitors to their community a taste of some of their cultural traditions, and even an opportunity to participate in them. This is most evident in an account of the event in 1948 when it was reported, “Chief Sabot and his Indian councillors headed an Indian

²⁸ *Wadena News*, 15 July 1948.

²⁹ *Wadena News*, 6 July 1950.

³⁰ *Wadena News*, 30 June 1949.

³¹ *Wadena News*, 15 July 1948.

³² For a more complete analysis of repression of Indian ceremonies in the prairie region see Katherine Pettipas, *Severing the Ties that Bind: Government Repression of Indigenous Religious Ceremonies on the Prairies* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1994).

dress parade which concluded with a pow-wow. White visitors were invited to enter the dance and in a spirit of goodwill many, including Mayor S.E. Love of Wadena, did take part.”³³

Fishing Lake Sports Days, then, were clearly just as well received by those from Wadena as Wadena Sports Days had been by Fishing Lake residents. The “hundreds of White persons who attended [in 1950] proved its popularity.”³⁴ Wadena residents had reciprocated the support shown to them by participating wholeheartedly in athletic events, coming in third for instance in 1950 in the baseball tournament, and taking part in the cultural traditions of their neighbours such as pow-wows. In return, town residents were extended an open invitation by the band to “make use of their picnic grounds and to visit the reserve at any time.”³⁵

Recreational and social interaction was not solely confined, however, to the annual celebration of Sports Days, either in Wadena or at Fishing Lake. For some, it was a daily or weekly occurrence. Jim Headington, Wadena resident and editor of the *Wadena News*, recalls for the younger men and boys anyways in both communities that social relations were somewhat hindered because of the fact that they did not attend the same schools. Association, then, was achieved largely through Sports Days, but also through what he described as the surest way to get the ball rolling between both groups: the Pool Room. He states, “There weren’t any [Indian students] in high school that I can remember when I was there... The ones we got to know would be through playing ball or going to Sports Days, or just that they [were] around town, or playing pool.”³⁶

³³ *Wadena News*, 15 July 1948.

³⁴ *Wadena News*, 6 July 1950.

³⁵ *Wadena News*, 15 July 1948.

³⁶ Jim Headington interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

Obviously triggering past memorable moments, he exclaimed with heightened emotion, “Hey...there was a great mixer! The Pool Room! We played pool with them all the time and had lots of fun. They could joke right along with everybody else [because of] course, part of the game was talking.”³⁷

Therefore, interaction that was recreational in nature continued to grow throughout the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, as it had since the early part of the century. This was due in large measure to the celebration of Wadena Sports Days and by the early 1930s, Fishing Lake Sports Days. As these were only annual occasions, though, other activities, such as pool and baseball, helped to fill the gaps throughout the rest of the year. It is reasonable to assume, then, that social relationships at this time were maintained and strengthened because they were viewed as mutually beneficial, rewarding, and enjoyable by both groups.

A shift from the sporting to the political arena, however, reveals a noticeable lack of interaction or co-operation among these two communities, this being neither surprising nor unexpected. Given that each group occupied different legal jurisdictions, any sort of significant mutual political advantage was virtually non-existent. While those living in Wadena would have held full citizenship, and all the rights accruing from that status, Fishing Lake band members were of an entirely different legal and political standing. As virtual “wards of the state,” owing to their Indian status, all rights and privileges accorded to them flowed mainly from a single piece of legislation: the *Indian Act*.

Since its inception in 1876, the *Act*'s fundamental goal of assimilation has remained constant, as has its permeating of almost every aspect of registered Indians' lives. The *Act* has in the past, among a whole host of other provisions, had the power to depose

³⁷ Jim Headington interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

elected chiefs, at the discretion of the Department of Indian Affairs, deprive Indian women of their Indian status if they chose to marry a non-Indian or a non-status Indian, and grant allotments of reserve lands in fee simple. But even today, it retains the authority to dictate band governance structures, who is entitled to be registered as a status Indian, and even the definition of terms such as “band” and “reserve.” As a result of the *Act*, First Nations people in Canada have been, and continue to be, the most regulated of all people in Canada, affecting them at every turn, right down to even the personal level. The *Indian Act* is somewhat of a “total institution, ’...touch[ing] on almost all aspects of the lives of status Indians [and] placing them in a separate category from other Canadians.”³⁸ What truly distinguished Indian people from other Canadians at this time was the franchise, or the vote. It was not until 1960 that status Indians across Canada could vote in federal elections. This was also the year that Saskatchewan Indians were finally granted the right to vote provincially.

Therefore, because the two groups were essentially on completely different political planes, the extent to which residents of these two communities would have found direct political co-operation meaningful was negligible. Any cases of political association would reasonably have been local, as opposed to federal or provincial. There is in fact at least some evidence to suggest that political partnership at the local level did indeed occur at least once during this period. When asked if there had ever been any political co-operation between Wadena and Fishing Lake, Steve George, a member of the Wadena community, was able to pull from memory this recollection: “My father was an RM [Rural Municipality] councillor. I can remember Native council members coming

³⁸ Olive Dickason, *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997; 1st ed. 1992), 260.

over and then planning roads.”³⁹ Although this is an isolated incident, it does suggest that when issues of a local political nature were relevant for both groups, they did join together in common cause to discuss and determine appropriate solutions. This one example is not intended to imply that direct political interaction was by any means widespread or that it dominated the relationship between these two communities, only that it was not completely absent from it. Perhaps the one event of equally significant political weight for both of these communities, one that did result in considerable indirect political union between them, was the outbreak of World War II.

Until quite recently, the contributions made by Aboriginal peoples to the various military campaigns Canada has been engaged in have been for the most part overlooked. During World War II, for example, Indians, despite the fact that they were not citizens, volunteered for service in proportionally higher numbers than did any other segment of the general population. Those who enlisted did so in some cases to escape the depressed economic conditions of reserve life or because of an unmistakable sense of patriotism. Perhaps more critical to their decision to enlist, though, was the very factor that had prevented many of them from becoming involved in the famed Canadian battle fought on the banks of the South Saskatchewan some sixty years earlier: the treaty relationship between First Nations and the Queen. According to one Cree recruit from Saskatchewan, he had volunteered because his great-grandfather, Mistawasis (Big Child), notable Cree leader and signatory to Treaty 6 in 1876, had made an alliance with the Queen through the signing of the treaty.⁴⁰ Furthermore, their disproportional rate of enlistment was paralleled by their contribution on the home front. Often among the

³⁹ Steve George interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

⁴⁰ John Herd Thompson, *Forging the Prairie West* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998), 142-43.

poorest communities in the prairie west, Indian reserves donated generously to war charities at this time. The Moose Lake band of Manitoba, for instance, offered furs worth \$3,000.00 to the Red Cross.⁴¹

In terms of both human and financial contributions, the Fishing Lake band was no exception to the general outpouring of support among prairie Indian reserve communities. At least four men from Fishing Lake are known to have served in the Second World War: L. Desjarlais, David Nataucappo, J. Nataucappo, and Percy Severight. In terms of cash donations, the *Wadena News* reported on 31 July 1940 that "Chief Sabitawasis of the Fishing Lake Band, came to their farming instructor, A.F. Fair, and told him that the Band had decided to donate \$1,000 of their trust fund to the Government for the purpose of furthering the war effort."⁴² It went on to note, rather proudly, that "this donation of \$1,000 is all the more remarkable since the Fishing Lake Band consists of approximately 165 Indians, which makes the per capita donation a large one."⁴³ The sending of men and money created a groundswell of pride in reserve communities, and their efforts no doubt also earned them the recognition of other Canadians. Ostensibly, the fighting of a common enemy for King and country would have proven to have been a powerfully uniting force between these two groups. But it was not only the war itself being played out on the international stage that served to reinforce relations, but also the unfolding of regional developments closer to home that worked in concert to solidify ties among this cast of characters.

⁴¹ Thompson, *Forging the Prairie West*, 143.

⁴² *Wadena News*, 31 July 1940.

⁴³ *Wadena News*, 31 July 1940.

The growth of agricultural productivity in the district was to some degree delayed due primarily to the simple reality of the topography of the region. Located on the southern edge of the boreal transition zone, an area that sweeps down in a southeasterly direction stretching from roughly Meadow Lake to Kamsack in Saskatchewan, conditions conducive to the cultivation of grain and cereal crops would have been achieved much later than in more southerly areas of the province on account of the dense brush that first had to be cleared from the land. Therefore, the time when agricultural production would have been feasible would have occurred at roughly the same time for area residents, providing an opportunity for increased interaction and partnership that was again of shared benefit.

Similar to their involvement in Canadian military action, the role of Indian farmers in the agricultural development of the Canadian plains has, until lately, gone unrecognized and been neglected in the pages of prairie history. First Nations people have not usually shared in the credit extended to White pioneers and homesteaders of whom this achievement was perceived to be solely the prerogative. Recent academic investigation, however, has revealed that initial Indian responses to farming were quite positive and generally successful, but Canadian government policy ultimately restricted and undermined reserve agriculture, effectively nipping it in the bud.⁴⁴ During this period, agriculture had become sufficiently advanced in the district and was being practiced by members of both communities. Oral testimony supplied by Jim Headington, for instance, depicts some of the agricultural pursuits taking place on the reserve at this time. Thinking back, he recalls that "there were some farmers out there

⁴⁴ See Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990) for an excellent examination of this topic.

[Fishing Lake], and there were some exceptionally good farmers out there: the Desjarlais, Mark, Luke, [and Lawrence]...and they were good farmers. They had purebred cattle and they were really doing well....”⁴⁵ Moreover, aside from working and tending their own fields, some reserve residents also provided valuable and much-needed labour for many non-Indian farmers in the surrounding area. As the local paper noted, this type of wage work was an important source of income for those from Fishing Lake, with “many of them earn[ing] money by working for neighboring farmers....”⁴⁶ A middle-aged female member of Fishing Lake First Nation also recalls, “we worked for a lot of farmers before.”⁴⁷

However, during the 1950s and into the 1960s, the demand for wage workers on White farms was beginning to dry up throughout the prairie region, largely as a result of mechanization. In her work *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare: Why Indian Policy Failed in the Prairie Provinces*, Helen Buckley explores prairie Indian reserve communities and the extent to which past and present government policy is responsible for the depressed economic conditions that afflict a number of them.⁴⁸ She points out that advances in agricultural technology were also a major blow to reserve economies, stating “the postwar era does mark a real downturn, for the simple reason that mechanization cut out much of the casual employment on which the reserves had lived

⁴⁵ Jim Headington interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

⁴⁶ *Wadena News*, 24 July 1946.

⁴⁷ Interview with middle-aged female member of Fishing Lake First Nation, 30 April 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

⁴⁸ Helen Buckley, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare: Why Indian Policy Failed in the Prairie Provinces* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1992).

since the 1880s.”⁴⁹ The female respondent from Fishing Lake referred to previously reported that this trend was also observable in her community, noting, “now that they [farmers] have all these big machinery, there’s no jobs.”⁵⁰ Another member of Fishing Lake First Nation, Ralph Sunshine, echoed this unfortunate development, stating, “at one time there was a lot of work on farms, but now with this big modern machinery that we have, things have kind of changed you know.”⁵¹

Nonetheless, the agricultural development of the district was certainly tied to the continuing development of positive relations between the two communities. The same female respondent identified earlier claims, “I think we’ve got more together with farmers ‘cause we always work[ed] on farms,”⁵² signifying that farming was a definite point of interaction and important in the formation of relationships. On a more personal note, during the gathering of information through oral interviews, it was revealed that a male member of the band and his family were actually employed by the author’s great-great aunt and uncle when he was a young boy.⁵³ Thankfully, the experience was a positive one: “They were nice people...She used to pay me two dollars to hoe, and that was a lot of money back then...I used to walk in that house and go and sleep upstairs or go and help myself to candy or whatever...they were good people...there was no colour

⁴⁹ Buckley, *From Wooden Ploughs to Welfare*, 69.

⁵⁰ Interview with middle-aged female member of Fishing Lake First Nation, 30 April 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

⁵¹ Ralph Sunshine interview, 1 May 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

⁵² Interview with middle-aged female member of Fishing Lake First Nation, 30 April 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

⁵³ Interview with male member of Fishing Lake First Nation, 1 May 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

barrier.⁵⁴ This ostensible absence of colour lines in some cases and the seemingly closer relations with farmers specifically and reserve residents, as alluded to earlier by a female member of the band, illustrates that the benefits of wage work performed by Indian workers for non-Indian farmers extended beyond the purely economic realm. Indeed, a majority of those respondents from Fishing Lake who supplied information on this subject relayed evidence of farming's favourable impact on relations between Native and White. Perhaps it was the nature of the work itself that was responsible for fostering positive interaction. Working and living in such close proximity for a lengthy period of time could have quite conceivably provided an excellent opportunity for the questioning and dismantling of stereotypes, had they existed, between Native and non-Native.

The same congenial relations also prevailed to some extent between reserve and town farmers, and in particular between those farmers who had volunteered during the Second World War. Commenting on the degree of interaction between Indian and non-Indian farmers during this time, Jim Headington recalled, "Yes, it [association] happened then, I can remember...especially [between] the guys who had...served in the army...overseas."⁵⁵ Here again, the diminution of racial stereotypes comes into play. Headington perceived that those reserve farmers who had served in the War "didn't feel that they were any different because they'd spent time with other [non-Native] soldiers."⁵⁶ Therefore, it can be reasonably posited that time spent overseas resulted in an equalizing effect among soldiers, serving to minimize racial boundaries. This

⁵⁴ Interview with male member of Fishing Lake First Nation, 1 May 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

⁵⁵ Jim Headington interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

⁵⁶ Jim Headington interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

combined with the all-too-familiar experiences of farming in Saskatchewan, shared by all farmers in the region, to produce a fertile environment for personal and positive association between these men.

The agricultural development of the district, then, was paramount in nourishing the continuing growth of agreeable relationships among Fishing Lake and Wadena community members. Both shared responsibility for the advancement of agricultural productivity in the region. In addition, wage work provided reserve residents with a source of income and also transferred farming knowledge, as acknowledged by Therese Desjarlais: "When we started to farm, that's where we learned from [from non-Indian farmers]...how to do things."⁵⁷ For the non-Indian farmers for whom they worked, band members supplied an invaluable pool of labour. An indelible feature since the beginning, reciprocity persisted in its capacity to motivate and create affable bonds between residents of both communities.

As farming gained prominence in the lives of area residents, so too did it in the pages of their local press. Reporting on everything from soil conditions to the latest technology and machinery, the *Wadena News* also found the achievements of the Fishing Lake band to be worthy of consideration. In his study of White concerns with Indian lifestyle in southern Alberta, Keith Regular brings attention to the press as an important conduit through which White attitudes towards Natives were channelled and expressed. He observes,

A vocal and free press can be an important formative institution in any society. The press translates and assesses government's declared objectives for the reading public and voices opinions about issues which it considers of vital concern to society at large. It has opinions of its own

⁵⁷ Therese Desjarlais interview, 30 April 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

which can often be at variance with official policy and with public perceptions of what is deemed right and proper. At its best, the press is the social conscience embodying the finest hopes and ambitions of the populace. Encouraging, assessing and revealing the 'progress' of Indians was therefore a concern.⁵⁸

The *Wadena News* was not immune to this practice as some of its pages too informed readers of the "progress," and in particular the agricultural "progress," of Fishing Lake Indians. For instance, an item in the 24 July 1946 issue of the paper begins by stating, "Fishing Lake Indian Reserve is known as one of the best and most advanced in Saskatchewan."⁵⁹ It continues, claiming, "the individual Indian has plenty of spending money. The reserve boasts 200 head of cattle in good condition and all proceeds from their sale belong to the Indian."⁶⁰ Similarly, under the banner "Indians Profit from Cattle Sale," the 8 September 1949 edition boasted of the success of a number of reserve farmers:

Twelve Indian farmers from Fishing Lake Reserve, southeast of Wadena, are richer by over \$5,000.00 this fall through selling 41 head of cattle on the Winnipeg market. Two of the farmers, Mark and Luke Desjarlais, netted \$800 each while Joe Desjarlais made \$600.00 for himself...The Indian farmers are starting this week to harvest what promises to be a good crop. They have an aggregate of 1,000 acres in grain and the half day's threshing done at the time of writing showed a good yield...Their gardens are good again this fall. The band is steadily increasing its acreage. During the past season 160 acres of new land were broken.⁶¹

And, finally, as reported on 18 November 1954, the article "Treaty Indian Buys Purebred Polled Hereford" relates the story of Mark Desjarlais of the Fishing Lake Indian reserve who had "made a forward step in building up his herd of 40 cattle. He purchased recently an eight month old Polled Hereford bull... The bull is of the Advance

⁵⁸ Regular, "Red Backs and White Burdens," 9.

⁵⁹ *Wadena News*, 24 July 1946.

⁶⁰ *Wadena News*, 24 July 1946.

⁶¹ *Wadena News*, 8 September 1949.

Domino strain featuring blood lines of the register of merit sire from the Kenneth Coleman Ranch in North Platte, Nebraska.”⁶²

The preceding examples are reflective of how some town residents viewed their Indian neighbours and their relationship with them. On the one hand, they can be construed as representative of underlying notions of race and culture and the expected abilities and skills attached to them. Therefore, the “success” of Indian people in what was considered to be White pursuits and society would have been perceived as somehow “extraordinary” and worthy of mention. Conversely, the inclusion of these items in the paper can be seen as recognition and appreciation of the agricultural achievements of reserve residents and even their contribution to the agricultural development of the district as a whole. The Wadena merchant community donated first (a thirty-two-piece set of dishes from Marshall-Wells Store), second (a Coleman lamp from Hicks’ Hardware), and third (a gift from the North American Lumber Company) prizes for a garden competition on the reserve in 1947, demonstrating that there was a genuine interest in both the encouragement of the band’s progress and, through the publication of this item, the celebration of their subsequent successes. Indeed, had there been no coverage at all of these accomplishments, the view would have perhaps been one of an indifferent and unsupportive neighbour. Hence, what this interpretation suggests is that although assumptions based on and informed by race were not completely absent from relations between these two communities, for surely they permeated association in some cases, overall the simple fact that these stories were printed is indicative of the band’s acknowledged agricultural progress and market presence in the area by Wadena community members.

⁶² *Wadena News*, 18 November 1954.

Aside from their agricultural lives, the cultural and personal lives of reserve residents were also at this time receiving increased attention and were considered newsworthy in their own right. This was most likely again a consequence of the Second World War and its aftermath. Indian involvement overseas and on the home front resulted in heightened recognition, appreciation, and interest in the lives of Native Canadians by their non-Native counterparts. Among Wadena and Fishing Lake residents this was certainly the case. "Indians Hold 'Rain Dance'" for instance, the featured front page story of the 12 August 1954 edition of the *Wadena News*, related that "the Indians of Fishing Lake Reserve...have just completed a ceremonial rain dance which originally was an appeal to the Great Spirit for rain."⁶³ It continued on to describe the event in greater detail: "During the observance of the custom a circular bower of leafy bows was built and surrounded by a waist high enclosure of green inside of which the Indians sang in pow. The structure was open to the east and west. A custom rigidly adhered to by the Indians is that the wood used in building the structure is never again used nor is it disturbed. Remains of a number of those formerly built are still to be seen on Fishing Lake Reserve."⁶⁴ The Rain Dance in this case was most likely an abbreviated version of the Sun Dance, the name possibly derived from a term attributed to the ceremony by Whites due to the tendency of rainfall to occur during the dance.⁶⁵ The name was also used by Indian people themselves, often in an effort to disassociate this new form of the Sun Dance from the more controversial version, one

⁶³ *Wadena News*, 12 August 1954.

⁶⁴ *Wadena News*, 12 August 1954.

⁶⁵ Pettipas, *Severing the Ties that Bind*, 179.

that included personal sacrifice through flesh offerings and the distribution or “giving away” of goods, both of which violated White, middle-class sensibilities.

And it was also in 1954 that the personal lives of band members and happenings of the reserve were brought into the social pages of the press. Births and deaths were recorded, such as the daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Paquachan on 8 March 1954⁶⁶ and the unfortunate death of longtime leader of the Fishing Lake band, Chief Sabitawasis, on 13 February 1956.⁶⁷ Of course more sensational items also found their way into the paper, such as an apparently self-inflicted gunshot wound to the chest of band member Jack Sabit.⁶⁸ At surface level, these items may appear not to be of much weighty concern or consequence, but taken together with all other reports detailing the efforts and accomplishments of band members in terms of everything from Sports Days to the Second World War to agriculture they represent a simple, yet profoundly deeper, significance.

In essence, what they demonstrate is a general recognition and appreciation of the reserve, its residents, and their inclusion and importance in the collective, wider community of the district, crucial indeed to the development and maintenance of positive relationships. The article “Fishing Lake Reservation Scene of Many Enterprises,” appearing in the 21 April 1949 edition of the *Wadena News*, expressed gratitude and commendation for the band’s aid in ridding the countryside of coyotes, for

⁶⁶ *Wadena News*, 18 March 1954.

⁶⁷ *Wadena News*, 23 February 1956.

⁶⁸ *Wadena News*, 6 May 1954.

its commencement of a fur conservation project and muskrat farm, and for the recent purchase of new tractors and tillers.⁶⁹

Similarly, "Indian Reserve Interesting Place," notes that it is "a pleasure to drive thru the reserve in the summer" and relates statistical information such as the population of the band, number of farmers, number of acres cultivated and summer fallowed, and number of bushels of wheat and oats sold.⁷⁰ Attention must, however, also be drawn to other portions of this article that reveal, as mentioned before, the presence of certain racial beliefs held by some White members of the district at this time. The author of the piece obviously felt compelled to dispel the myth that somehow attendance at exhibitions or fairs would lead to the ruin of reserve farmers by providing a reversal of the situation: "Of course, sometimes the whole population heads off for a fair, but how about our White farmers? We often see the whole White population in town here when a fair or sports day is on, so why expect our Indian neighbours to stop home when there is some fun in town?"⁷¹ So while some town residents certainly would have held these views, it is evident that surely all did not, the writer of this piece being proof of that. In addition, this article bears witness to the fact that the flow of traffic between reserve and town seemed to be largely from the former to the latter, observing that "although we have an Indian reserve close to town there are few people who seem to know much about what goes on out there. The Indians come to market, get their goods and go home again without any talk."⁷²

⁶⁹ *Wadena News*, 21 April 1949.

⁷⁰ *Wadena News*, 2 November 1938.

⁷¹ *Wadena News*, 2 November 1938.

⁷² *Wadena News*, 2 November 1938.

A number of factors need to be considered, though, when attempting to interpret this observation. First, considering that Wadena was the largest service centre in the district it makes sense that the movement of individuals from not only the reserve but also other smaller surrounding communities was directed there. Second, this could be behaviour characteristic of a certain segment of the reserve population. For instance, opportunities for interaction between Native and non-Native females appeared to be fewer than for male members of both communities, remembering that WWII, agriculture, and social venues such as the Pool Room, as discussed earlier, served to increase association between men. Hence, it is quite possible that the forming of relationships between women from both groups occurred less frequently and therefore, since it was probably the women from Fishing Lake who were responsible for shopping duties, it would not be at all surprising that they came to market, purchased their groceries, and returned home "without any talk." Finally, depending on the degree to which it was enforced and adhered to at Fishing Lake, the pass system too could have had an impact here as well.

The pass system, although lacking any legal basis, became official government policy shortly after the 1885 Riel Resistance due to the perceived involvement of First Nations people in the insurrection. It sought to confine Indians to their reserves and to monitor their movement through the granting of passes by Indian agents, which stated explicitly the destination, duration, and purpose of off-reserve excursions by reserve residents. To date there is no thorough, academic investigation of the pass system available, and consequently questions pertaining to its lifespan, enforcement, and effectiveness in terms of specific bands, geographic areas, or even among men and women, remain unanswered. Due to the lack of knowledge surrounding this policy, it is

somewhat difficult to determine, then, to what extent the pass system may have contributed to the apparent tendency of some Fishing Lake residents, female or male, to arrive and depart so quickly from town.

Perhaps the most convincing piece of evidence, though, that clearly attests to the town's acknowledgement of the reserve and its contribution to the development of the district is the *Wadena News*' 1955 Jubilee Edition. The caption across the top of the insert reads in large, bold lettering, "Fishing Lake Indians Vital Part of Wadena's History," and the special issue begins by stating, "The history of Wadena would not be complete without the story of its good neighbors to the southeast, the Indians of Fishing Lake Reserve."⁷³ The article goes on, detailing such things as the political leadership of the band, including a picture of the longtime Chief Sabitawasis, and its early relations with the first White settlers in the area, the Milligans, and also with later arrivals as well, noting the "good fellowship and neighborliness" between the two.⁷⁴ Under the sub-heading "Indians are part of Saskatchewan" homage is paid to Chief Yellow Quill and his people for their indelible impression made in that section of the province. Indeed, the toponymy of the region reflects this with names such as Quill Plains, Big Quill and Little Quill Lakes, the town of Quill Lake, and a former rural school southeast of Wadena known as Yellow Quill School, all believed to be derived from the name of Saulteaux leader Chief Yellow Quill. The final paragraph concludes with the assertion that the Fishing Lake band "can play a valuable part in shaping the destiny of the province and the country of which they were the first settlers."⁷⁵ This definite acknowledgement by the town of the original inhabitation and occupation of the land by

⁷³ *Wadena News*, Jubilee Edition, 1955.

⁷⁴ *Wadena News*, Jubilee Edition, 1955.

⁷⁵ *Wadena News*, Jubilee Edition, 1955.

First Nations people seems somewhat remarkable, given that this was a fact not always readily conceded by non-Indian society at the time. Certainly some appreciation of and respect for this reality would have aided in the formation of positive relationships.

Relations between the communities of Fishing Lake and Wadena continued along a friendly and agreeable path throughout the middle decades of the twentieth century, much as they had in the decades prior during the early settlement period. Association among the two groups was further increased by the catalytic effects of two major events during this period, namely World War II and the agricultural development of the area, the trials and tribulations of which touched members of both groups, thus creating a sense of commonality and shared experience. Reciprocal benefit, a mainstay of association between the two up to this point, again figured prominently at this time. This was noticeable, for instance, in recreational and agricultural terms, with Wadena residents now attending Sports Days hosted by the band on their reserve, and White farmers providing supplemental income to their Indian neighbours in exchange for their much-needed labour. Of absolutely key importance, however, in forging this veritable “golden age” of relations during this time was the overall recognition of the reserve and its residents. Instead of the usual version of history that has the majority White society either at worst, running roughshod over the local Aboriginal population, or at best, simply disregarding and ignoring it, here appears to be a case of genuine respect for and appreciation of Indian people by non-Indians. Acknowledgement by Wadena residents of their Indian neighbours as the first inhabitants of the land, of their contributions to the development of the district, and of their inclusion and centrality in the wider community

could not but have been appreciated by band members and surely was conducive to amiable relationships.

By the 1960s the cultural and political landscape of the country was rapidly changing, especially for the Aboriginal population. Informed by the human and civil rights movements of the time, a cultural and political resurgence began to occur among Native people. No longer willing to accept their quiet place in the wings, Indian leadership burst onto the political stage during this period with calls for greater control over their lives and the constitutional entrenchment of their inherent and unextinguished rights as the original peoples of what is now Canada. Fishing Lake First Nation was, of course, not left untouched by this phenomenon. Accordingly, the final chapter in this account of the shared history of these two prairie communities reveals the beginning of marked division between the residents of Fishing Lake and Wadena, a significant departure from the relatively positive relations of previous years.

Chapter 5

Decades of Discord, 1960-2002

The final decades of the twentieth century would witness a profound transformation of the generally amiable relationship that had existed between Fishing Lake and Wadena from roughly the 1880s to the 1950s. Again, events of a regional, national, and international nature would come to bear upon the relations between these two communities, resulting in noticeable division. The key factor in explaining this relational shift is the cultural and political resurgence that began in the 1960s among Indigenous populations in not only Canada, but across North America and indeed the world. It was how this phenomenon manifested itself among the Fishing Lake band specifically and how this was consequently perceived by its neighbours that would ultimately lead to the deterioration of the relationship between Fishing Lake and Wadena. This trend would, unfortunately, continue, culminating in the less than favourable situation that these two communities presently find themselves in.

Data for this period indicate a slight increase in the populations of both Wadena and Fishing Lake, with Wadena's standing at 1311 by 1961,¹ up from 1081 in 1951, and Fishing Lake's at 327 in 1959,² up from 271 in 1954. Twenty years later Wadena would

¹ Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *1961 Census of Canada, Population – Electoral Districts* (Ottawa: Department of Trade and Commerce, 1962), 5/49.

² Canada, *1959 Census of Indians in Canada* (Ottawa: Department of Mines and Resources, Indian Affairs Branch, 1961), 24.

experience a small jump in its population, up to 1495 in 1981,³ while Fishing Lake would see a slight decrease, down to 264 in 1981.⁴ Finally, by the beginning of the twenty-first century, Wadena's population would drop slightly to 1412 in 2001⁵ and Fishing Lake's would rise to 330 in 2001.⁶

In some respects, relations between the Fishing Lake band and Wadena proceeded along a trajectory similar to that of previous years. Recreational activities, for instance, enduring facilitators of interaction since earliest times, continued in this capacity throughout the 1960s and 1970s. In addition to Sports Days, held annually in both Wadena and at Fishing Lake reserve, Wadena Wild West Days were added to the roster of social events during the late 1960s and into the 1970s. Wild West Days included "free flapjack breakfasts," children's bicycle races, and of course, games of skill, a parade, and an Indian pow-wow. The 2 July 1970 edition of the *Wadena News* reported under the banner "Huge parade fitting opening for successful Wild West Day" that "two blocks on Main Street had been blocked off so spectators could enjoy the colorful Indian pow-wow. The young Indian lads did a good job of tribal dancing and looked smart in their beaded costumes and feathered headdresses. The traditional dancing...was much enjoyed by the audience."⁷ So in much the same way that Sports Days did, Wadena Wild West Days would have presented an opportunity for members of both communities to socialize with each other and for band members to express and share some of their cultural traditions with their non-Indian neighbours.

³ Statistics Canada, *1981 Census of Canada, Population – Geographic Distributions* (Ottawa: Department of Supply and Services Canada, 1982), 4/11.

⁴ Statistics Canada, *1981 Census of Canada, Population – Geographic Distributions* (Ottawa: Department of Supply and Services Canada, 1982), 4/10.

⁵ Statistics Canada, *2001 Census of Canada, A National Overview* (Ottawa: Industry Canada, 2002), 110.

⁶ Statistics Canada, *2001 Census of Canada, A National Overview* (Ottawa: Industry Canada, 2002), 109.

⁷ *Wadena News*, 2 July 1970.

As the 1970s progressed, a good number of those from Fishing Lake swept their way to victory while participating in the quintessential sport of every prairie town: curling. From the mid-1970s through to the early 1980s, rinks from Fishing Lake consistently dominated as winners in the annual Wadena Farmers' Bonspiels. In 1976, for instance, the faces of Luke Nanaquetung, Bob Smoke, and Mr. and Mrs. Ted Sabit stared out from the pages of the 4 March edition of the *Wadena News* as the rink that had successfully captured top spot in the Grand Challenge Mcleod's Event.⁸ A couple of years later the Farmers' Bonspiel winners were Norman Sabit, Luke Nanaquetung, Bob Smoke, and Ted Sabit,⁹ all of Fishing Lake, and in 1980, the same rink, with Calvin Paquachan replacing Norman Sabit, again won the annual event.¹⁰ Finally, in 1984, the Macleod's Grand Challenge trophy was awarded to skip Allan Paquachan and teammates Ted Sabit, Zane Zukewich, and Jeff Paquachan.¹¹ Other rinks from Fishing Lake participating in the Bonspiels throughout this time were also triumphant in the second and third events, such as the Paquachan rink, which took the Co-op second event in 1977,¹² and the Sabit rink which took the Lazar's Hardware third event in 1981.¹³

As mentioned in the previous chapter, pool had proven a favourable activity for fostering interaction between mostly the male members of both communities. This included friendly, informal games, as well as more structured affairs. For example, in 1981, winners of a snooker tournament held at the Wadena Hotel were Fishing Lake

⁸ *Wadena News*, 4 March 1976.

⁹ *Wadena News*, 2 March 1978.

¹⁰ *Wadena News*, 21 February 1980.

¹¹ *Wadena News*, 1 March 1984.

¹² *Wadena News*, 24 February 1977.

¹³ *Wadena News*, 4 March 1981.

residents Churchill Wahweaye and Milton Paquachan.¹⁴ A few years later, the Galaxy Arcade in Wadena sponsored a pool tournament and again, members of the band were victorious with Ted Sabit receiving the trophy for first on the A-side and Harry Desjarlais for second.¹⁵

Participation in these recreational events by residents of both communities, then, points to sustained social relations on at least some level. Again, lack of involvement of women from the reserve suggests that their contact with members of the Wadena community was, in this particular context anyway, rather limited. Finally, as noted previously, the flow of traffic was largely from reserve to town, but again, this can be explained by the fact that Wadena was and is the largest centre in the immediately surrounding area. Therefore, because of its proximity to the reserve and the sporting and other facilities it maintains, the town's ability to attract and pull in not only members of the reserve, but also those of surrounding towns and villages, is to be expected.

Also reflecting the continued social interaction between these two communities at this time was the interest taken by those from Wadena in the personal lives of reserve residents. Regularly featured in the pages of the *Wadena News* were pieces printed on, for instance, the deaths and achievements of band members. The passing of Mr. Nataucappo, affectionately known as "The Old Man," was, for example, reported in the 9 February 1967 issue of the paper. He was known among many as a great year-round hunter north east of Wadena and was "especially famous for his success with moose."¹⁶ A year later, the front page announced the death of a Fishing Lake resident who had

¹⁴ *Wadena News*, 19 March 1981.

¹⁵ *Wadena News*, 12 March 1987.

¹⁶ *Wadena News*, 9 February 1967.

died when a building on the reserve was completely burned down.¹⁷ Also, the featured story of the 9 October 1969 edition was the funeral service held for D. Nataucappo of Fishing Lake reserve. Nataucappo had served during the Second World War in Italy and Western Europe. Accordingly, he was given full Legion honours and acting as pallbearers were six Wadena Legionnaires, Mike Sowa, Bill Wallin, Ed Leach, Walter Turkenburg, Ted Avery, and Ross McPherson.¹⁸ That these men were chosen to perform this duty indicates their close relationship with the deceased and harkens back to the war's positive influence on relations between members of the two communities, as discussed in the previous chapter.

But news of a somber nature was balanced by that of a more joyous kind. The accomplishments and successes of band members also found their way into the pages of the local press. Indicative is a 7 April 1977 article on Brenda Kayseas, reserve resident and Wadena Composite High School student. She was chosen to represent the school at the Forum for Young Canadians, held in Ottawa, where she visited Rideau Hall, sat in the visitors' gallery of the Canadian House of Commons, watched the Senate in progress, and mingled with about 100 other students from across Canada who were also chosen to attend.¹⁹ Similarly, in the early 1980s Fenton Paquachan skipped his crew, consisting of brothers Giles and Keith and cousin Vincent, to the Championship of the Regina High School Boys' Bonspiel. Thirty-two teams from across Saskatchewan participated in the event for high school students in grades 10 and under.²⁰ It is interesting to note that although Kayseas and Paquachan were residents of Fishing Lake,

¹⁷ *Wadena News*, 4 January 1968.

¹⁸ *Wadena News*, 9 October 1969.

¹⁹ *Wadena News*, 7 April 1977.

²⁰ *Wadena News*, 5 January 1984.

the paper stated that Brenda “did Wadena proud”²¹ and that Fenton “brought curling laurels to the town.”²² This is in direct contrast to articles describing those band members implicated in say sensational criminal activity, who are without exception identified as belonging to Fishing Lake Indian reserve. Indicative is a story which identified three brothers, Earl, Noel, and Michael Desjarlais “of Fishing Lake Indian Reserve” who were linked to a stabbing incident.²³ Another article reported on a shooting in which Jack Sabit, “Fishing Lake Indian,” was involved.²⁴

By the early 1980s, perceivable changes in the social relations and reporting of reserve activities alone mirrored a more general drifting apart of the two communities in question. Direct evidence of this is the testimony of about half of those interviewed from Fishing Lake, who believed that Wadena’s support of Fishing Lake Sports Days had increasingly dwindled over the past 10 to 15 years, and that the *Wadena News*’ tendency to myopia intensified when it came to coverage of reserve life, with the focus often on the more negative aspects of it. It is the beginning of this decade that is of absolutely crucial importance when attempting to trace the steady deterioration of the relationship between Wadena and Fishing Lake First Nation, and to account for the state of relations that currently exists. The 1980s signalled a time of remarkable change for the community of Fishing Lake, change that was informed and influenced by regional, national, and even international events of the previous twenty years. The trickle down effect of these developments would prove to have an impact of torrential proportions on this tiny prairie reserve, and more importantly for the topic at hand, its relations with the

²¹ *Wadena News*, 7 April 1977.

²² *Wadena News*, 5 January 1984.

²³ *Wadena News*, 9 October 1969.

²⁴ *Wadena News*, 6 May 1954.

neighbouring town of Wadena. A brief examination, then, of the social and political climate of the 1960s and 1970s is therefore imperative.

For Aboriginal people in Canada, the 1960s and 1970s were a time of political resurgence and cultural rebirth fuelled by events occurring both within their own country and abroad. This was a time when much more liberal attention was being paid to civil and human rights, a trend most visible south of the border where a civil rights conflict raged between Blacks and Whites. In addition, the American Indian Movement or "Red Power" movement, which challenged American administration to allow Indians a greater say in conducting their own affairs, had arisen in Minnesota in 1968, and its influence was beginning to spread into Canada.²⁵ Conditions here, combined with observation of developments in the United States, forced Canadian citizens, Native and non-Native alike, to assess Canada's own record of human and civil rights protection. International bodies such as the United Nations began to publicly condemn racism. Critics looked to Canadian Indian poverty as proof positive that Canada's Indian policy was discriminatory and Indian peoples' segregation on reserves a form of apartheid.

Buoyed by the increased attention focused on these issues elsewhere, Indians in Canada seized upon opportunities brought about by circumstances in their homeland to further draw attention to their plight. First, 1967 marked the centennial of Canada's Confederation and presented Indian people with media attention unlike anything they had experienced before. At Expo in Montreal they erected a pavilion and, for the first time on a national scale, were able to publicly express their dissatisfaction with their position within the Canadian state. Second, Prime Minister Pearson's "War on Poverty"

²⁵ Olive Dickason, *Canada's First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997; 1st ed. 1992), 363.

provided Indian leaders with national attention and enabled them to point out that Indian people as a group occupied the lowest of economic and social levels in Canada.²⁶ The arrival of Prime Minister Trudeau and his vision of a “Just Society” also provided Indian politicians with the occasion to pose uncomfortable questions about the place of Indian people in Canadian society. Finally, the granting of the federal franchise to Indians in 1960 brought them into the Canadian political mainstream, bestowing upon them full citizenship rights and the possibility of having at least some impact on the political decision-makers and future of the country.

These calls for increased Indian control both nationally and internationally were echoed in Saskatchewan as well. The election of David Ahenakew in 1968 as President of the then Federation of Saskatchewan Indians (now Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations) signalled a shift in the leadership of the organization up to this point. Ahenakew’s style of politics marked a generational change among the Federation’s leaders. Well-educated, outspoken, ambitious, and in relation to past leaders, quite young (elected when he was only 35 years of age) Ahenakew aggressively and successfully fought for the advancement of Indian rights throughout his ten-year term.

So as it stood by the 1970s, provincial, regional, and national Indian political organizations had gained strength and power, becoming forces in the country that could no longer be easily overlooked. This decade saw a greater push for Indian rights and autonomy by provincial organizations such as the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians, and also at the behest of national ones such as the National Indian Brotherhood. A number of initiatives were taken in order to secure increased control in several areas,

²⁶ Pat Deiter, “A Biography of Chief Walter P. Deiter,” (MA thesis, University of Regina, 1997), 135.

including Indian welfare, education, and child protection.²⁷ A natural progression from the significant advances made by Indians during this period was the development and delineation of the concept of Aboriginal rights, rights to self-determination and self-government, and, perhaps the most fundamental of all, rights to land and the resources of that land. The heightened awareness and action taken to protect Indian rights during these two decades would not be lost on Fishing Lake band members and leaders.

By the early 1980s, the legacy of these radical times would radiate in a number of ways among those of Fishing Lake First Nation, while at the same time, cast a shadow over the generally agreeable relationship that had existed between the band and its neighbours to the west for well over 50 years. By 1980 the time was ripe for change. Finding themselves in an environment much more conducive to the goals and aspirations of Aboriginal peoples and bolstered by a renewed sense of strength, the Fishing Lake band began to more strenuously and aggressively assert their rights as Aboriginal and treaty people. Perhaps the most prominent example of this was the launching of a specific land claim in April of 1989. Although the claim was not officially submitted until 1989, preparatory work and research had been on-going since the late 1970s in an attempt to prove that on 9 August 1907, the surrender of some 13,170 acres of the Fishing Lake reserve was obtained through duress and undue influence, as an unconscionable agreement, and that it had been acquired without strict compliance with the provisions of the *Indian Act*.²⁸ Fishing Lake's claim was by no means unique at this time. By 1976 in fact, almost half of the bands in Saskatchewan

²⁷ J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*, rev. ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991; 1st ed. 1989), 233.

²⁸ Canada, Indian Claims Commission, *Inquiry into the 1907 Surrender Claim of the Fishing Lake First Nation* (n.p., 1997), 1.

had entitlement claims pending.²⁹ Although a number of Saskatchewan bands had begun the planning and researching of claims by the 1970s, the actual settlement and ratification of these claims did not begin to occur until the mid-80s and into the 1990s. Fishing Lake's longstanding claim, for instance, was finally settled in the summer of 2001 with the band receiving a financial compensation package worth \$34.5 million for the damages and losses it suffered as a result of the 1907 surrender.

This was by no means, however, the only accomplishment of the band. Twenty years spent fighting for the re-acquisition of their land was punctuated by a number of community successes. In 1990, for example, Fishing Lake became home to a pre-school/kindergarten for the younger members of the reserve. The pre-school/kindergarten was established so that younger children from the reserve would be more fully prepared for the transition to elementary school in Wadena. Five years later in 1995, the reserve celebrated the erection of a brand new band hall in May of that year. The hall houses a number of social activities such as bingos and dances, and provides a gathering place for reserve residents to discuss issues of community concern. Then, the call for "Indian control of Indian education" by Native leaders of the 1970s was answered at Fishing Lake when the band opened the doors of its high school to students in 1998. It was the desire and vision of the community to educate their children in their home community in a manner that emphasized Saulteaux cultural values and traditions, and where elders and other resource people in the community could be accessed. It was also during this time that the band began to organize their own teams and clubs, and to host some events that had hitherto only been available in Wadena. In 1990 the Fishing

²⁹ Peggy Brizinski, *Knots in a String: An Introduction to Native Studies in Canada*, 2nd ed. (Saskatoon: University Extension Press, Extension Division, University of Saskatchewan, 1993; 1st ed. 1989), 234.

Lake Chargers junior and senior volleyball teams, for instance, were created, and a few years later, the Fishing Lake Karate Club was established, offering both youth and adult classes. The reserve also became host to activities such as bingo games and even Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, both of which were open to everyone.

Paralleling the political resurgence among the band that gave rise to the aforementioned accomplishments was a cultural rebirth of equal proportion. Prior to this time, Sports Days, fairs, and parades were really the only avenues available to reserve residents that afforded them the opportunity to convey to their non-Native neighbours certain aspects of their culture. By the 1980s, however, the sharing and expression of Saulteaux traditions became increasingly more frequent and visible on the reserve, in Wadena, and even throughout the district. The observance of National Aboriginal Day illustrates this point. The *Wadena News* reported on 7 July 1999 that that year's celebration included a slow-pitch tournament, a barbecue, a traditional pow-wow and a dance held in the evening. National Aboriginal Day was designated to recognize and appreciate Aboriginal cultures, including those of the First Nations, Inuit, and Metis, and the contributions of Aboriginal people to the development of Canada, all of which non-Aboriginal peoples are encouraged to celebrate and learn more about. Unfortunately, coverage of the event suggests that it was attended predominantly, if not only, by reserve residents. The paper noted that "Fishing Lake First Nation celebrated National Aboriginal Day" and that all six teams which participated in the slow-pitch tournament were from the reserve. Also, pictures that appeared alongside the story are of Indian people only.

More encouraging, however, was the communication of culture through the Wadena Elementary School. Indicative was the week set aside in October of 1989 to promote awareness of the Saulteaux culture. Students took part in learning about legends, artwork, such as stitchery, rock painting, and mask-making, the importance of nature in Indian cultures, and the Saulteaux language. Members of the reserve, dressed in traditional attire, demonstrated jigging and other dances, and everyone joined in a round dance in the gym.³⁰ In 1998, Wadena elementary school students were again exposed to the traditions of the reserve as reflected through the Fishing Lake First Nation Na-ka-way singers. The group's singing and drumming, accompanied by the performance of traditional dances, "inspired emotion and admiration" among students and staff.³¹ The Na-ka-way singers and dancers from the reserve were also involved in various other events throughout the area. In 1996, for instance, they were a featured part of the third annual Shorebirds and Friends festival, their performance apparently receiving many compliments from the crowd.³²

Overall, then, what this florescence of culture and flexing of political muscle among the Fishing Lake community represented was merely an extension of the human, civil, and indigenous rights movement which began in the 1960s and 1970s. Significantly, Fishing Lake's strenuous assertion of rights and the consequent attainment of benefits accruing from them resulted in a radically different relationship with the town of Wadena. For town residents, Aboriginal or treaty rights were virtually unheard of concepts at worst, and abstract ones at best. Furthermore, that their Indian neighbours

³⁰ *Wadena News*, 26 October 1989.

³¹ *Wadena News*, 25 November 1998.

³² *Wadena News*, 29 May 1996.

had the audacity to actually vocalize and formally assert that they possessed these rights was absolutely foreign to them. Consequently, a great deal of agitation and resentment was generated among community members, which is not at all surprising given the uncertainty and unfamiliarity of the atmosphere into which they were now thrust.

Key to understanding the fear and backlash created among Wadena residents is the incredible lack of understanding surrounding these issues that many of them possessed. This unfortunate fact is partially substantiated by oral testimony provided by Fishing Lake band members. When asked "Do you think non-Aboriginal people, specifically the ones resident in Wadena, have a proper understanding of the treaties and the treaty relationship?" the consensus among the majority of the respondents was that no, they did not. The most compelling evidence of this was the oft-repeated example of the fallacious assumption by many in Wadena that band members receive upwards of \$1000 during the annual Treaty Day celebrations, instead of the actual \$5 that they do collect. A familiar clause found in the numbered treaties signed in the prairie region during the 1870s was the \$5 annuity that each man, woman, and child was to receive, usually for the purchase of goods and other necessities.³³ However, given that this and many other terms of treaty have not been modified to reflect modern realities and circumstances, the \$5 still given today is not so much pragmatic as it is symbolic, or as some more plainly put it, "a joke."³⁴

In many cases, though, it was the responses of Wadena residents themselves that so clearly revealed the state of ignorance and misinformation that currently exists. When questions were posed that attempted to extract town residents' knowledge of treaties,

³³ Arthur J. Ray, Jim Miller, and Frank Tough, *Bounty and Benevolence: A History of Saskatchewan Treaties* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 73.

³⁴ Henry Scott interview, 30 April 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

treaty rights, and the land claim, the replies conveyed either a complete lack of any understanding at all, or were riddled with inaccuracies. When asked what her understanding of the treaties and treaty rights were, for example, one young woman replied, "I really don't know. I really don't understand that question."³⁵ Similarly, when questioned as to her knowledge of the land claim, she answered, "I don't understand things like that."³⁶

Conversely, there were those that had definite views on the subject, although they were to some degree narrow and erroneous. Indicative are the thoughts of one young man, Curtis Kircher, who summed up the treaty process as Indian people signing away all their land and now wanting it back. He also added that he does not agree with the treaty right to hunt.³⁷ For a middle-aged woman of the community, treaties seemed to revolve almost exclusively around the issue of taxation, stating, "I think it would really help all of Saskatchewan if we all...just started paying the same taxes...like the municipal taxes, the federal tax, and the GST, the PST."³⁸ This is echoed in the words of another female member of the community, a teacher at the Wadena Elementary School, who believes that "there is a definite feeling out there that ...First Nations being without tax is viewed by a lot of people as not being a fair system."³⁹

As well, questions that focused on participants' knowledge of the history and process of the Fishing Lake land claim also evoked equally uninformed responses. The middle-aged woman identified above claimed, "I think people are still very leery. [They are worried that] if that money does go, that they'll go back to the government for

³⁵ Interview with younger female resident of Wadena, 2 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

³⁶ Interview with younger female resident of Wadena, 2 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

³⁷ Curtis Kircher interview, 2 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

³⁸ Interview with middle-aged female resident of Wadena, 4 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

³⁹ Donna Coleman interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

another round.”⁴⁰ Kircher stated, “I don’t know. I hope it [the claim] doesn’t happen. They’re just going to chase out the guy that’s been there for years and years trying to make a living farming.”⁴¹

What all of this testimony suggests, then, is a fundamental lack of knowledge and understanding. That First Nations “signed away” all of their land in one enormous real estate deal is a popular Euro-Canadian view of the treaty process, but indeed it is only one. Less familiar, and in some cases completely unknown, to non-Indians is the understanding of treaties through the eyes of Indian signatories and their descendants. Here the understanding was one of sovereign nations negotiating and agreeing upon a mutually advantageous relationship with the belief that the rights and responsibilities flowing from this solemn accord would be honoured and fulfilled. In addition, although there were clearly delineated areas that were occupied by specific nations and even acknowledged hunting territories used by certain groups and families, the idea of outright individual ownership of land was anathema to their worldview. Therefore, the notion that land that was not owned could somehow be sold, or “signed away,” was completely inconceivable.

Further, criticisms levied at rights such as that to hunt or to be free of some forms of taxation ignore the fact that First Nations, because they agreed to the peaceable sharing of their land, received certain benefits and rightly so. What is also not acknowledged is the degree to which many of these rights have been eroded. In terms of taxation, for instance, only status Indians living and working on reserve are exempt from paying the GST and PST on goods purchased on or delivered to the reserve, and income tax. Given

⁴⁰ Interview with middle-aged female resident of Wadena, 4 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

⁴¹ Curtis Kircher interview, 2 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

that the majority of Fishing Lake band members live off-reserve, that only a minority are employed on-reserve, and that there are no stores from which goods can be purchased on the reserve, to say that Fishing Lake residents are “without tax” is simply untrue. As Dwayne Paquachan, Fishing Lake band member, noted with a hint of frustration in his voice, “Most White people have no idea that I am paying rent on my home just as much as the next person, that I am paying taxes just as much as they are.”⁴²

Finally, the belief that the settlement of the land claim will result in non-Indians being “chased out” or that it will open the door for band members to “go back for another round” are unfounded as the compensation package is a once and for all final deal, and that any land bought will be purchased on a “willing seller/willing buyer” basis. Again, lack of information appears to be the culprit: “A lot of the White people I know don’t think [the land claim is] fair...they don’t like the idea. But they’re not educated enough to know what really happened way back in 1907 when the land was taken away. If they knew how it was taken away...maybe they wouldn’t judge us that harshly.”⁴³

Overall, this glaring paucity of comprehension is symptomatic of and located within a much larger ideological framework. This is most clearly elucidated by historian Elizabeth Furniss in her monograph *The Burden of History: Colonialism and the Frontier Myth in a Rural Canadian Community*.⁴⁴ Here she chronicles the “frontier cultural complex,” her term for the dominant Euro-Canadian culture, which assumes that colonization and assimilation have been in the best interests of Aboriginal people.

⁴² Dwayne Paquachan interview, 1 May 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

⁴³ Dwayne Paquachan interview, 1 May 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

⁴⁴ Elizabeth Furniss, *The Burden of History: Colonialism and the Frontier Myth in a Rural Canadian Community* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999).

Furniss shows how these assumptions permeate many facets of everyday life and serve to reinforce the marginalization and disempowerment of Aboriginal peoples. While focused specifically on the small community of Williams Lake, British Columbia and surrounding Secwepemc, Tsilhqot'in, and Carrier Aboriginal communities, her work has a much broader relevance for the study of Indian-White relations among other small rural communities in Canada. Many of her findings are remarkably similar and equally applicable to the communities of Wadena and Fishing Lake, including her finding of a general insensitivity to the multi-faceted effects of colonization and social breakdown crisis in the lives of Aboriginal peoples. This explains why some First Nations communities are ravaged by social problems of epidemic proportions, often leading to stereotypical images of Indians as drunk, lazy, or criminal. As Furniss explains, these images are part of the national tradition of "imagining" Indians and "are not just inert expressions of a colonial ideology [for] when they circulate in small-town talk...they exert a profound influence on Euro-Canadian understandings and attitudes and have devastating consequences in the lives and experiences of Aboriginal men, women, and children."⁴⁵

To be sure, this particular situation also exists among Wadena residents and is to a significant degree responsible for colouring the attitudes and understandings held by many of them with regard to Native peoples, their lives, experiences, cultures, rights, and histories. Consequently, as stated previously, this has inevitably led to the generation of a considerable amount of resentment. Band member Dwayne Paquachan agrees that backlash has been an unfortunate by-product of the push by First Nations for recognition of their rights: "Yes, if I were a White person I probably would view it as a

⁴⁵ Furniss, *The Burden of History*, 111.

threat. Of course, if you're threatened, most people will try to...fight back."⁴⁶ This feeling is also evident in the testimony of Jim Headington, Wadena resident: "Things are changing now. They're a little more assertive now. I'm not so sure that's so well accepted in town."⁴⁷

Having established the presence of this veritable backlash, two particularly interesting sub-points also emerge. First, it would seem that some in Wadena attribute this "newfound" sense of autonomy not to Indian people themselves, but to non-Indians, suggesting a stereotypical and antiquated view of Indian peoples as devoid of any inherent Aboriginal rights, possessing only those delegated to them by successive European governments since the time of contact. This attitude is reflected in statements such as "We are telling them that they sort of own the land now and a lot of them have that attitude...These are ideals that are being instilled in the Native people now by the government."⁴⁸

Second, as Dwayne Paquachan observed, the urge to fight back is often an instinctive response to any type of intimidation or threat. In this case, the defensive strategy employed has been one of scare tactics in an attempt to undermine the efforts of Fishing Lake residents and to prevent their further attainment of rights. Typical are claims that Indians will "only be hurting themselves" and that their actions will most definitely have a detrimental effect on their relations with their non-Indian counterparts. One man from Wadena commented that Indian people "use all these little things from

⁴⁶ Dwayne Paquachan interview, 1 May 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

⁴⁷ Jim Headington interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

⁴⁸ Jim Headington interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

the treaties to argue their point and I don't think it's helping the Native people out."⁴⁹

Similarly, an editorial printed in the 11 March 1993 edition of the *Wadena News* offered this sage advice:

If I may offer my opinion to the Native people of this province...Demanding special privileges 'like the right to operate gambling casinos' within a province where the rest of the population does not have those same rights, will only create new fears, new jealousies, and new hatreds. Within a country, or a province, people must strive for equality. Asking to...have more privileges than others will just add fuel to the racist fire.⁵⁰

Here, the onus is on First Nations to keep the social fabric of the province from unravelling by ceasing to assert their rights and the acquisition of "special privileges"; apparently the refusal of many non-Indians to acquire a more liberal and accurate understanding of First Nations issues does nothing to encourage its coming apart at the seams.

The fear of further separation, however, does seem to be a legitimate and genuine concern in the minds of some town residents. For them, past government policy and initiatives are at least partly to blame for the current divide between Native and non-Native, claiming that the creation of Indian reserves, for instance, was the "biggest mistake...ever made,"⁵¹ creating an atmosphere of "'them' and 'us.'"⁵² Perhaps Steve George of Wadena expressed this sentiment best, stating, "I don't think reservations should have ever been formed because if everything would have just been left alone we'd all just have a little darker eyes and it would be no problem!"⁵³ The concern is

⁴⁹ Jim Headington interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

⁵⁰ *Wadena News*, 11 March 1993.

⁵¹ Jim Headington interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

⁵² Ed Arndt interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

⁵³ Steve George interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

then that matters will only be exacerbated as Fishing Lake becomes more self-determining. The issue of Fishing Lake having its own elementary and high schools, for instance, met with comments such as “I know it’s a good thing too where they want their own...schools but it just seems that everything is getting more fragmented I think”⁵⁴ and “When you all of a sudden want your own schools, and want to do everything in a segregated way, to me, that promotes that attitude [racism] in people.”⁵⁵ Likewise, Headington adds, “They’re pushing for their own schools which I don’t agree with because...we have to live together so why would we separate them [students] all the way through school?”⁵⁶ Although this may ring true on some level, it can also be viewed as simply a thinly veiled attempt to thwart the political and social aspirations of the band by encouraging a sense of guilt and responsibility for the deterioration of relations, as discussed above. Furthermore, many from Fishing Lake would agree that a certain amount of internal examination among town members would reveal instances when Wadena itself has deepened the ever-widening chasm that presently exists between the two communities.

Despite these concerns over the severing of reserve/town bonds, efforts have been made by the band, and even in some cases Wadena, to maintain and further ties between the two. In 1988, for example, the Fishing Lake Recreation Board made two substantial contributions to town fund-raising projects. Five hundred dollars was donated to the Jaws of Life fund and another \$500 to the curling rink building fund. The political leadership of both communities has also from time to time endorsed the broadening of

⁵⁴ Interview with middle-aged female resident of Wadena, 4 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

⁵⁵ Donna Coleman interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

⁵⁶ Jim Headington interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

alliances between Fishing Lake and Wadena. When Mike Desjarlais was elected Chief in 1994, one of his immediate concerns was “to promote a closer working relationship with the Town of Wadena.”⁵⁷ Perry Banadyga, then Mayor of Wadena, reciprocated, while extending greetings from the people of Wadena on the opening of the band’s new hall, when he stated that he “felt there would be opportunities in the future for joint projects between the town and Fishing Lake First Nation.”⁵⁸ Finally, efforts have been made since the mid-1990s to facilitate communication between the two through the meeting of various boards and councils. It was announced, for instance, in the 12 October 1995 edition of the *Wadena News* that a meeting was held between the Wadena Town Council and members of Fishing Lake First Nation, and that each had agreed to meet every three months from then on. Town Council also invited the band to place a representative on the Tourism Committee. Unfortunately, meetings were subsequently held only two or three times and apparently not much came of them.⁵⁹ Efforts aimed at bringing together the Band Council and Wadena Chamber of Commerce and securing a representative from Fishing Lake to sit on the Wadena Hospital Board have also met with little success.

There has been, though, at least one enduring point of cooperation and that is the Wadena School Division. Since 1985, Melba Desjarlais has represented the Fishing Lake band on the Wadena Board of Education. What all of this suggests, then, is that even though the band has become increasingly self-governing, it has tried to preserve

⁵⁷ *Wadena News*, 8 December 1994.

⁵⁸ *Wadena News*, 18 May 1995.

⁵⁹ Jim Headington interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

existing aspects of its relationship with Wadena. By the same token, Wadena has also sought in some ways to forge new links between itself and the reserve.

In addition to the band's efforts to uphold its ties with its neighbours through the aforementioned avenues, it has also attempted to do this by providing useful information to town residents principally on issues surrounding Indian and treaty rights and the land claim, issues that have recently come to have a direct bearing on relations between Wadena and Fishing Lake. As such, it is hoped that the dissemination of knowledge will combat erroneous understandings and possibly ease tensions somewhat. A number of different media have been adopted in this endeavour, beginning with the local press, an obvious choice given its wide readership. For instance, shortly after the band ratified its Settlement Agreement, an informational piece entitled "Plain Facts on Land Claims" appeared in the *Wadena News*.⁶⁰ It included basic definitions of terms, such as specific claims, comprehensive claims, and Treaty Land Entitlement, as well as brief explanations of what reserves are and how they are created, and the benefits of settling land claims. The names of Chief Allan Paquachan and Mike Desjarlais, along with office and home phone numbers, were also included so that anyone requiring additional information could obtain it by contacting either of these individuals.

The band has also taken a more active and "hands on" approach to cross-cultural understanding through the celebration of National Aboriginal Day and Treaty Days. Several of those interviewed from Fishing Lake believed that Wadena's participation in events such as these would go a long way to clearing up misconceptions (especially the annual treaty payment of \$5, rather than \$1000) and improving relations. Given, however, that some town residents may feel that they are somehow "intruding" or that

⁶⁰ *Wadena News*, 28 March 2001.

their presence is not welcome at these events, the band may have to elevate the profile of these gatherings through more extensive advertising campaigns, while at the same time, stressing that non-Natives, as well as Natives, are welcome to attend.

Finally, the band's efforts to expose non-Indian children to Native issues, traditions, and languages have met with a significant degree of success. Many activities such as visits by Elders, pow-wows, and concerts, are funded by the Fishing Lake band and organized in conjunction with teachers from the Wadena Elementary School. This type of partnership has produced favourable results as racial tension between students at the elementary level is virtually non-existent.⁶¹ Generally, though, the band's attempts at offering knowledge of their culture, experiences, and rights as Aboriginal and treaty people have been of no avail, their apparent inability to penetrate the town consciousness most likely stemming from an apathetic and obstinate unwillingness. Consequently, relations between Wadena and Fishing Lake as they currently stand are almost solely shaped and informed by the overriding issues of Fishing Lake's land claim settlement and Aboriginal and treaty rights; as these are fraught with misgivings and confusion, so too is the relationship between these two communities.

As this chapter draws to a close, the floor aptly belongs to those who are the focus of this thesis: the members of the communities of Fishing Lake First Nation and Wadena. Their thoughts on the relationship in the years to come are particularly revealing and provide important insight into the future of Indian-White relations on not only a local, but also provincial, scale. To begin with, although the majority of respondents from both communities did express sincere hope that relations would improve in the future, at the same time they were not optimistic that the relationship between Wadena and

⁶¹ Donna Coleman interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

Fishing Lake would in fact become any better. For instance, when asked to describe their views on relations between the residents of Fishing Lake and Wadena ten years from now, most believed that the situation would either remain the same or that it would worsen. From the testimony gathered, there emerges two distinct points that it would seem account for this overall sense of foreboding.

The first of these is the existence of two opposing viewpoints on the issues of treaties and the subsequent rights stemming from these agreements. Wadena resident Ed Arndt describes it best: "You go downtown here and you talk with individuals and they just feel that we're so over-generous it's not funny and then you talk to some of the First Nations people and they just figure they're getting [cheated] because we're not being fair...Each side thinks the other is ripping them off...and it's creating a lot of animosity."⁶² Arndt, along with others from Wadena, believes that there is a definite feeling among town residents that the treaties are a "never-ending thing,"⁶³ that First Nations have been given "too much,"⁶⁴ and that "White society [has] been very very generous."⁶⁵

The flipside to this, however, is the understanding among Fishing Lake band members as to the extent to which the treaty rights of First Nations people have been upheld and honoured. Lawrence Desjarlais' wry observation that "the river must have gone dry and the sun must have went behind a cloud"⁶⁶ provides some indication of his community's feelings on fulfillment of rights accorded by the treaties, covenants that

⁶² Ed Arndt interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

⁶³ Steve George interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

⁶⁴ Donna Coleman interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

⁶⁵ Ed Arndt interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

⁶⁶ Lawrence Desjarlais interview, 30 April 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

were to last “as long as the sun shines and the water flows.” Desjarlais’ words are paralleled by those of fellow band member and son, Henry Scott: “It seems like they’re slowly chipping away at the agreement we made with them, taking away a little bit at a time ‘til finally we’re not going to have any [treaty rights]... They got our land... but they don’t seem like they want to honour that.”⁶⁷ Finally, echoing this sentiment is the view of another male member of the band who stated, “we gave up a lot just to have a relationship with European settlers.”⁶⁸

The second point that also appears responsible for the pessimistic outlook on future relations is quite closely tied to the first: the settlement of Fishing Lake First Nation’s land claim. This issue is obviously foremost in the minds of town residents when contemplating the nature of association with their Indian neighbours in the years to follow. Jim Headington is of the opinion that future relations will be “very very rocky...because of the land entitlement,” and that “if things keep going the way they are...it’s going to be difficult for both sides.”⁶⁹ Fellow residents concur, claiming, “I think a lot of people are quite angry about it all”⁷⁰ and “I don’t think [relations] will improve much...[because of] the land claim and the resentment [it has created] in some people.”⁷¹ Statements such as these are, however, ironic in a sense, given that the town of Wadena will quite likely benefit economically from the settlement of the band’s claim. Henry Scott of Fishing Lake quite rightly notes, “[Although] Wadena thinks we

⁶⁷ Henry Scott interview, 30 April 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

⁶⁸ Interview with male member of Fishing Lake First Nation, 1 May 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

⁶⁹ Jim Headington interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

⁷⁰ Interview with middle-aged female resident of Wadena, 4 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

⁷¹ Steve George interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

shouldn't be getting this money [from the claim] because we get [lots] of money anyway...Wadena's going to get a fair chunk of that anyway because the reserve does their shopping in Wadena."⁷² Another band member used a fitting metaphor, contending, "Wadena is just sitting out there like an eagle on a perch,"⁷³ just waiting to "cash in." Even some in Wadena do acknowledge that there are indeed some perceived benefits for the residents of Wadena and surrounding areas. As Steve George reported, more than a little amused, "There [are] farmers around there that are just waiting for them to come and buy them out. They can't wait!"⁷⁴

What these two points represent, then, is essentially and simply First Nations people finally attaining some of the rights and benefits accruing to them by virtue of their Aboriginal and treaty status. Herein lies the crux of the issue. Among non-Indians generally there exists an underlying resentment towards Indian people because of the number of monetary privileges that they supposedly receive from the federal government on account of their historic relationship with it. Again, because of the widespread lack of knowledge surrounding most issues that relate to First Nations, erroneous assumptions and stereotypes result. Elizabeth Furniss' work, referred to earlier in this chapter, expands on this idea, noting that there are indeed several images and common criticisms, many of them founded on misconceptions that relate to the perceived special status that Aboriginal people enjoy by virtue of their relationship with the federal government. These include "that Indians enjoy a 'tax-free' status, that they are given 'free' houses and 'free' university education, and that they enjoy a wealth of government payments that flow into reserve communities to support highly paid band

⁷² Henry Scott interview, 30 April 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

⁷³ Steve Sunshine interview, 30 April 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

⁷⁴ Steve George interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

staff and unrealistic development projects that are doomed to fail through mismanagement.”⁷⁵

She further observes that “this image of the ‘wealthy, undeserving Indian’ ... is circulated in the frequent jokes about how most Indians are now driving new expensive trucks ‘that even I can’t afford.’”⁷⁶ Consequently, as earlier proposed, this creates among non-Natives “a strong resentment that Aboriginal people enjoy privileges not available to Euro-Canadians, that they get things for free while Euro-Canadians have to work hard to afford similar luxuries. Thus, Aboriginal peoples’ purported laziness, irresponsibility, and alcohol dependence are supported by their special relationship with the federal government.”⁷⁷

Significantly, Furniss found that similar studies conducted by Niels Braroe and David Stymeist⁷⁸ stretching back to the 1960s, yielded “virtually identical attitudes among Euro-Canadians in other rural Canadian towns.”⁷⁹ Add to this collection the work of this author, who discovered strikingly similar beliefs in a rural prairie setting to those unearthed by Furniss in British Columbia and Stymeist in Northwestern Ontario. Here, too, in Wadena angry refrains of Indians’ apparent freedom from taxation and the granting of free homes and education to Indian people can be heard. One rare voice of reason does, however, surface, commenting, “Human nature’s a funny thing you know. Some farmer buys a new half-ton and he drives down the street and that’s acceptable.

⁷⁵ Furniss, *The Burden of History*, 111-112.

⁷⁶ Furniss, *The Burden of History*, 112.

⁷⁷ Furniss, *The Burden of History*, 112.

⁷⁸ See Chapter 1 for a discussion of these works.

⁷⁹ Furniss, *The Burden of History*, 112.

You get a Native [who] buys a new half-ton and it's 'Damn it, we gave him the money [for that].'"⁸⁰

But aside from animosity created simply because non-Indians feel that Indians are receiving something that they are not, these attitudes are rooted in a much deeper ideology that permeates much of the Newcomer psyche. As Furniss explains in her study,

in portraying Aboriginal people through these varied images, Euro-Canadians are simultaneously expressing an ideal adherence to a set of values and morals central to the frontier complex: sobriety, respect for the law, self-sufficiency and personal responsibility, punctuality, sexual discretion, materialism, and the capitalist work ethic. These public values emerge from a vision of history captured by the myth of the self-made man. They reflect a deeply held belief in the potential for prosperity and advancement through hard work.⁸¹

What is of importance here, however, is that while these morals may reinforce a sense of belonging or group consciousness among non-Natives, they do so at the expense of Native people because they are perceived to share none of these public values.⁸²

Subsequently, Indians are often condemned for "‘living off government money,’ for being ‘given’ free homes and then ‘wrecking them,’ and for being granted tax-free status, all of which are perceived as benefits that unfairly privilege certain...groups and that undermine the principle of the equality of all Canadians. Aboriginal people are seen as the epitome of those who ‘live off the system’ and thus undermine the central

⁸⁰ Steve George interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

⁸¹ Furniss, *The Burden of History*, 112.

⁸² Furniss, *The Burden of History*, 112.

values of personal responsibility, thrift, materialism, equality, hard work, and self-sacrifice.”⁸³

Often, then, it is the actual procurement of Aboriginal and treaty rights combined with the above-mentioned images of Indian people that continue to fan the flames of hostility. Furniss’ words are appropriately scathing and powerful in this regard: “These casual remarks and the humorous frame in which they are frequently communicated are vicious expressions that deny the human dignity and individuality of Aboriginal people, that naturalize social problems and violence in a chilling fashion, and that perpetuate assumptions of the special treatment of reserve communities by government that only furthers Euro-Canadian antagonism.”⁸⁴

For rural populations in towns and reserve communities scattered across the prairies, Euro-Canadian antagonism is further exacerbated by conditions singular to this region. The current crisis afflicting the agricultural sector, for instance, is certainly being felt among producers in the Wadena area. This, when viewed against the backdrop of the \$34.5 million awarded to the Fishing Lake band has served to create a feeling of “Indian prosperity among White adversity.” Added to this is a fear that First Nations people are being “given” too much land by the government and that the growth of reserves will ultimately end with First Nations owning an excessive share of Saskatchewan’s land base, thus severely curtailing non-Indian interests in the land. However, bands, including Fishing Lake, who have successfully navigated their way through the rapids of the land claims process, are simply re-acquiring that which was theirs to begin with, land reserved for their use and benefit as stipulated in the numbered treaties. Generally,

⁸³ Furniss, *The Burden of History*, 112-113.

⁸⁴ Furniss, *The Burden of History*, 113.

it has been estimated that two-thirds of the land originally set aside for First Nations when the treaties were signed was lost over time.⁸⁵ Indicative is the Fishing Lake band, which through the settlement of its claim, was able to recover the more than sixty percent of its land base that was illegally obtained in 1907. As for the fear that First Nations will eventually be in possession of Saskatchewan's entire landmass, this is completely unfounded given that currently less than two percent of the province's land is held in reserve for First Nations people.⁸⁶ Furthermore, even if all validated land claims in Saskatchewan were satisfied tomorrow, First Nations would still only occupy less than three percent of the province's total land base.⁸⁷

For residents of the communities of Fishing Lake and Wadena, the closing decades of the twentieth century would bring unprecedented change to the manner in which each group perceived and interacted with the other. A relationship that since the early days of Newcomer settlement had been built upon a foundation of cooperation and amiability had by this time crumbled to one that rested upon an unsteady base of fear and distrust. Clearly, this was the result of a cultural and political revival that began in the 1960s among Indigenous populations worldwide that saw Native peoples take a more direct and aggressive approach to securing and attaining their rights as Aboriginal peoples. It was not, however, until the 1980s and 1990s that the Fishing Lake band would reap any tangible benefits. The highly politicized atmosphere created by the band's bold assertions of their rights, and especially land rights, as treaty Indian people during this time caught many of its non-Indian neighbours off guard. An incredible lack of knowledge regarding the history and experiences of Aboriginal people left many ill-

⁸⁵ *Wadena News*, 28 March 2001.

⁸⁶ *Wadena News*, 28 March 2001.

⁸⁷ *Wadena News*, 28 March 2001.

equipped to deal with the situation in an informed and reasonable fashion, thus significantly altering the cloak of congeniality that previously enveloped them. Nevertheless, as this study has shown, this has certainly not always been the case and although it is the present reality, it by no means has to be that of the future.

Chapter 6

Towards a Shared Future

This study has examined the nature and development of Native-Newcomer relations between two communities, Fishing Lake First Nation and Wadena, located in a small area of east central Saskatchewan. The intent was to demonstrate that interaction did not only occur between prairie Indian people and the Canadian federal government, but indeed, also with the immigrant populations that would come to settle near reserve communities, creating in effect, “shared neighbourhoods.”¹ This inquiry has sought to eradicate the prevailing assumption found in numerous historical works that prairie Native and Newcomer communities developed and operated in virtually complete isolation from one another. It is hoped that the work presented here will contribute to a broader understanding of prairie Indian communities, patterns of association between them and their non-Indian neighbours, and their contributions to the growth of the prairie region.

Since 1882, the year of permanent White settlement in the Fishing Lake area, the relationship between the host Native culture and the immigrant population it would encounter has by no means remained static, but has instead evolved and changed as national and regional events and attitudes and beliefs dictated. The 1880s to the 1920s,

¹ Keith Regular, “‘Trucking and Trading With Outsiders’: Blood Indian Reserve Integration into the Southern Alberta Economic Environment, 1884-1939, A Case of Shared Neighbourhoods,” (PhD thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1999).

for instance, marked the beginning of sustained interaction between Native and Newcomer. This was a period characterized by the necessity of mutual cooperation between both groups. For new arrivals, the skills and knowledge of their Indian neighbours would have proven essential for their survival. Conversely, for Fishing Lake residents, who were just beginning to adapt to the changes associated with reserve life, incoming settlers presented new economic opportunities for the band by providing a market for their labour and goods, as well as advice and aid when they eventually tried their hand at crop and animal raising.

For the next thirty years, the relatively positive association between Wadena and Fishing Lake would continue, building upon the strong foundation set during the early years of settlement. The "Golden Years" between 1930 and 1959 were principally the result of not only the behaviours and attitudes of the people from each community, but also to a significant degree, regional and international events, which served to strengthen the bonds between both. The Second World War, for example, saw reserve communities sending recruits in disproportionately higher numbers than any other segment of the general population and donating generously to war charities, despite the fact that they were among the poorest communities in the prairie west. Fishing Lake was no exception in terms of both human and financial contributions, creating a groundswell of pride among reserve members, and earning them recognition among their non-Indian counterparts. This, combined with a sense of fighting for King and Country against a common enemy, proved to be a powerfully uniting force between the two groups. Closer to home, the agricultural development of the district also served to reinforce bonds between residents of Fishing Lake and Wadena. For those from Fishing

Lake, wage work on non-Indian farms provided a source of income and an opportunity to acquire farming knowledge, and for the non-Indian farmers they worked for, band members supplied an invaluable pool of labour. Again, reciprocity and mutual cooperation were responsible for the creation of affable bonds between both.

The remaining decades of the twentieth century would, unfortunately, witness a significant departure from the path of positive relations of previous years. By the 1960s, the political and cultural landscape of the country was being rocked by change, especially for the Aboriginal population. Influenced by the civil and human rights movements of the time, a cultural and political resurgence began to occur among Indigenous populations worldwide. By the early 1980s, the legacy of those radical times would be visited upon the tiny prairie reserve community of Fishing Lake First Nation. Finding themselves in an environment more accepting of the goals and aspirations of Aboriginal people and buoyed by a renewed sense of strength, the band began to more actively and aggressively assert their rights as Treaty Indian people, the ultimate declaration probably being the launching of a specific land claim against the government of Canada. Consequently, a fire of backlash and resentment was unleashed against the band by their longtime neighbours to the west, resulting in the deterioration of the relationship between each group and culminating in the less than favourable situation that Fishing Lake and Wadena currently find themselves in.

However, as previously stated, this has not always been the case, and, although it is indeed the present reality, residents are not necessarily condemned to a future of much the same. The following observations gleaned from the current state of the relationship may, if addressed, serve to mitigate tensions and perhaps set both communities back on

the road to improved relations. First, the tremendous impact that Fishing Lake residents have on the town of Wadena's economy must be more fully appreciated. It is estimated that Fishing Lake First Nation contributes approximately four to five million dollars annually to the businesses and organizations from which they purchase their goods and receive services and yet, this seems to go largely unnoticed.² This was a point often mentioned by band members, with one individual claiming, "We're making their economy. We spend a lot of money there and they don't realize. If we stopped shopping in Wadena...it wouldn't be a very viable town anymore."³ And, with an ironic twist on a frequent Euro-Canadian criticism, another resident countered, "We've been supporting them for so many years! Wadena is just another town trying to survive and they're surviving because of the First Nation."⁴ Obviously, then, it is quite clear that Wadena does enjoy enhanced economic benefits by virtue of its close proximity to a reserve community. That a number of persons from that reserve community feel that this is not recognized and even taken for granted, suggests that this is perhaps one issue that is at least partially responsible for the current tension between Wadena and Fishing Lake and that if ameliorated, may improve this situation.

Second, coverage of reserve activities in the *Wadena News* is perceived by a number of band members as often negative and sensationalized. One young woman from Fishing Lake noted, "The only thing you see is...negative stuff in the paper about the

² Interview with male member of Fishing Lake First Nation, 1 May 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

³ Henry Scott interview, 30 April 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

⁴ Steve Sunshine interview, 30 April 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

reserve. It always seems to be negative.”⁵ Similarly, another man commented, “When they want to put something in the newspaper they always put something negative. They never use anything that’s positive that’s going on at Fishing Lake.”⁶ In addition to frequently focusing on less than favourable aspects of reserve life, some also felt that articles somewhat distorted the reality of certain situations. Henry Scott of Fishing Lake, offering his thoughts on the subject, stated, “What I noticed is how they make the Natives sound...From the way they make it sound...if there was a dispute they just blow it way out [of proportion] like somebody practically [was] killed or something. They make it more than it was. I noticed that a lot of times in that paper.”⁷

The problem here is that the *Wadena News* is often the only source of information on Native issues for its non-Native readers. Therefore, through not only what stories it chooses to print, but also how it chooses to portray and present them, the local press wields tremendous influence with regard to Wadena residents’ views of their Indian neighbours. This has not escaped the attention of reserve residents, with one man acknowledging, “[the paper] has [a large readership] so all those other people are reading this and saying, ‘Holy cow, that reserve must be just rank!’”⁸ Even one man from Wadena conceded, “Well, it [the paper] changes what you think of them [Fishing Lake residents] or what you thought of them before.”⁹ Ralph Sunshine, Fishing Lake band member, believes that perhaps Fishing Lake should take the initiative to inform

⁵ Interview with younger female member of Fishing Lake First Nation, 30 April 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

⁶ Interview with male member of Fishing Lake First Nation, 1 May 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

⁷ Henry Scott interview, 30 April 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

⁸ Henry Scott interview, 30 April 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

⁹ Curtis Kircher interview, 2 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

non-Indian residents of the district: “Maybe if [we] had a news magazine circulated everybody would know what’s going on... We all know about their business because of the paper...so why don’t we have one here of our own news, what’s taking place in our band, what we’re going to do...then they’d be informed, they’d know what’s happening here. It would be a good thing really.”¹⁰ Given the power of the press to inform, educate, and influence, the *Wadena News* possesses the ability to some degree to better relations between both communities through its reporting practices, as does Fishing Lake First Nation through initiatives such as that proposed by Sunshine.

Third, a majority of respondents from Fishing Lake believed that exposing non-Native students to Native issues, cultures, and histories in the classroom would serve to minimize racial friction. As discussed earlier, the Wadena Elementary School has already begun this process. As was observed by a teaching staff member from the Elementary School, as well as a parent from Fishing Lake, Indian and non-Indian children between the ages of six and eleven appear to socialize and interact in a positive manner. However, segregation between the two becomes much more evident once they reach high school. Although this can quite clearly be attributed to the fact that notions of racial difference are not usually fully developed among younger children, it is interesting that the emphasis put on Native issues in the high school is not comparable to that in the elementary school, thus suggesting that a greater focus on these matters at the secondary level is needed.

Fourth, the eradication of stereotypical assumptions through respect for the individuality of all persons is of absolute importance. A good number of those from

¹⁰ Ralph Sunshine interview, 1 May 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

Fishing Lake reported that they believed many from Wadena based their views of reserve residents generally on the actions of only a few. For instance, one young woman from the band claimed, "Say somebody gets drunk and causes a big disturbance, then...they [Wadena residents] label everybody else like that on the reserve."¹¹ Others, from both Wadena and Fishing Lake, were of the opinion that interaction on an individual basis could provide a solution to this problem. Band member Dwayne Paquachan suggests residents of both communities should be "just going out and meeting each individual and knowing them as a person, rather than [as just] a bunch of 'Natives [or] a bunch of 'Honkeys.'"¹² Lending credence to Paquachan's proposal is anecdotal evidence supplied by Wadena community member Steve George who relayed the following:

You get twelve people down[town having coffee] and its Native bashing and you get twelve Natives together and its Whiteman bashing. Those same twelve people can split up and lo and behold you're driving down one of the country roads and here's a Native stopped and one of the White men stopped standing [there] having quite a reasonable bloody conversation! It seems like as long as they're one-to-one individual[ly] there's no problem, but you get this bandwagon going and it's trouble.¹³

Based on the preceding testimony, then, although some Fishing Lake residents feel as though their non-Indian neighbours harbour often limited and narrow conceptions of them, they also believe, as do some from Wadena, that interaction on a one-to-one level offers one of the best ways to broaden their perspectives.

Finally, it is promising and encouraging that respondents from both communities overwhelmingly expressed a genuine desire for relations to improve between the two.

¹¹ Interview with younger female member of Fishing Lake First Nation, 30 April 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

¹² Dwayne Paquachan interview, 1 May 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

¹³ Steve George interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

Many were not, however, overly optimistic that this will indeed occur any time soon, perhaps because many are unsure of how this can actually be achieved. It is suggested here, given that so much of the existing relationship between Wadena and Fishing Lake is coloured by the band's exercising of its treaty rights and the recent settlement of its land claim, that in order for this to be realized, the will and determination of non-Indians to obtain a much more comprehensive and accurate appreciation and understanding of the historical and contemporary experiences of Aboriginal peoples must exist. As historian Elizabeth Furniss concluded in her study,

public resistance to the Aboriginal treaty process, and the reluctance...to fully acknowledge the legitimacy of Aboriginal title and rights cannot be simply dismissed as expressions of ignorance, racism, redneckism, or outdated colonial ideology. A proper understanding of these...requires an appreciation of the systematic way in which a dominant colonial culture operates in multiple dimensions of ordinary life and how public attitudes are rooted in a complex, sophisticated, and partial vision of the world that is profoundly shaped by past and present colonial experience.¹⁴

Some from Fishing Lake would argue that the will to acquire this proper understanding does not exist among the majority of town residents, that they simply "don't even care to know."¹⁵ The poignant words of one woman from Wadena, however, illustrate her sincere desire to attain an alternate understanding:

I think the crucial thing is to find out from them [First Nations people] 'What are the elements of a good partnership that we need to have with you?' But we need to know what that is and I don't know that we do. I don't know that those conversations are being held. We need to know what their expectations are and what we can do to enhance the partnership because we're going to have to have it. [We need] an understanding of the Aboriginal view of the world. I think that that is key because I think that is something that we don't know. What is their view? What are the

¹⁴ Elizabeth Furniss, *The Burden of History: Colonialism and the Frontier Myth in a Rural Canadian Community* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 204.

¹⁵ Therese Desjarlais interview, 30 April 2001, Fishing Lake reserve, Saskatchewan.

elements of partnerships as they would see them to make a successful co-existence? That's where it has to start...is an understanding of their view...as [to] how we would be able to work together.¹⁶

These are certainly promising words, but are unfortunately seldom uttered or believed to be true at this time by most town residents.

The hallmarks of good relations between Fishing Lake and Wadena throughout their 120-year history have always been mutual benefit and recognition and appreciation. Now, more than at any other time before, a return to these principles is possible and indeed necessary if the relationship is to improve. The settlement of the Fishing Lake band's land claim, for instance, provides an excellent opportunity to increase the level of partnerships through joint ventures and is surely an occasion to be embraced. While attending a ceremony to celebrate the settlement of the band's longstanding claim, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Robert Nault, recognized the perceived benefits of the settlement for the band and its neighbours, stating, "The settlement of this claim honours an outstanding lawful obligation to the First Nation and will create viable opportunities for investment, business partnerships and sustainable economic development on both First Nations lands and in surrounding communities."¹⁷ Fishing Lake First Nation then represents a microcosm of what is happening generally on a provincial scale. The augmented economic and political clout of First Nations, combined with their growing population numbers, renders it inevitable that they will be a driving force in the future development of Saskatchewan, and perhaps even its salvation. It is therefore incumbent upon the non-Native population of the province to

¹⁶ Donna Coleman interview, 3 May 2001, Wadena, Saskatchewan.

¹⁷ Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, press release, "Fishing Lake First Nation Celebrates Major Land Claim Settlement," 25 August 2001.

acknowledge this impending reality and the reciprocal advantages of it. For the tiny prairie communities of Fishing Lake First Nation and Wadena, this is especially relevant and timely.

With hope, aspects of the shared history of Fishing Lake and Wadena can become the foundation upon which a shared future is also built between these two communities.

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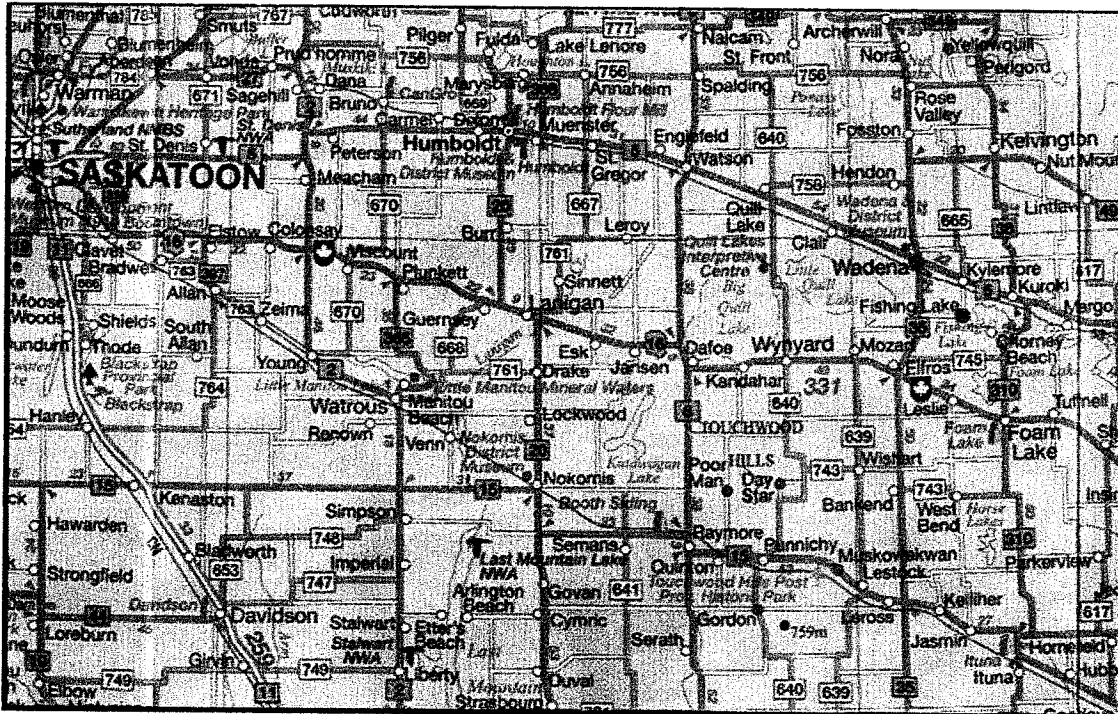
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APPENDIX ONE



Map of Saskatchewan showing the communities of Fishing Lake First Nation and Wadena.

Source: Map of Western Canada by MapArt Publishing Corporation (Oshawa, ON: Peter Heiler Ltd., 1999).

APPENDIX TWO



This photo was taken by a travelling photographer in approximately 1894. Left to right: Joshua Milligan Sr., unidentified Indian man, unidentified Indian woman, daughter Sarah, Indian child, Mrs. Frances Milligan, daughter Annie Milligan, traveller in doorway, daughter Margaret, Joshua Milligan Jr., traveller, Jim Bole.

Source: Wadena History Book Committee, *Remembering Times: Wadena and Area Dating Back to 1882* (Wadena: Wadena History Book Committee, 1992).

APPENDIX THREE

QUESTIONS ASKED OF PARTICIPANTS DURING INTERVIEWS

1. Could you please tell me about yourself? What is your name, address, background, or occupation?
2. Is there anything else that you think is unique or important regarding yourself or your background that you think would be useful for the purposes of my research?
3. Overall, how would you characterize relations between your community (Fishing Lake or Wadena) and _____ (insert either Fishing Lake or Wadena)? Why do you think this is so? Has this changed over time or remained relatively constant?
4. What can you tell me, specifically, about the relations between Wadena and Fishing Lake? For example, has there ever been any political co-operation between the two communities? Did residents of both communities ever unite in common cause, say, to protest against certain government policies?
5. Were relations ever of a religious nature? Has anyone from Fishing Lake ever attended any of the churches in Wadena? If yes, how did residents of Wadena react to their presence?
6. Have members of both communities ever engaged in any social or recreational activities together, for instance, dances or sporting events?
7. Has interaction between your community (Fishing Lake or Wadena) and _____ (insert either Fishing Lake or Wadena) ever been for economic purposes? Is farming an important economic pursuit for your community? How would you characterize relations between Native and non-Native farmers? Did residents of _____ (insert either Wadena or Fishing Lake) ever provide any sort of casual labour or wage work for _____ (insert either Wadena or Fishing Lake) farmers? Was help ever freely given?
8. How would you describe relations between students from Fishing Lake and Wadena? Why do you think this is so?
9. Do you think the RCMP affect relations between residents of both communities in any way? If yes, how?
10. Do you know of anyone from _____ (insert either Fishing Lake or Wadena) who has married someone from _____ (insert either Fishing Lake or Wadena)? If yes, how was this marriage or marriages viewed by your community?

11. Is your community a signatory to one of the numbered treaties, and if so, which one?
12. Why did your community decide to enter into a treaty relationship with the Crown?
13. According to you or your community, what does it mean to be in a treaty relationship with the Crown? What does it entail?
14. Do you think non-Aboriginal people, specifically the ones resident in Wadena, have a proper understanding of the treaties and the treaty relationship? If no, why do you think this is?
15. What is your understanding of the treaties made between the Crown and First Nations people? Where did you gain this understanding from? Are you aware of what a treaty relationship is understood to be from the perspective of Aboriginal people?
16. Has land, either the granting or selling of it, either through land claims or some other means, affected relations between the two communities? If so, how?
17. How do you think residents of _____ (insert either Fishing Lake or Wadena) view you and your community? Why do you think this is so? Would you prefer it if they viewed you differently from what you have previously described? If so, how do you think this could be achieved?
18. Describe for me how you see relations between the residents of Fishing Lake and Wadena ten years from now? Why do you think this will be so?

APPENDIX FOUR

CONSENT FORM PROVIDED TO EACH PARTICIPANT

Please indicate either "YES" or "NO" beside the following statements and sign both copies of this consent form. One of the signed copies will be left with you.

I agree to take part in an interview and have the interview recorded as part of the research for a Masters Thesis being done by Christa L. Nicholat. **I understand that I am free to end the interview at any time. I also understand that I am free to change my mind about the use of my information at any time during the research.**

I agree that my name may be used in the write-up of this research and the comments I have made attributed to me.

I would prefer to remain anonymous, and that I be referred to by a pseudonym in the write-up of the research.

All of my answers may be used in the write-up of the research.

I prefer that my answers to questions _____ not be used.

I wish to be provided with a summary of my answers so that I may add to, clarify, or delete any information that I have provided.

[Regulations at the University of Saskatchewan require researchers to keep research records for five years after completion of the research project in case there is any dispute about the researcher's use or interpretation of the data. **After the materials are deposited in a public archives any researcher with a valid reason to do so may examine them.**]

When C. Nicholat has completed her project and is ready to dispose of the research materials, I want the records of my interview

deposited in an archive that C. Nicholat thinks is appropriate

deposited in the following repository that I have chosen:

destroyed.

Name Place Date

Christa L. Nicholat (researcher), Graduate Student, Dept. of History, University of Saskatchewan 2005 East Hill, Saskatoon, SK S7J 3C6 (306) 374-1953

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