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Branding the Last Best West: Regionalism, Tourism, and the Construction of the Tourist Gaze in Alberta, 1905-1940

by

Sheila Campbell ©

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of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

in

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Abstract

This thesis examines the production of the tourist gaze in early twentieth-century Alberta. I examine the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede from 1912 to 1935, and the Government of Alberta Publicity Bureau from 1905 to 1940 to argue that, through tourism, Alberta was constructed as the "Last Best West." The Last Best West was an ideology shaped by western regionalism, and the forces of romanticism, antimodernism, and consumerism. It reflected a desire to express cultural meaning constructed within Alberta, and served the early twentieth-century booster ethos of building a unified province grounded in British traditions. The Last Best West ideology inscribed a dominant narrative on the Alberta landscape, and silenced alternative interpretations of the provincial experience. The Last Best West remains the dominant ideology in contemporary Alberta tourism, and permeates ways of seeing citizenship, politics, and business in Alberta. This thesis critiques the ideological project reflected in the Last Best West, and argues for recognition of the multiplicity of meanings inscribed on the Alberta landscape in order to reach a richer understanding of the past and present.

Acknowledgements

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List of Abbreviations

ABP	Alberta Beef Producers
AFRD	Agriculture, Food, and Rural Development
CIEC	Calgary Industrial Exhibition Company
CPR	Canadian Pacific Railway
FDCC	Frontier Days Celebration Committee
HBC	Hudson's Bay Company
IWPEC	Inter-Western Pacific Exhibition Company
NWMP	North West Mounted Police
UFA	United Farmers of Alberta

Introduction

Regionalism and the Tourist Gaze

> The literary landscape, the way one saw the world, was always and necessarily distinct from the world as it was.
>
> W.L. Morton, 1970

In 1938, the Government of Alberta invited tourists to experience the "true atmosphere of the Old West." "Stay over a while," the Publicity Bureau encouraged, "and enjoy riding, roping, branding, jingling, packing and diamond-hitching....Get acquainted with our Indians, our Stampedes, our modern counterpart of the real Old West."[1] In the early-twentieth century, tourism boosters adopted the imagined landscape of the "Last Best West" as the true character of Alberta. I propose that the Last Best West was a product of western regionalism, a regional way of seeing that heralded Alberta as possessing a utopian past and present, and boundless future. Tourism boosters embraced the Last Best West as a means to engender in Alberta what Benedict Anderson termed an "imagined community."[2] Communities are imagined in the minds of residents out of an invented sense of togetherness, and a configuration of place and cultural identity generated through the commonsense imaginings of shared histories and mythologies.[3] This study focuses on how two prominent agents of cultural production—the Calgary

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[1] Provincial Tourist and Publicity Bureau, *Facts about Alberta* (Edmonton: The [Publicity] Bureau, 1938), 30-31.

[2] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections of the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (New York: Verso, 1991), 6-7.

Exhibition and Stampede from 1912 to 1935, and the Government of Alberta from 1905 to 1940—utilized the Last Best West to serve the booster ethos of community solidarity. An examination of the production of an imagined landscape through tourism in Alberta illuminates ways in which tourism inscribed meaning on the provincial landscape. It reveals the cultural mentalities, historical conditions, and regional way of seeing the cultural landscape of Alberta. Thus, early twentieth-century tourism in Alberta formed part of the broader discourse of western regionalism in the province.

A regional sense of presence emerged in the West in the 1880s as an outcome of widespread disillusionment with the Ontario-inspired expansionist project.[4] Expansionism was a mid to late nineteenth-century movement that transformed popular perception of the North West from the fur trade's barren wasteland to a land fit for agricultural settlement. The movement originated in the elite business and political circles of Toronto and the Ottawa Valley. The expansionist spirit was fuelled by the enthusiasm of the 1860s, and the North West emerged as the unquestioned future linchpin of the nation and the British Empire.[5] Thousands of immigrants from Ontario, as well as Europe and the United States, answered the call of the nation, and settled in the North West. The harsh realities of settlement, however, countered the utopian rhetoric of expansionism, and settlers soon became disillusioned with eastern expansionists, politicians, and corporations. A regional sense of presence grounded in faith in the land and distrust of

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[3] Mike Crang, *Cultural Geography* (London: Routledge, 1998), 163-65.

[4] Douglas Owram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West 1865-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1980), 173.

[5] Owram, 3-5.

the East emerged from the failures of expansionism. The movement could not reconcile both regional and national needs, and, by the late 1890s, the project was abandoned.[6]

The legacy of expansionism was a utopian sensibility.[7] A utopian way of seeing the past and present emerged as a dominant feature of western regionalism, and framed the imagined landscape of western Canada. The province of Alberta and its municipalities adopted the rhetoric of western regionalism in their drive for progress and prosperity. This drive was characterized by the work of boosters—local promoters who held economic growth, material success, and community solidarity as central to civic and provincial success.[8] Much like nineteenth-century expansionists, boosters were an unofficial network of political and business leaders who held unwavering faith in the potential of their city and province. They saw themselves as agents of progress, and worked to situate their municipality and Alberta as attractive to investors and immigrants. Importantly, boosters also saw themselves as community builders. Civic boosters worked to generate a sense of community based on "faith in the city, belief in its destiny, and commitment to its growth."[9] Provincial boosters sought to engender similar faith and commitment to Alberta as a whole. Civic and provincial boosters in Alberta adopted a utopian way of seeing, and embraced the imagined landscape of the Last Best West as a means to achieve booster goals of progress, prosperity, and community solidarity.

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[6] Owram, 224.

[7] Owram, 222.

[8] Alan F.J. Artibise, "Boosterism and the Development of Prairie Cities," in *The Prairie West: Historical Readings*, 2nd ed., ed. D. Francis and H. Palmer (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1992), 518, 520.

[9] Artibise, 520.

Tourism emerged in the early-twentieth century as an important industry through which boosters could promote to visitors, residents, and future immigrants and investors the virtues of the province of Alberta and its municipalities. Boosters adopted the Last Best West as the ideological framework for tourism in Alberta. The imagined landscape of the Last Best West was shaped by the cultural mentalities of antimodernism, romanticism, and consumer capitalism, and was influenced by a regional way of seeing. The Last Best West ideology responded to consumer desires, and saleable folklore in Alberta—cowboys and mountains, for example—emerged as dominant imagery in promoting Alberta and its municipalities. Through tourism, boosters used the Last Best West to inscribe uniform meaning on the Alberta landscape. Analysis of the production of the Last Best West through the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede and Government of Alberta tourism publicity serves as an analysis of the broader discourse of western regionalism in the province.

1. "Not only as it could be seen, but as it might be seen": Imagining the West

A region such as the Canadian West is an "imagined community," a social construct defined by the vague territorial boundary of being situated west of Ontario. While geography defines regional boundaries, the social milieu of location—the interplay of geography, history, economics, politics, and culture—has shaped notions of western regionalism since 1880. Literary scholar Frank Davey proposes that regionalisms contain narratives that reflect meaning interpreted from within the region. A regionalism, he argues, "represents a general social or political strategy for resisting meanings generated by others in a nation-state."[10] People who ascribe to a western regional sensibility perceive power as residing elsewhere, and generate a regional sense of imagined community from the perspective of being peripheral to the southern Ontario heartland. While regionalisms express resistance to national uniformity, they also assert cultural hegemony within their geographic locale. Historian Robert Wardhaugh proposes that "Over time, dominant images emerge (from inside and outside the region) that define a place and time, and people use them (whether through acceptance or rejection) to express their identity."[11] Dominant regional ideologies assert cultural hegemony over other interpretations of the regional experience—nationalism, feminism, class, ethnicity, localism, or race, for example.[12] Regional ways of seeing, and ways of seeing regions are social constructs, and reflective of cultural mentalities and historical conditions that shape Canadian society.

Regional sentiment in the West emerged from expansionism, the mid to late nineteenth-century movement in which natural resource exploitation and agricultural settlement of land west of Toronto and the Ottawa Valley was perceived as vital to the future of Canada. The promise of an agrarian utopia lured thousands of settlers to the North West from eastern Canada, Britain, and the United States. By the 1880s and 1890s, however, expansionist rhetoric had not lived up to settler reality. Disillusioned residents of the West began to reject Ontario-inspired expansionism, and asserted their sense of place in Canada from a regional perspective.[13] The process of defining the West continued into the twentieth century, and much like the national preoccupation to define Canada and Canadian identity, residents of the West sought to understand themselves and their region.[14] Cultural expressions imagined the West in poetry, art, literature, and the tourist landscape, and served to reinforce a dominant way of seeing the region.

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[10] Frank Davey, "Towards the Ends of Regionalism," in *A Sense of Place: Re-evaluating Regionalism in Canadian and American Writing*, ed. C. Riegel and H. Wyile (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1997), 4.

[11] Robert Wardhaugh, "Introduction: Tandem and Tangent," in *Toward Defining the Prairies: Region, Culture, and History*, ed. R. Wardhaugh (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 2001), 3.

[12] Davey, 4-5.

Academic scholarship also contributed to defining the West as a region, and did much to shape perceptions of western Canadian history and contemporary society. Scholarship on the West has been influenced by two significant approaches to Canadian history: the frontier thesis and the Laurentian thesis. Arthur Lower was one of the first Canadian historians to embrace the frontier thesis.[15] The thesis was originally posited in 1893 by American historian, Frederick Jackson Turner. In *The Frontier in American History*, Turner argues that American civilization was created through the frontier experience. "The wilderness masters the colonist," he argues. It transformed Europeans into "a new product that is American." For Turner, this product was a society grounded in democracy, individualism, and freedom.[16] In the late 1920s and 1930s, Lower adapted Turner's frontier thesis to interpret the influence of the Canadian frontier. In "Some Neglected Aspects of Canadian History" (1929), he agrees that democracy in Canada was a product of the frontier.[17] Unlike the American frontier, however, the Canadian frontier did not assimilate Canada's two founding colonies—the French and the English—into a unified society. Instead, Lower argues, the frontier drew out common characteristics of resourcefulness, social equality, and democracy. His study of the role of the frontier coalesced in his most distinctive work *Colony to Nation* (1946). "While the New World has not had the power to make different things the same," he argues, "it has had great power to modify, to change old institutions and give them new form and spirit."[18] Lower saw history as a means to engender a sense of national community amongst disparate Canadian society, and nationalism underscores much of his work.[19]

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[13] Owram, 173.

[14] Douglas Francis, *Images of the West: Changing Perceptions of the Prairies, 1690-1960* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1989), 194, observes that writers, artists, and historians post-WWII were "Children of the West." They searched for cultural meaning in a region that shaped their own lives.

[15] Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing since 1900*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1986), 118.

[16] Fredrick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt, 1947), 4, 32, 37.

A second major interpretation of Canadian history was the staples thesis solidified by economic historian Harold Innis. In *The Fur Trade in Canada* (1930), Innis proposes that natural resource exploitation was the defining factor of Canadian development, institutions, and culture. He asserts that staple commodities—fish, lumber, and agriculture, for example—historically defined regional and national relations, and the relationship between Canada and Europe. "The economic history of Canada," Innis states, "has been dominated by the discrepancy between the centre and the margin of western civilization."[20] Metropolitan areas of Europe and Canada were centres of consumer power, thus, metropolitan consumer habits shaped development of outlying regions. The staples thesis retains aspects of environmental determinism, and the character of each staple industry is thought to shape the character of the region.

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[17] Arthur Lower, "Some Neglected Aspects of Canadian History," *Canadian Historical Association Annual Report* (1929): 65-71, quoted in Berger, 120.

[18] Arthur Lower, *Colony to Nation: A History of Canada* (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Company, 1946), 48.

[19] Berger, 112.

[20] Harold Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (New Haven: Yale University, 1930), 338, 406-7.

The staples thesis was further adapted as the Laurentian thesis by historian Donald Creighton. In *The Empire of the St Lawrence* (1937), Creighton proposes that the mercantile class in the cities of the St. Lawrence determined the course of Canadian history. "The dreams of the commercial empire of the St. Lawrence runs like an obsession through the whole of Canadian history," he argues.[21] For Creighton, commercial interests in the western interior began during the fur trade and dominated for two centuries Canadian politics, and political and economic relations with Europe and the United States.[22] The Laurentian thesis asserts the commercial imperialism of central Canada over hinterland regions such as the West.

Innis, Creighton, and Lower interpreted Canadian history in terms of a homogenous Canadian experience. Each historian sought the common thread that defined and unified Canadian society. For Innis, the unifier was the influence of the frontier; for Creighton and Lower it was the influence of eastern commercial centres that relied on frontier staples for national development. The Canadian West was a central theme in the frontier, staples, and Laurentian theses. Yet, neither Innis, Lower, nor Creighton sought to interpret the implications of the frontier and eastern commercial imperialism from the perspectives of Canadians living in the western interior. As Ontario-born historians, their work reflected the nationalist interests of the southern Ontario heartland. Thus, they marginalized the hinterlands to the periphery of Canadian history.

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[21] Donald Creighton, *The Empire of the St. Lawrence*, re-issue ed. (Toronto: Macmillian, 1956), 6.

[22] Creighton, 14-16.

William Lewis Morton was one of the first historians to offer a western regional history to the study of Canada. Morton was a third-generation Manitoban born in 1908. His grandparents had settled in the province in 1871, and his father was a Progressive member of the Manitoba legislature during the agrarian protests of the 1920s.[23] Morton's academic interests initially lay with British imperialism and Canadian foreign policy. Historian Carl Berger proposes that Morton's "sensitivity to the imperial relation and to the larger world outside further strengthened his appreciation for the inwardness and separateness of the history of his province and region."[24] Morton articulated this sense of western separateness in "Clio in Canada: The Interpretation of Canadian History" (1946). In this critique of the social and political implications of the Laurentian thesis, Morton asserts three aspects of Canadian historical interpretation: French survivalism, Ontario domination, and Western subordination. He acknowledges the role of Innis and Creighton in raising the stature of Canadian history, but critiques the Laurentian approach for its uncritical reaffirmation of central Canadian dominance.[25] Morton argues that it is an approach that implies cultural homogeneity where homogeneity does not exist. "No more than French Canada can the West accept a common interpretation of Canadian history or cultural metropolitanism. The West must work out its own historical experience...and free itself, and find itself."[26] Morton devoted his academic career to working out the West's historical experience and his own.

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[23] Berger, 238-39.

[24] Berger, 240.

[25] W.L. Morton, "Clio in Canada: The Interpretation of Canadian History," in *Contexts of Canada's Past: Selected Essays of W.L. Morton*, ed. A.B. McKillop (Toronto: Macmillan, 1980), 105-6.

[26] Morton, "Clio in Canada," 109.

Morton adopted and adapted the environmental determinism of the frontier thesis and commercial imperialism of the Laurentian thesis in his interpretation of Canadian history. In "Marginal" (1946), Morton asserts that, in the Canadian West, "the environment is ruthless and not to be denied. Adaptation is the price of survival."[27] Yet, Canadians did not encounter the western interior as a blank slate. Their "hereditary culture"—for Morton, a culture of British tradition—influenced the frontier experience. For the role of culture in Canadian history, Morton accepts the Laurentian thesis as "incontestable," but critiques its lack of attention to implications for hinterland regions. The thesis relies too heavily on economic and political subordination, Morton argues, and is inattentive to the role of the environment in shaping the West. For Morton, the history of the West must be interpreted in terms of "conscious adaptation" to the environmental and cultural circumstances of its historical experience—an experience marred by disappointment and disillusionment.[28]

Morton asserts that the psychological aspect of the West as a "marginal civilization"—including the West's self-perception as a hinterland—greatly influenced its course of history. Images of the West, he argues, were shaped not only by external reality, but also by the internal imagination. In "Seeing an Unliterary Landscape" (1970), Morton reflects on his childhood in Manitoba to highlight the conflict between the actual landscape and the landscape of literary creation. "The literary landscape, the way one saw the world, was always and necessarily distinct from the world as it was."[29] He reflects that he always felt a need to reconcile external reality with the internal imagination. "I desired [the landscape] to be seen not only as it could be seen, but as it might be seen."[30] Morton forefronted the imagined landscape—a West of myth and memory—in the interpretation of Canadian history.

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[27] W.L. Morton, "Marginal," in *Contexts of Canada's Past: Selected Essays of W.L. Morton*, ed. A.B. McKillop (Toronto: Macmillan, 1980), 41.

[28] Morton, "Marginal," 43-44.

[29] W.L. Morton, "Seeing a Unliterary Landscape," in *Contexts of Canada's Past: Selected Essays of W.L. Morton*, ed. A.B. McKillop (Toronto: Macmillan, 1980), 20.

Morton contributed to scholarship the importance of regional perspective in Canadian history. "Canada, in its history and at any moment of its existence, is an infinite variation on the theme of the one and the many," he wrote in 1973. "Canada, at any one moment, possesses an undoubted oneness....Yet the one cannot be without the many, nor the many without the one."[31] Morton was committed to both region and nation, and, following the legacy of other Canadian historians, sought to discover common threads that defined and unified the whole of Canadian society. For Morton, the common threads—a northern character, historical dependence, monarchical government and committed national destiny—were universal to region and nation, and composed a single narrative of Canadian history.[32] However, Morton's work pointed to the multiplicity of Canadian history. Westerners embraced his interpretation of the West as exploited by the East, and Morton inadvertently fuelled western regional protest and a sense of alienation.[33] By voicing a regional interpretation of Canadian history, Morton challenged the very oneness of Canadian identity he sought to uncover. Although he failed to reconcile regional and national interests, he succeeded in securing a place for the West in the interpretation of Canadian history.

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[30] Morton, "Seeing a Unliterary Landscape," 22.

[31] W.L. Morton, "Canada: The One and the Many," in *Contexts of Canada's Past: Selected Essays of W.L. Morton*, ed. A.B. McKillop (Toronto: Macmillan, 1980), 285.

[32] W.L. Morton, "The Relevance of Canadian History," in *Contexts of Canada's Past: Selected Essays of W.L. Morton*, ed. A.B. McKillop (Toronto: Macmillan, 1980), 163.

[33] Francis, *Images of the West*, 196.

The West as an imagined landscape emerged as a powerful approach in the study of regionalism in Canada. Imagined or mythic regionalism recognizes that regions are social constructs, continually created and re-created by the imagery and mythology that breathe them into existence. A mythic region is "a blending of fact and fiction, historical truth and literary creation, physical locale and mental perception."[34] The internal landscape of the West has been explored by literary scholars Dick Harrison (1977), Eli Mandel (1973), and Northrop Frye (1971), and historians Richard Allen (1973), Douglas Francis (1989), and Gerald Friesen (2001). Douglas Owram in *Promise of Eden* (1980) argues that popular perception of the West dictated its course of history. "Realistic or delusory, noble or selfish, these perceptions determined the evolution of the expansionist movement and of Western Canada."[35] Scholarship concurs that the West resides in the imagination, an imagination shaped by the myths of an imagined past, perceived present, and anticipated future. Myths, however, are not universal, and the weakness of mythic regionalism is in its portrayal of a single regional metanarrative. "It looks for unity where it does not exist," historian Douglas Francis argues, "and imposes uniformity of thought and outlook where it should be valuing diversity."[36] The need to recognize the diversity of narratives that constitute regional spaces calls into question the very concept of a uniform imagined regional landscape.

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[34] Francis, *Images of the West*, 193.

[35] Owram, 6.

[36] Francis, "Regionalism, W.L. Morton, and the Writing of Western Canadian History," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 31, no. 4 (2001): 573.

Francis proposes that awareness of diversity in the regional experience can be achieved through a postmodern approach to regionalism. Postmodern regionalism embraces multiple imagined landscapes and regional experiences, resulting in "many Wests."[37] Multiple Wests are gendered, ethnic, religious, political, and occupational, and defy concrete boundaries and definitions. The challenge to regionalism under conditions of postmodernity—the lived experience not the philosophical position—is to ensure that the other of the regional experience are heard in a culture dominated by consumer capitalism. In a culture of consumption, imagined regional landscapes are turned into products to be bought and sold in the global market. For regional imagery to survive, it must prove its commercial value.[38] Yet, only imagery deemed profitable endures economic selection, resulting in the marginalization of unsaleable voices. Saleable folklore—the Alberta cowboy and Nova Scotian fisherman, for example—silences voices less amenable to mass consumption.[39] A postmodern approach to regionalism is attentive to the marginalizing forces of imposed uniformity and the selective forces of consumer capitalism, and offers a critical examination of dominant narratives. This approach can serve to illuminate the cultural mentalities, historical conditions, and ways of seeing that inscribe meaning on regional landscapes.

Tourism is an industry that relies heavily on regional imagery, and thrives under conditions of global consumer capitalism. Tourism fuses commerce and culture to sell imagined landscapes to tourists—people engaged in leisure activities away from home and work.[40] Tourism is an assembly of goods and services, and looks to local culture to construct a saleable, competitive product for the global marketplace. In Canada, regional signifiers with proven commercial value—western Canadian frontier icons, for example—dominate the tourism landscape. Images that do not appeal to the mass tourist sensibility or suit the motivations of tourism boosters—social dissent or class conflict, for example—are marginalized. Through tourism, regions are presented as homogenous, unified wholes safe for pleasurable consumption.

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[37] Francis, "Regionalism and W.L. Morton," 574.

[38] See Davey, 12-15, for discussion of regionalism and the global economy.

[39] Ian McKay, *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 1994), 35-36, for discussion of economic dislocation and the silencing of the labour voice in Nova Scotia in the 1920s and 1930s.

A unified whole and unified way of seeing the whole serves the booster ethos of community solidarity. Boosters in Alberta adopted the cultural myths and ideologies of the Last Best West as a means to inscribe uniform meaning on the Alberta landscape. By means of the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede and Government of Alberta tourism publicity, early twentieth-century boosters used tourism to construct and promote a common way of seeing Alberta. Thus, tourism contributed to the creation of what Morton referred to as an internal, literary landscape. Landscapes of the mind, Morton argues, are "cultural landscapes, formed by what the mind, not the seeing eye alone, takes in." Morton recognizes that the seeing eye aids the mind, and proposes that imagined landscapes are shaped by books, pictures, travels, and dreams. The Last Best West was a landscape of the mind aided by the seeing eye. It structured an imagined past, perceived present, and anticipated future. It reflected the way things ought to have been, and, following Morton, was "always and necessarily distinct from the world as it was."[41]

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[40] John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*, 2nd ed. (London: Sage, 2002), 2-3.

[41] Morton, "Seeing a Unliterary Landscape, 17-20."

2. The Seeing Eye and the Tourist Landscape: John Urry's Tourist Gaze

Imagined landscapes are shaped by the seeing eye. Tourism involves the production and consumption of visual goods and services—museum exhibits, art, architecture, and natural scenery, for example—and relies heavily on print media in the form of tourism brochures, photographs, and newspaper advertisements. Sociologist John Urry recognizes the visual nature of tourism, and, in 1990, proposed the "tourist gaze" as a conceptual framework from which to study the tourist phenomena. Urry argues that tourism is an inversion of the everyday. Tourists are attracted to people and places perceived as out of the ordinary, and in response, the tourism industry seeks to differentiate the familiar and the far away.[42] Tourists in search of differentiation become semioticians reading the tourism landscape for signs and symbols generated in a cross-section of cultural spheres. The tourist gaze is produced through the purposeful assembly of signs and symbols by public and private interests for the intention of creating both desire and a consumable experience. There are many gazes, Urry contends, each constructed by signifiers of a particular time and place, and each reflective of society, a social group, and historical period.[43] As such, tourism is as much a study of travel as it is of everyday life.

The tourism industry and tourists share a mutually-dependent relationship. Production and consumption occur simultaneously, and each act fuels the other. Tourists consume what the industry produces, and the industry produces what tourists want to consume, and will want to consume with subtle persuasion. Interaction between producers and consumers exists within social, cultural, political, and economic context, and the impacts of these forces shape the tourist gaze. Scholarship on tourism in Canada recognizes travel as part of a greater whole, and studies highlighting the influences of antimodernism, romanticism, and consumerism inform an understanding of the relationship between the production and the consumption of the tourist gaze.[44]

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[42] Urry, 12.

[43] Urry, 1-2.

Scholarship demonstrates that throughout the history of tourism in Canada, cultural producers—writers, artists, photographers, and tourism boosters, for example—constructed images that resonated with the romantic sensibilities of travel and consumer capitalism.[45] Cultural producers largely derived from the urban, middle and upper classes, and, as Ian McKay suggests,

> They were people who wielded 'power through' more than they used 'power over'; theirs was a subtle cultural power that could define for a large number of people what is self-evident within a network of words and things.[46]

In the case of Nova Scotia, cultural producers found the myth of the "Folk" to be self-evident to notions of provincial identity. Backed by an antimodern sentiment that rejected urban and industrial reality, Nova Scotians embraced the Folk as true to their identity.[47] The idea of a cultural "other" as the perceived essence of regional identity emerged as a common characteristic of modern tourism. The process of "othering" was one of cultural reflexivity, and attachment to the other mirrored modern society's unease with perceived progress and civilization.[48] Othering also involved differentiation, and through selective remembering, and perhaps more importantly, forgetting, essentialized cultural icons frozen in time emerged as subjects of the tourist gaze. The cultural other of antimodern sentiment was constructed so to exist outside the complexity of ethnic, class and political relations. Thus, French Canadians at the 1894 Quebec Winter Carnival were "a charming laughing people without any evident of worldly cares," cowboys at the 1912 Stampede in Calgary were a "bright-eyed and resolute race," and First Nations in nineteenth-century northern Ontario were perceived as a noble yet inferior people.[49]

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[44] See Frank Abbott, "Cold Cash and Ice Palaces: The Quebec Winter Carnival of 1894," *Canadian Historical Review* 69, no. 2 (1988): 167-202; Patricia Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario*, 1790-1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1995); Lynda Jessup, "The Group of Seven and the Tourist Landscape in Western Canada, or The More Things Change...," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 37, no. 1 (spring 2002): 144-79; McKay, 1994; Michael Dawson, "Consumerism and the Creation of the Tourism Industry in British Columbia" (Ph.D. diss., Queen's University, 2002), available on-line from Theses Canada (Ottawa: National Library of Canada), amicus no. 27417500; and Michael Dawson, "'Taking the 'D' out of Depression," *BC Studies* 132 (Winter 2001/2002): 32-56.

[45] Abbott, 171; Jasen, *Wild Things*, 12-13; Jessup, 146-47; McKay, 4; and Urry, 13-14. McKay uses "cultural producers" to identify Nova Scotians involved in the production of cultural goods. I apply the term to Alberta to refer to refer to individuals or institutions that direct the public gaze on culture in Alberta. Cultural producers that shaped cultural perception in early twentieth-century Alberta include federal institutions such as the National Gallery of Canada, provincial institutions such as Government of Alberta Publicity Bureau, and civic institutions such as the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede Company. Correspondingly, individuals such as Group of Seven artist Tom Thompson or M.B. Marcell, the 1912 Stampede official photographer shaped how the public perceived the natural and cultural landscape of Alberta. Not all cultural producers held the same cultural power, yet as a group, they transformed popular perception of people and places.

[46] McKay, 41.

The antimodern sensibility of cultural producers and consumers was influenced by romanticism, the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century celebration of emotion over reason, sensibility over logic, and nature over civilization. Romanticism encouraged the middle and upper classes to seek refuge and re-creation in the nature and culture that lay beyond urban boundaries. Tourists were drawn to picturesque landscapes, and visually-pleasing scenes that imitated the artistic aesthetic of European landscape paintings.[50] Visual art was an influential medium in the shaping of a romantic tourist gaze, a gaze in which solitary, almost spiritual experiences were prized. Early twentieth-century works by Group of Seven artists encouraged a romantic gaze, and their paintings framed the Canadian landscape as a pristine, uninhabited wilderness.[51] According to romanticism, wilderness was inherently sublime, and tourists sought the wonder and terror of wild lands for emotional intensity and the transcendental experience. The Canadian Pacific and the Canadian National railways embraced Group of Seven art as part of their advertising campaigns, and tourists to the Rocky Mountains sought the solitude and sublimity depicted in railway brochures and posters.[52]

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[47] McKay, 4.

[48] Crang, *Cultural Geography*, 167-68.

[49] Abbott, 168; Calgary Stampede Committee, *The Stampede at Calgary, Alberta, 1912, September 2, 3, 4 & 5* (Calgary: Calgary Stampede Committee, 1912), 49; and Jasen, 15-17.

Romanticism not only influenced how tourists framed the natural and cultural landscapes of their imaginations, but also the commercial character of the tourism industry. Consumerism in capitalist societies is largely grounded in a romantic ethic, an ethic with the insatiable appetite for the novel and the pleasurable.[53] This appetite is stimulated by the advertising industry, and, as argued by historian Michael Dawson, "Tourism promotion has become a method of making local goods and services desirable to outsiders by endowing them with an aura of unique experience."[54] Advertising in the form of posters, pamphlets, maps, and guidebooks was extensively used by tourism boosters. Print media allowed for the selective representation of people and places. As such, tourism constructed late nineteenth-century Quebec City in terms of the quintessential Canadian winter—skating, hockey, tobogganing and curling—and early twentieth-century Victoria was presented as a delightful seaside city with British ambience.[55] Photographs were often used to accompany text in tourism advertising, and the inherent selectivity of the camera lens—like the frame of a landscape painting—made pictures a powerful medium for controlling and differentiating perceptions of people and places.[56] Tourism boosters played into the romantic and antimodern sensibilities of consumers, and stimulated tourists' expectations and anticipations.

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[50] Jasen, *Wild Things*, 7-13; also see Maxine Feifer, *Tourism in History: From Imperial Rome to the Present* (New York: Stein and Day, 1986), 137-61, for historical discussion of Romanticism and eighteenth-century tourism.

[51] Jonathan Bordo, "Jack Pine – Wilderness sublime or the erasure of the First Nation presence from the landscape," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 27, no. 4 (winter 1992/1993): 108-9.

[52] Jessup, 147–48.

[53] Patricia Jasen, "Romanticism, Modernity, and the Evolution of Tourism on the Niagara Frontier, 1790-1850," *Canadian Historical Review* 72, no. 3 (1991): 286; Jasen, *Wild Things*, 11-13; and Urry, 82.

[54] Dawson, "Consumerism and Tourism," 15.

Urry contends that tourism is "prefiguratively postmodern because of its particular combination of the "the visual, the aesthetic, the commercial and the popular."[57] Urry proposes that postmodernism, viewed as a cultural paradigm, refers not to the whole or part of society, but to:

> A system of signs or symbols, which is specific in both time and space. Such a system can be characterized in terms of a specific regime of signification in which particular cultural objects are produced, circulated and received.[58]

Signification is primarily visual, and dissolves concrete distinctions between "representation" and "reality." Reality increasingly becomes a representation and representation increasingly more real than reality. "Everything is a copy, or a text upon a text."[59] Urry proposes that signification from de-differentiated cultural spheres floods the tourism industry with signs and symbols in a fusion of travel, media, art, sport, architecture, and literature.[60] By virtue of dissolved cultural spheres, tourism exemplifies the postmodern synthesis of culture and commerce.

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[55] Abbott, 176; and Dawson, "Consumerism and Tourism," 63.

[56] Urry, 127-30; and Carol Crawshaw and John Urry, "Tourism and the Photographic Eye," in *Touring Cultures: Transformation of Travel and Theory*, ed. C. Rojek and J. Urry (London: Routledge, 1997), 184-85, observe the role of photography in culturally constructing the English Lake District.

[57] Urry, 78.

[58] Urry, 75.

For travels within a signified and represented reality, Urry draws from Maxine Feifer in *Going Places* (1985) to consider tourists in postmodernity.[61] "The post-tourist knows that he or she is a tourist and that tourism is a series of games with multiple texts and no single, authentic tourist experience."[62] Post-tourists are not preoccupied by inauthenticity, and instead "delight in the multitude of choices" available for their consumption. They are aware that tourism involves exaggeration and fabrication, and playfully suspend reality while travelling. Postmodern travel indulges in the nostalgic, and tourism boosters in an increasingly competitive tourism industry turn to "heritage" spectacles in order to attract the fleeting and discriminating post-tourist.[63] As a result, the industry provides tourists with an opportunity to play cowboy and cowgirl at the Calgary Stampede, fisherfolk at Peggy's Cove, and adventurer in the Canadian Rockies.

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[59] Urry, 77; also see Michael Pretes, "Postmodern Tourism: The Santa Claus Industry," *Annals of Tourism Research* 22, no. 1 (1995): 2.

[60] Urry, 75-76, proposes that modernism is a process of differentiation in which cultural spheres have identifiable norms, conventions, and boundaries. Postmodernism, on the other hand, dissolves the distinctive character of each sphere, a process referred to as de-differentiation.

[61] See Feifer, *Tourism in History*, 259-71. This book was previously published as *Going Places* (London: Macmillan, 1985).

[62] Urry, 91.

[63] Urry, 85, 101, 105.

Urry defines the tourism stage in terms of three fluid dichotomies: romantic and collective, historical and modern, and authentic and inauthentic.[64] Spectacles can be a combination of each category, and tend towards either pole. A romantic gaze is framed in terms of solitude and privacy, while a collective gaze requires company and shared consumption. Urry cites the Lake District in northwest England as an example of a romantic gaze, and Alton Towers leisure park, also in the northwest, as primarily a collective gaze. To apply these concepts to the study of tourism in Alberta, crowds of people at the rodeo grounds and Indian village are required for the collective gaze of the Calgary Stampede, but detract from the romantic gaze of a solitary horseback ride in the foothills. Conflict between the anticipated and consumed experience is not unusual, and neither is debate over authenticity. Urry suggests that objects are presented as authentic or inauthentic, and authenticity is often accepted or rejected by consumers based on what they are told they are seeing. Turning to Donald Horne's scholarship on museums, Urry contends that it is the aura surrounding an object—an aura created in a synthesis of cultural spheres—rather than the object itself that constitutes authenticity.[65] The growth of the heritage industry has resulted in the creation of many "authentic" events and attractions. The "cowboy-ification" of Calgary during the Stampede, for example—much like the "ye olde-ing" of English pubs—serves toward validating the event as authentic.[66] Much of the modern tourism industry is aided by the twentieth-century obsession to preserve the past, and fuses a romantic, authentic and historical gaze.

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[64] Urry, 94.

[65] Urry, 94, 117-18, also see Donald Horne, *The Great Museum: The Re-presentation of History*. (London: Pluto, 1984).

[66] Urry, 120 refers to P. Norman, "Faking the Present," *The Guardian* 10-11 (1988) regarding the "ye olde-ing" of British pubs.

The tourist gaze as a conceptual approach to the study of tourism challenges the approaches of previous scholars who tended to be preoccupied with authenticity. In *The Image* (1962), Daniel Boorstin argues that under conditions of modernity, Americans are unable to, and uninterested in, experiencing reality. Instead they delight in "pseudo-events," events based on images constructed from ever-sophisticated communication technology (e.g., television, magazines, and computers). For Boorstin, the mass tourist exemplifies the modern attraction to pseudo-events.[67] Travelling *en mass* within an "environmental bubble" tourists indulge in inauthenticity, and, as a result, the industry and local people contrive exaggerated images to fulfill tourists' expectations. Thus, the vicious circle of illusion and inauthenticity becomes the framework for the tourism industry.

Turner and Ash support Boorstin's notion of tourism as a contrived experience. In *The Golden Hordes* (1975), they argue that the pseudo-event becomes the tourist's reality. The cultural pageant staged by the industry is part of a holiday package constructed on European and North American desires for "the antique, the ethnic and the pristine."[68] The holiday package shelters tourists who seek a safe and simplified version of reality. Turner and Ash refer to tourists as "Nomads of Affluence," and, although recognizing that they are not a homogenous group, argue that what binds them is "the existence of a coherent industry which strives to recognize, stimulate and serve the travel needs of all of them." As a group, tourists are modern-day imperialists of the "Pleasure

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[67] Daniel Boorstin, *The Image: What happened to the American Dream* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1962), 103.

[68] Louis Turner and John Ash, *The Golden Hordes: International Tourism and Pleasure Periphery* (London: Constable and Company, 1975), 139-40.

Periphery," regions of the world appropriated and fabricated for urban escape.[69] Travel on the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries can be interpreted as an example of a holiday package that sheltered imperialistic tourists from local realities of economic hardship, class struggle, and cultural appropriation.[70] Acting as a travel agent, the CPR constructed an environmental bubble by means of CPR itineraries, hotels, and outfitters. Interpreted as a CPR-contrived pseudo-event, travel by train in the Canadian Rockies was illusionary and inauthentic.

Dean MacCannell challenges the pseudo-event in *The Tourist* (1976), and argues that authenticity not illusion is central to the tourism experience.[71] For MacCannell, tourists seek authenticity in travel because they cannot find it in their own lives. Modernity crafts truth and reality as elsewhere, and, borrowing from sociologist Erving Goffman, MacCannell proposes that the elsewhere of the tourist experience is staged in front and back regions. The front is the setting clearly designed by the tourism industry (e.g., hotels, restaurants, and tour operators), but the mystified backstage is where tourists sense that authenticity exists. Tourism entrepreneurs are aware of this desire to experience the backstage, in particular the work lives of others, and, thus, they open the back in a form of staged authenticity.[72] For example, early twentieth-century spectators at

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[69] Turner and Ash, 11-14.

[70] See Lisa LaFramboise, "Travellers in Skirts: "Women and English Language Travel Writing, 1820-1926" (Ph.D. diss., University of Alberta, 1997), 92, available on-line from *Theses Canada*. Ottawa: National Library of Canada, amicus no. 1822279492, observes that late nineteenth-century travel in western Canada was defined by itinerary, service, and material structure of the CPR.

[71] Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley: University of California, First California Paperback Printing, 1999), 100-102.

[72] MacCannell, 92-99, also see Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959).

Banff Indian Days indulged in the work lives of First Nation women as they gazed upon pack horse and tipi pitching contests.[73] Whether a front or backstage attraction, MacCannell argues that tourism celebrates difference (e.g., class, ethnicity, age, politics, and profession), and is a reflection of the international middle-class search for authenticity in other times, people and places.[74]

Urry agrees with MacCannell that tourism is an industry of differentiation, one that constructs and sustains otherness in the unique, the unfamiliar, the familiar out of context, and the extraordinary in the ordinary. Urry, however, challenges MacCannell's preoccupation with authenticity, and drawing from Gottlieb (1982) on the nature of American vacations, asserts that the tourist's quest is one of differentiation not authenticity. Authenticity is only relevant in how it helps define the "ordinary/everyday" from the "extraordinary."[75] Nature and culture have emerged in modern society as two main signifiers of difference, and Urry applies the tourist's quest for differentiation to nineteenth-century British seaside resorts (e.g., Blackpool and the Lake District), the heritage industry (e.g., "colonial" Havana, Cuba, and Wigan Pier Heritage Centre, UK), and themed urban landscapes (e.g., nineteenth-century Paris, and Europa Boulevard in West Edmonton Mall, Edmonton, Alberta).

The tourist gaze has received much attention in social science scholarship. It offers a conceptual framework for the postmodern mentalities of society in transit and at home, and of tourist motivations, anticipations and values. It has emerged in various intersecting fields such as tourism, women's studies, cultural studies, geography, sociology, history, and anthropology.[76] Although some scholars see the tourist gaze as a valuable tool, others offer critiques of Urry's work. Perkins and Thoms (2001) argue that Urry's emphasis on the historical development of heritage tourism in Britain resulted in a Eurocentric tourist gaze that is static and passive. They propose that tourists are performers, actively engaging in "physical, intellectual and cognitive activity *and* gazing."[77] The "tourist performance," they argue, is better suited for a country such as New Zealand where tourists are not spectators but participants in adventure tourism. The tourist as spectator indulging in the visual and aesthetic is also questioned by Dann and Jacobsen (2003) and Game (1991) who argue that smell, taste and touch are valuable senses that situate tourists in place.[78] Wearing and Wearing (1996) critique the subject/object construction of place in the tourist gaze, and drawing from feminist studies, propose a shift from the tourist as gazer to an interactive person, from a destination as place to an interactive space, and from tourism as bound by time and space to an open-ended activity of self-enhancement.[79] The perceived lack of agency and social interaction is furthered by Cloke and Thorns (1998) who argue that tourists are active and reflexive individuals who do not passively accept images constructed by the tourism industry. Instead, tourists actively construct meaning in the places they visit.[80] Urry recognizes the critiques of social science scholars, and responds in the second edition of *Tourist Gaze* (2002) by "*embodying* and *mobilising*" the gaze. By recognizing that travel involves corporeal bodies moving through endless sensescapes, Urry endeavours to maintain the tourist gaze as a valuable approach to understanding both tourist phenomena and everyday life.[81]

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[73] E.J. Hart, *The Selling of Canada: The CPR and the Beginnings of Canadian Tourism* (Banff: Altitude, 1983), 59.

[74] MacCannell, 11-13; and Urry, 9.

[75] Urry, 11-12.

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[76] Charles Acland, "Imaxtechnology and the Tourist Gaze," *Cultural Studies* 12, no. 3 (1998): 429-45; Steffan Igor Ayora-Diaz, "Imaging Authenticity in the Local Medicines of Chiapas, Mexico," *Critique of Anthropology* 20, no. 2 (2000): 173-90; Mike Crang, "Picturing Practices: Research through the Tourist Gaze," *Progress in Human Geography* 21, no. 3 (1997): 359-73; Graham M.S. Dann and Jens K.S. Jacobsen, "Tourism Smellscapes," *Tourism Geographies* 5, no. 1 (2003): 3-25; Rosemary Deem, "Women, the Cities and Holidays," *Leisure Studies* 15, no. 2 (1996): 105-19; Arjun Gunerante, "Shaping the Tourist's Gaze: Representing Ethnic Difference in a Nepali Village," *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute* 7, no. 3 (2001): 527-43; McKay, 34; James Carrier, "Mind, Gaze and Engagement: Understanding the Environment," *Journal of Material Culture* 8, no. 1 (2003): 5-23; Harvey C. Perkins and David C. Thoms, "Gazing or Performing?: Reflections of Urry's Tourist Gaze in the Context of Contemporary Experience in the Antipodes," *International Sociology* 16, no. 2 (2001): 185-204; Pretes, 1-15; Maria M. Bryan and Fiona H. McKenzie, "A monastic tourist experience: the packaging of a place," *Tourism Geographies* 5, no. 1 (2003): 54-70; Ellen Strain, *Public Places, Private Journeys: Ethnography, Entertainment, and the Tourist Gaze* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University, 2003); and Betsy Wearing and Stephen Wearing, "Refocussing the tourist experience: the flaneur and the chorister, "*Leisure Studies* 15, no. 4 (1996): 229-43.

[77] Perkins and Thoms, 186.

[78] Graham M.S. Dann and Jens K.S. Jacobsen, "Tourism Smellscapes," *Tourism Geographies* 5, no. 1 (2003): 4; and Ann Game, Undoing the Social: Towards a Deconstructive Sociology (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1991), 177.

I see the tourist gaze as a valuable approach from which to examine the production of the imagined landscape of the Last Best West through early twentieth-century tourism in Alberta. The Last Best West as an imagined region is informed by ways of seeing. To return to Morton, cultural landscapes are a construct of the mind.[82] The seeing eye is one means to cultivate the imagination. The tourist gaze thought of as an active way of seeing, not simply the passive act of seeing, allows for analysis of the cultural mentalities and historical conditions that shaped perceptions of the West and the construction of the Last Best West through tourism in Alberta. In this sense, the study is an examination of the production of a regional sensibility through the processes of expansionism, settlement, regionalism, and tourism from the mid-nineteenth century to 1940. Three main questions guide the study: (1) what is the nature of a western regional sensibility; (2) how did this sensibility inscribe meaning on the landscape in Alberta; and (3) what were the cultural mentalities, historical conditions, and regional ways of seeing that endorsed the production of the Last Best West through tourism in Alberta? The forces shaping tourism in Alberta have yet to be thoroughly examined in Canadian tourism scholarship. Scholarship on the history of Alberta tourism has primarily focused on the Canadian Rockies, and has offered preliminary insights on pre-1945 travel-related leisure and frontier imagery of the Calgary Stampede.[83] Thus, this study contributes original work to tourism scholarship.

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[79] Wearing and Wearing, 230.

[80] See P. Cloke and H.C. Perkins, "Cracking the Canyon with the Awesome Foursome: Representations of Adventure Tourism in New Zealand," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 16 (1998): 185–218.

[81] Urry, 145, 152-53. Urry's recognition of the corporeal aspects of the gaze parallels trends in social science scholarship that explore the places of the subject in contemporary culture. See Game, 39-47, for discussion of Foucault and bodily forms of power.

[82] Morton, "Seeing a Unliterary Landscape," 17.

Chapter One examines nineteenth-century expansionism in which the West was transformed from a barren and inhospitable land to a land endowed with the imperial grandeur of the nation. The bitter disappointments of western settlement and the delayed arrival of progress resulted in the gradual abandonment of the expansionist project. The legacy of expansionism was a utopian vision of the West. Westerners adopted a utopian sentiment, and embraced a mythic understanding of the past and present. When Alberta achieved provincial status in 1905, the province adopted a western regional way of seeing, and projected Alberta as the Last Best West. I propose that the Last Best West emerged as the ideological framework for early twentieth-century tourism in Alberta.

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[83] See Jessup, 2002; PearlAnn Reichwein and Karen Fox, "Margaret Fleming and the Alpine Club of Canada: A Woman's Place in Mountain Leisure and Literature, 1932-1952," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 26, no. 3 (2001), 35-60; Bill Waiser, *Park Prisoners: The Untold Story of Western Canada's National Parks, 1915-1946* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1995); Donald Wetherell, *Useful Pleasures: The Shaping of Leisure in Alberta 1896-1945* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, University of Regina, 1990); Hart, 1983; Robert Seiler, "M.B. 'Doc' Marcell: Official Photographer of the First Calgary Stampede," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 33, no. 2 (2003): 219-38; and Robert Seiler and Tamara Seiler, "The Social Construction of the Canadian Cowboy: Calgary Exhibition and Stampede Posters, 1952-1972," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 33, no. 3. (1998): 51-77.

Chapter Two examines the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede from 1912 to 1935 as an example of civic production of the Last Best West through tourism. I propose that Calgary experienced three cultural turning points in the adoption of the Last Best West as true to its civic identity. The first turning point was the 1912 Stampede. This cultural pageant marked a shift in the focus of civic boosters from industrial growth and material success—the primary focus of the civic exhibition since 1886—to focus on the past. A ranching past served the booster spirit of community solidarity, and was used at the 1912 Stampede to educate the public on a common understanding of Alberta's frontier history. The 1912 Stampede in Calgary was a cultural pageant held as a tribute to the "dying race" of old frontier. The frontier gaze produced in Stampede publicity reflected a fusion of American and Canadian traditions. The lawlessness of the American tradition was countered by myths of a gentlemanly Canadian frontier characterized by British ranchmen, North West Mounted Police, and Christian missionaries. I turn to the event itself to argue that the parade of western history reinforced cultural hegemony, and that the rodeo was reflective of an early twentieth-century holiday sporting competition. I propose that the popularity of the 1912 Stampede resulted from its ability to capitalize on popular sentiment of the nineteenth-century frontier. The second cultural turning point in Calgary was in 1923 when a Stampede entertainment program was added to Calgary Industrial Exhibition. The Stampede programme was initially seen as a means to draw spectators to the agricultural fair, however, it quickly emerged as the dominant attraction. The Calgary Stampede and Exhibition became a major player in the tourism industry, and was situated alongside Banff and Lake Louise as a premier attraction in Alberta. The third cultural turning point was marked by Weadick's claim over ownership of the

"Stampede" tourism product. The lawsuit compelled the City of Calgary and the Calgary Industrial Exhibition Company to evaluate the relationship between civic identity and the Stampede brand. The resulting civic declaration of ownership over the Stampede tourism product solidified the Last Best West as true to civic identity.

Chapter Three examines Government of Alberta involvement in the tourism industry as an example of provincial production of the Last Best West through tourism. In an examination of government policy and publicity from 1905 to 1940, I propose that the government-constructed tourist gaze went through four phases. Each phase capitalized on cultural myths of a Last Best West in order to self-actualize the past, and promote a mythic present. The first phase from 1905 to 1919 was rooted in early settlement boosterism, in which Alberta was portrayed as a land of unbridled agricultural potential where the industrious and hard working could pursue the gentlemanly sport of hunting, or could "rest and repair" at rural lake resorts and mountain parks. The second phase from 1920 to 1929 emerged with the popularity of auto-touring and government recognition of the value of selling settlement to tourists. The government advertised to the auto tourist in settlement literature, and focused on Alberta industry, history, and landscape. The third phase from 1930 to 1938 marked recognition of tourism as an industry, and the emergence of tourism-specific publicity. During the Depression, Alberta was promoted in auto-touring map books as an empire of mountain peaks, prairies, and the open road. Wartime publications of 1939 and 1940 marked the fourth phase of publicity, and were characterized by the refinement of the Last Best West. The government demonstrated increasingly sophisticated use of romantic imagery, and in the virtual erasure of modernity, nineteenth-century folk—cowboys, "Mounties," pioneers, and "Indians"—

emerged as heroes of the grand epic of the Canadian West. The production of an imagined regional landscape through tourism is a selective process, and I conclude the chapter with an examination of politics of representation and cultural hegemony.

In the early-twentieth century, Alberta was constructed through tourism as a "thrilling setting of frontier romance." "In Alberta you will find 'Mounties,' Indians, pioneer guides and trappers who add color to many a holiday moment," provincial boosters declared to tourists in 1940.[84] The process of constructing Alberta as the Last Best West was shaped by a western regional sensibility, and the forces of antimodernism, romanticism, and consumerism. The contested ownership of the tourist gaze and selective nature of tourism imagery reveals that essentialized cultural icons of early twentieth-century tourism were not benign symbols of provincial expression. Instead, the Last Best West was a politically-charged narrative, and reflected a cultural preference for a particular way of seeing Alberta. Civic and provincial boosters contributed to shaping a dominant way of seeing the province. By asserting the Last Best West as the dominant narrative, boosters marginalized other possible interpretations of the provincial experience. An examination of the work of civic boosters at the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, and provincial boosters in the Government of Alberta reveals the cultural beliefs and attitudes that motivated the production of Alberta as the Last Best West through tourism.

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[84] Publicity Branch, *We like Alberta, Canada. So will you!* (Edmonton: Department of Economic Affairs, [1940]), n.p.

Chapter One

Expansionism, Western Regionalism, and the Utopian Legacy, 1850s-1905

> No where is to be found so inviting a field of Immigration as that of the vast and magnificent Prairies of the North West of the Dominion of Canada.
>
> Thomas Spence, 1879

Canada is a nation defined, in part, by regions and regionalisms. Canadians identify with notions of the "Maritimes" and "Prairies," and reference to the "West" and "North" is so commonplace that regions—defined by geographic location—and regionalisms—defined by the social milieu of location—are accepted as natural entities. Regions and regionalisms, however, are social constructs, and have been shaped throughout Canadian history by shifting perceptions of the natural, political, economic, and cultural forces that constitute place.[85] This chapter seeks to explore perceptions of the West as shaped by the forces of nineteenth-century expansionist sentiment and mass western settlement. I begin with perception of the West as a wasteland during the fur trade era from the 1650s to 1850s to examine the mid nineteenth-century shift toward an expansionist ideology. Following the work of historian Doug Owram, I propose that in the gradual abandonment of the expansionist project, residents of the West developed a sense of regional presence. Western regionalism was grounded in nostalgia for a utopian frontier past and faith in the future. When Alberta achieved provincial status in 1905, it adopted a regional sensibility in its construction of provincial identity I propose that the ideology of the Last Best West characterized the imagined landscape of Alberta, and the provided the ideological framework for early twentieth-century tourism in the province.

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[85] Davey, 2; Gerald Friesen, "The Evolving Meanings of Region in Canada," *The Canadian Historical Review*, 82, no. 3 (2001): 530-45.

1. "Thou dost not know the hardships I endur'd": The Fur Trade West, 1650s-1850s

European interest in the land west of the St. Lawrence River had its origins in the late sixteenth-century determination to find a short sea route to the Orient. Once explorers realized the commercial potential of the fur-bearing animals on the northern continent, a route to the Far East was no longer a priority.[86] Riches were to be had along the interior rivers, and by the late-seventeenth century, the French and British had established fur-trading empires in the St. Lawrence-Great Lakes drainage and the Hudson's Bay drainage, respectively. In the two hundred years that First Nations, Métis and Europeans trapped and traded, European interest in the area rarely extended beyond commerce. Most explorers were contracted by the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) or the rival North West Company to seek new trade routes and alliances with First Nation communities. These Europeans painted a picture of the North West as a suitable place for resource extraction but certainly not for settlement.[87]

Hudson's Bay fur trader Henry Kelsey is celebrated as one of the first Europeans to enter the North West. In a 1690 expedition from York Factory to as far west as, perhaps, the South Saskatchewan River, Kelsey wrote a poem that reflected fear and dread for the land. "Thou dost not know the hardships I endur'd..." he wrote, "Nor wilt thou me believe without y^t thou had seen, The Emynent Dangers that did often me attend."[88] Europeans perceived the North West as a desolate and fearful wilderness. The overwhelmingly negative perspective of Rupert's Land was countered by First Nations who perceived it as their homeland, Red River settlers of 1811 who found spiritual and moral reprieve in toiling the interior's only agricultural settlement, and entrepreneurs who sought to crack the HBC monopoly. Nonetheless, popular opinion reduced the North West to an uninhabitable wasteland in the European mind until the mid-nineteenth century.

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[86] Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1984), 46–47.

[87] Francis, *Images of the West*, 1.

One explanation as to why the European view of the North West as entirely unsuitable for European settlement persisted for nearly two hundred years is that the HBC desired to retain control of the land for fur production. The company, it has been argued, actively promoted a desolate image of the land in order to discourage settlement.[89] Owram offers another explanation, and proposes that later explorers reported what they already knew, not what they experienced first hand. Popular books such as *Narrative of a Journey to the Shores of the Polar Sea* (1823) by Sir John Franklin depicted the northwest as an arctic wasteland, and scientific reports reinforced the northerly image. Explorers, trappers, and traders arrived in preparation for the dangerous and often violent struggle of "man" over nature, and "man" over "man."[90] The land was perceived as only for the hardiest of men, certainly not a place for non-Native women or children, and, as told in explorer accounts, only the heroic survived. In this respect, the North West was to a certain extent imagined in the minds of explorers, trappers, and traders prior to their arrival. Although their accounts reflected the scientific inquiry of the Enlightenment, a mythic Nor'West had crept into popular culture and history, and influenced how Europeans experienced Rupert's Land.

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[88] Henry Kelsey, *The Kelsey Papers*, ed. A.G. Doughty and C. Martin (Ottawa: Public Archives of Canada, 1929), 1-4, quoted in Francis, *Images of the West*, 14.

[89] Owram, 193, 205 observes that the Hudson's Bay Company was perceived by expansionists as a barrier to settlement. Expansionists saw the company as actively conspiring against a positive image of Rupert's Land. In the 1880s, regional historians reoriented the interpretation of the HBC. They presented the HBC as a company with right and just presence in the West in the seventeenth century. Although still critical of the HBC, historians on the Canadian West framed the company as an important aspect of western Canadian history.

[90] Owram, 11-15.

By the early-nineteenth century, the mythic Nor'West thrived in fictional accounts of the land. Romanticism had begun to transform "wilderness" from a place of fear and evil to a place of romance and adventure. In the process, inhabitants of the wild—First Nations and frontiersmen—became the primitive other of European sentiment.[91] Romantic primitivism made for compelling reading, and fictional characters such as adventurer Natty Bumppo of the *Leatherstocking Tales*, a series of books written by America's first novelist James Fenimore Cooper in the 1820s and 1840s, reflected the archetypical frontiersman of the American West. American fiction did much to shape a frontier gaze in the reader's imagination, and, as suggested by Owram, many youth may have joined the Canadian fur trade in search of a life as adventurous and free as Natty Bumppo's.[92]

2. "The bond that binds our great Dominion": The Early Expansionist West, 1850s-1860s

Romanticism transformed the western wilderness into a more hospitable and attractive land. In doing so, it also influenced the emerging expansionist movement in

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[91] Francis, *Images of the West*, 39.

British North America.[93] Expansionists were a loose collection of self-declared "far-sighted patriots"—mainly from Toronto and the Ottawa Valley—who shared a common vision that the future success of the eastern colonies lay in the immediate acquisition and development of Rupert's Land. Initially, expansionists regarded the North West strictly in terms of natural resource extraction for the purpose of advancing Ontario's interests. However, over time, the movement also came to view the land in terms of agricultural settlement.[94] As argued by historian Gerald Friesen, the western interior was perceived as "a source of trading activity, not an area with ambitions or interests of its own."[95] Expansionism was a product of the optimism of the 1850s, a decade marked by the rapid construction of rail lines to meet increased international demand for timber and agricultural products. British North America was prosperous. There was a sense that the eastern colonies were entering a new stage of development—one in which they could be freed from a colonial frontier status to take their rightful place at the centre of the British empire.[96] Belief in the need to acquire and develop the North West found fertile ground among the business and political elite in Toronto and the Ottawa Valley. Enthusiasm was contagious, and expansionist sentiment spread to "a good many Canadians."[97]

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[92] Owram, 16. Also see James Fenimore Cooper, *The Leatherstocking Tales* (New York: Viking, 1985).

[93] Douglas Francis, "Changing Images of the West," in *A Passion for Identity: An Introduction to Canadian Studies*, 3rd ed., ed. David Taras and Beverly Rasporich (Toronto: ITP Nelson), 422.

[94] Owram, 3-4, 48.

[95] Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, 111.

[96] Owram, 42-43; and Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, 111.

[97] Owram, 47, observes that while Toronto and the Ottawa Valley were the primary centres for the expansionist movement, interest in expansionism was shared by "a good many Canadians." He proposes that the movement had both provincial and regional dimensions, and suggests that it was primarily supported by English-speaking Canadians. Owram, 5-6, notes that French Canadians tended not to embrace

The governments of the United Canadas and Britain sponsored scientific expeditions in order to reassess and validate the agricultural prospects of the North West popularly embraced in public and private spheres. Expeditions led by John Palliser (1857-1859) and Henry Youle Hind (1857-1858) returned with favourable conclusions: other than the arid desert of treeless prairie in the south (an infertile strip of land later known as Palliser's triangle), the interior consisted of a "fertile belt" extending from the Red River colony to the foothills of the Canadian Rockies.[98] To access the fertile belt and the untapped resources of the North West, expansionists advocated the building of a transcontinental railway. A railway, it was argued, would link British North America not only to the riches of the North West, but also to the Far East.[99] The idea of a transcontinental railway appealed to British imperialism, and the railway emerged as a symbolic umbilical cord linking British North America to the motherland. As declared in 1866 by railway advocate Thomas Rawlings in 1866:

> Carry out the project of a railroad to the Pacific Ocean, at whatever cost to the British Government or people, and the future of that country will present a panorama of magnificence unexampled in history....The silks, teas, and opium of China will swiftly speed over the Rocky Mountains to the warehouses of Europe; spices and Oriental luxuries of India will be transported over lands where the red race but an age since had trapped the beaver and the ermine; the re-awakened commerce of Japan would find a way across the prairie land of Hudson's Bay Territory; the gold of California, or British Columbia, and the Saskatchewan Valley, would find safe passage by the great lakes to the Atlantic; the wool of California would find a more direct route to England and the homeward and the outward bound would cross the Atlantic on their way to India, China, Australia,

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expansionism. Francis, Images of the West, 76, observes that business leaders in Montreal did support the notion of an agricultural hinterland in the North West. According to Abbott, 178, the nineteenth-century Montreal business community was primarily English-speaking. Thus, expansionism was primarily supported by Anglo-Canadians in Quebec. Also see Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, 111.

[98] Owram, 64; and Francis, *Images of the West*, 78-79.

[99] Owram, 49.

> California, British Columbia, British North America, and the United States, in social companionship. What scenes would be witnessed on this route![100]

Politicians, entrepreneurs, and ex-patriot traders of the North West embraced expansionist ideals. By the 1860s, the prospect of a railway and western settlement was accepted as the destiny of Rupert's Land.[101]

The North West was the key to the expansionist project, and, apparently, to the survival of Canada as a nation. By the late 1860s, expansionism and Canadian nationalism were seemingly identical, and the North West was considered essential to the success of both movements. Rupert's Land was the perceived unifying force from which the newly-joined British colonies—Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Canada East (now Quebec), and Canada West (now Ontario)—could generate an imagined sense of national presence.[102] Confederation in 1867 was functional in terms of politics and economics, so, it was the acquisition of Rupert's Land and all its natural resource potential that was seen as the great unifier for the Dominion of Canada. When Rupert's Land joined Confederation in 1870 as the Province of Manitoba and the North-West Territories, the western interior shifted from a perceived hinterland to "the fountainhead of national greatness and imperial grandeur."[103]

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[100] Thomas Rawlings, *The Confederation of the British North American Provinces; Their Past History and Future Prospects, Including also British Columbia and Hudson's Bay Territory* (London: S. Low and Marston, 1865), 6-7, quoted in Francis, *Images of the West*, 101.

[101] Owram, 31-34.

[102] Francis, *Images of the West*, 73.

[103] Francis, *Images of the West*, 83. I refer to the Province of Manitoba and the North-West Territories (present-day Alberta and Saskatchewan) as the "West." Miro Cernetig, "The Far Side of the Rockies: Politics and Identity in British Columbia," in *A Passion for Identity*, 3rd ed., ed. David Taras and Beverly Rasporich, 449-462, (Toronto: ITP Nelson, 1997), 458, observes that British Columbia has erroneously been considered a part of the West. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the role of British Columbia in ways of seeing the West. However, it is important to note the contested inclusion/exclusion of British Columbia in constructions of the West.

Owram suggests that the writings of expansionists, surveyors, and early settlers after the late 1860s reflected an experience of the North West that was as much emotional as it was intellectual.[104] The imagined landscape of the North West was shaped by the forces of romanticism, expansionism, and nationalism. In the expansionist mind, Rupert's Land was a hinterland of boundless natural resources, a future agricultural empire, and a land of imperial grandeur. "Thou'rt the bond that binds our Great Dominion," it was recorded in the folk song *Manitoba*. "East to West from foam to foam. Thou giv-est us from mines and forests, From lakes and from they fer-tile plains. We will live in thy light, We will stand for the right In the Land where Freedom reigns."[105] By the 1860s, the utopian sensibility of expansionism had successfully transformed the North West from a barren, inhospitable wasteland to an imagined landscape of opportunity and unity.

3. "Two quite distinct, and in some measure conflicting ideas": The Late Expansionist West, 1870s-1890s

In the 1870s, the Canadian West of expansionist rhetoric was tested by the realities of western settlement and development. The disparity between myth and reality resulted in two distinct and conflicting ways of seeing the western interior. The expansionist gaze was supported by the work of Dominion surveyors and publicists. In the 1870s, the federal government sponsored further scientific surveys to assess the West's natural resources. Importantly, the Dominion sought information for the mapping of agricultural lands and railway routes. The expansionist spirit was rampant among surveyors, and they returned to Ottawa with glowing reports. One such surveyor was botanist John Macoun .

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[104] Owram, 70.

[105] "Manitoba," score, n.d., in Francis, *Images of the West*, 102.

who joined five expeditions from 1872 to 1881. During his tenure with the Dominion, Macoun demonstrated increasingly blind faith in the potential of the land, and became one of the most adamant supporters of western settlement. He rejected reports by Palliser and Hind of a great desert and fertile belt, and decisively concluded, "There [is] no such thing as a fertile belt at all— it [is] all equally good land."[106] The findings reported by Macoun and other surveyors fulfilled the anticipations of expansionists and the Dominion, and verified that the West was ripe for agricultural settlement and a transcontinental railway.

In the expansionist imagination, the West took its place as the Granary of the British Empire among other regions in Canada. Agrarian ideals were embraced by boosters for the Dominion and provincial governments, and private interests, such as the CPR. Thomas Spence, a Scottish immigrant to Red River in 1866, was one of the most prolific writers of immigration pamphlets.[107] "No where is [there] to be found so inviting a field of Immigration as that of the vast and magnificent Prairies of the North West of the Dominion of Canada," he wrote, "none with greater undeveloped wealth, or with such prospect of rapid development."[108] Spence assured future immigrants that optimistic depictions of the region were not exaggerations. "There has been no attempt to depict in glowing colours the resources of the country, beyond the warrant of facts," he declared.[109] Spence was so concerned about the publication of "facts" that he refuted "slanders upon the Canadian North-West" by American railway companies, and defended Canada's utopia with expert testimonies of Dominion surveyors, British dignitaries, and American statesmen.[110] Immigration was a competitive business, and boosters such as Spence understood the need to construct and protect the imagined agrarian paradise.

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[106] John Macoun quoted in *Manitoba Free Press*, 7 April 1881, 1, quoted in Waiser, Bill, *The Field Naturalist: John Macoun, the Geological Survey, and Natural Science* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1989), 49.

[107] See Owram, 104-105 for a history of Spence's career.

[108] Thomas Spence, *The Prairie Lands of Canada: Presented to the world as a new and inviting field of enterprise for the capitalist, and new superior attractions and advantages as a home for immigrants compared with the western prairies of the United States: The elements of our future greatness and prosperity* (Montreal: Gazette Printing, 1879), 7, available on-line from University of Alberta, Peel's Prairie Provinces, no. 896.

The utopian image of the West was increasingly questioned by residents and observant visitors. Settlers discovered all too quickly that Thomas Spence's land of "farming made so easy" was an illusion.[111] Many settlers rebuked expansionist rhetoric once they experienced the disparity between the myth and reality firsthand. As one disillusioned settler wrote, "So may books, pamphlets, etc. (mostly untrue) have been written about the charms and beautiful climate of the North-West of Canada and none about the hardships that have to be endured there that I think it high time someone should let the public know the true state of affairs.[112] Adam Shortt, professor of politics and economics at Queen's University, articulated the disparity between myth and reality in an article published in Queen's Quarterly in 1895, observing:

> Before going out to see something of the territories for myself, I found that, in my own case, I had developed two quite distinct, and in some measure conflicting ideas answering to the name North-West. The one, corresponding to the great North-West with the retinue of superlatives, was obtained by reading Government

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[109] Thomas Spence, *Useful and practical hints for the settler on Canadian prairie lands, and for the guidance of intending British emigrants to Manitoba and the North-West of Canada* (Montreal: Gazette Printing, 1881), 3, available on-line from University of Alberta, Peel's Prairie Provinces, no. 1010.

[110] Thomas Spence, *The question of the hour! 1883: Where to emigrate: Advice to intending emigrants from Great Britain with important facts for their information* ([Montreal, 1883]), 6, available on-line from University of Alberta, Peel's Prairie Provinces, no. 1177.

[111] Spence, *Hints for the Settler*, 8.

[112] Public Archives of Canada [PAC], MG 29 C 38, "My Four Years Experience in the North West of America: Roughing it in the Far West" (unpublished manuscript, n.d.), 1-2, quoted in Francis, *Images of the West*, 156.

> pamphlets and settler's guides, C.P.R. literature...and a number of enthusiastic writers who are the chief ornaments of the Canadian school of patriots. The other, a much narrower, more localized and much less splendid, but withal more human idea, was derived mainly from conversations with persons who had lived in widely different parts of the North-West, and who, while tolerably well satisfied with their lot, were not rendered arrogant by unusual good fortune.[113]

Shortt's observation of the disparity between expansionist utopia and the settler reality reflected the uneasy coexistence of enthusiasm and disillusionment characteristic of the late-nineteenth century. The 1880s had been ushered in by unchecked prosperity. Winnipeg appeared to be well on its way to becoming a powerful centre for trade and export, and speculation brought the value of land to new heights. In 1883, however, the boom came to an end, and land prices collapsed, accompanied by a decline in settlement, commercial investments, and the grain market. The West was not living up to expectations, and residents of Ontario increasingly questioned the need for eastern sponsorship of what was proving to be an unprofitable experiment.[114] Settlers who had migrated west under expansionist rhetoric blamed powerholders in the East for the West's inability to realize expansionist dreams. The federal government and eastern corporations, such as the CPR, simply had not done enough in the name of western prosperity, it was argued. Settlers who had risen to the call to build the nation felt betrayed by the Ontario-inspired expansionist movement. As Owram argues, for the disillusioned westerner, "The easterner was to blame for the failure of the West to live up to its promise," and was thereafter regarded with suspicion.[115]

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[113] Adam Shortt, "Some Observations on the Great North-West. Part I: Immigration and Transportation," *Queen's Quarterly*, 3 (July 1895): 183, in Francis, *Images of the West*, 173. See Francis, *Images of the West*, 156-58 for discussion of Shortt's article. Also see Berger, 1-31, for analysis of Shortt's contribution to the study of Canadian history.

[114] Owram, 169-79.

[115] Owram, 171-73.

By the late-nineteenth century, two distinct and conflicting ways of seeing the West existed. The expansionist image of an agrarian paradise promoted by Dominion surveyors and immigration publicists stood in sharp contrast to the harsh realities of settlement experienced by the men and women who immigrated to the so-called promised land. Owram argues that it was enthusiasm not fraud that led to ambitious accounts of the West.[116] Optimism ran unchecked in insular expansionist circles, and resulted in a region imagined more in the minds of boosters and bureaucrats than in reality. Disillusioned residents of the West—many residents who had migrated from Ontario—increasingly questioned expansionist rhetoric, and blamed eastern corporations and the federal government for the West's fall from national grace.[117] A regional sense of presence emerged from the divergent ways of seeing. Increasingly residents of the West saw themselves as being from a distinct region within Canada.

4. A Western Regionalist Gaze: The West's West, 1880-1900

By the late 1890s, the Ontario-inspired movement that had successfully transformed Rupert's Land in the Canadian consciousness from an inhospitable wasteland to a fertile garden of opportunity had been completely dismantled. As Owram argues:

> [Expansionism] had died because its own expectations had been too high to face the test of time and because it had never been able to reconcile its national goals with the regional perspective, whether eastern or western, inherent in the very process of expansion.[118]

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[116] Owram, 106.

[117] Owram, 173.

[118] Owram, 224.

Ontario expansionists had not anticipated that the West would become a land with its own ambitions and interests.[119] Regional sentiment challenged the original centralist assumption of expansionism, and by the late 1890s, when divergent expectations of the West were seemingly irreconcilable, expansionism was abandoned by both the East and the West as a failed experiment.[120]

A distinct western regional way of seeing emerged from failed expansionism. The two hallmarks of western regionalism were: (1) distrust of the East and (2) the adoption of the expansionist utopian tradition. The expansionist experiment left westerners profoundly sceptical of eastern intensions, and grievances were felt at a very personal level. Men and women who had immigrated to the promised land on the basis of expansionist rhetoric felt abandoned by eastern-controlled railway, grain, and elevator companies, banks, and the federal government. "National" organizations were perceived to serve Ontario interests, and the westerners were convinced that the East saw the West solely in terms of eastern progress and profit.[121] Distrust of the East coloured how westerners gazed upon national and territorial politics, commerce, and culture. The gaze was also framed by a utopian sensibility. Westerners embraced the expansionist myth of the fertile garden, in spite of the fact that reality had proved the myth an illusion. Rejection of expansionism was a rejection of eastern control, not of the land itself. The land retained all of its original potential, a potential perceived to have been squandered by eastern indifference and exploitation. A utopian sensibility heralded a mythic past and boundless future as characteristic of a western regional gaze.

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[119] Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, 111.

[120] Owram, 179.

[121] Owram, 172, 219-22.

Recognition of the history of the West was vital to the development of an imagined regional landscape. From an expansionist perspective, the West did not have a past, it only had a future. However, as settlers lured west by expansionist rhetoric became increasingly disillusioned by perceived eastern indifference, they sought to define their sense of place in Canada from within the West. The resulting re-interpretation of Canadian history challenged traditional expansionist perspectives. Western historians presented the region not as an undeveloped hinterland, but as a successful frontier community prepared to join the Dominion. The past was looked upon with increasing fondness, and westerners situated the golden age of the West, not in the future as expansionists did, but in the mid nineteenth-century frontier.[122] As Owram argues, "The people and events of the years before 1870 moved from obscurity to romantic idealization and, in the process, all events connected with the era took on a romantic colouring."[123] Westerners appeared to long for the disappearing frontier, and cultural producers took it upon themselves to salvage what remained of the past. As outlined by the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, it was the duty of the society to "rescue from oblivion the memory of early missionaries, fur traders and settlers."[124] Memoirs, bibliographies, and history books flooded the market, and people turned to art, literature, and song to preserve an older order. The past became a utopia freed from the shackles of the East and civilization. By the turn of the century, the grand epic of the Canadian West and its frontier heroes constructed the imagined landscape of the West.

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[122] Owram, 206-7, 211.

[123] Owram, 207, makes this observation in regards to Manitoba. In Alberta, the years before the 1880s and 1890s were framed in terms of a utopian past.

[124] Bell, "Inaugural Address," Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, Transaction no. 34, 28 February 1889, 1, in Owram, 200.

The future of the West was also viewed through utopian lenses, and unrelenting faith in the land shaped the imagined landscape. "The image of a fertile land and the whole myth of a utopian future," Owram argues, "remained intact in the work of western writers and promoters."[125] Faith in the future, however, begged explanation when the future did not hold true to utopian ideals. Westerners placed blame for unrealized potential on the East. Perceived eastern indifference to western success fuelled a sense of alienation. The rhetoric of alienation was strikingly similar to that of expansionism. Both sentiments required a repressive other—the East in the case of western alienation, and the Hudson's Bay Company in the case of expansionism—that was held responsible for delayed progress and broken promises. If blame for failures were outside of the West, faith in the land could remain unchallenged, and the utopian vision of the West could persist. Owram proposes, "The 'boom' or 'bust' psychology of the western farmer further sustained elements of the old expansionist outlook....Faith in the future is an essential part of the farmer's character if he is to persevere in his precarious livelihood."[126] The boom and bust psychology extended beyond farmers to include individuals involved in ranching, manufacturing, and commercial enterprises, as well as civic and provincial politics. The western economy was rarely stable, and residents were always looking to the next year. Coined as "Next Year Country" in the twentieth century, the West relied on hope for the future. The utopian legacy of expansionism gave westerners access to much-needed optimism.

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[125] Owram, 222.

[126] Owram, 222.

5. Imagining the Provincial Landscape from a Regional Gaze: Alberta as Last Best West

As residents of the West increasingly saw themselves as inhabiting a distinct region in Canada, they sought control over their own political, economic, and social spheres. Since its acquisition by the Dominion in 1870, the North-West Territories had been under federal control, in spite of being governed by a territorial council of appointed, and later, elected, representatives.[127] Many residents felt that territorial status at the hands of eastern bureaucrats stagnated progress and hindered development. As a territory, the North-West had limited ability to access federal grants and subsidies for infrastructure development—roads and schools, for example—and lacked the legislative means to incorporate companies essential to economic and material growth—railways, steamships, telegraphs, and irrigation companies, for example.[128] By the 1890s, a strong movement for provincial status emerged in what is today known as Alberta. In 1895, concerned residents in Calgary argued that autonomy would "change the present condition of discouragement and stagnation" into one of "renewed energy, hopefulness, and prosperity."[129] Control of the North-West, it was argued, should be "in the West, by the West, for the West."[130]

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[127] Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, 223, 239.

[128] The hindrance of territorial status was observed in Alberta Tribune, *Provincial government for Alberta, its meaning and necessity: "Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow"* (Calgary: Alberta Tribune, 1895), n.p, available on-line from University of Alberta, Peel's Prairie Provinces, no. 2179.

Federal political parties cautiously supported the North-West's aspirations for autonomy. The federal Liberal government led by Wilfred Laurier was concerned that the transfer from territorial to provincial status would give the ruling territorial Conservatives too much power. Thus, Laurier strategically divided the West into two provinces of equal size. Alberta and Saskatchewan held their first provincial elections in 1905. Strong lobbying in on part of the federal Liberals led to the success of provincial Liberal leaders Alexander Rutherford and Walter Scott, respectively.[131] Although there was enthusiasm for the future prospects of Alberta, the discouragement and stagnation spoken of by advocates of provincehood did not entirely transform into the renewed energy and prosperity for which they had hoped. The federal government's decision to retain control over public lands and natural resources withheld from Alberta potential revenue and power, and reinforced in the West the belief that the East only sought a hinterland relationship not an equal partnership.[132] In spite of a climate of distrust and alienation, Albertans still held much hope for the future. Utopian imaginings for the West were transferred to the provincial domain, and the imagined regional landscape influenced the emerging sense of provincial identity in Alberta.

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[129] Alberta Tribune, n.p.

[130] John Richards and Larry Pratt, *Prairie Capitalism: Power and Influence in the New West* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1981), 16.

[131] Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, 239-40.

[132] Richards and Pratt, 17.

Alberta adopted a western regional sensibility in its construction of provincial identity, an identity promoted through tourism in the province. I argue that the regional gaze shaped the imagined landscape of the province. Alberta's imagined landscape heralded a utopian past and future, faith in the province and its people, and exhibited strong distrust of eastern politicians and corporations. I propose that the imagined landscape of Alberta—interpreted as the ideological framework of the Last Best West—reveals the cultural mentalities, historical conditions, and regional way of seeing that shaped the province in the early-twentieth century. The term "Last Best West" was initially coined by Dominion boosters, and was used extensively in immigration campaigns from 1896 to 1914. Inherent to the notion of the "last best" was the belief that life in Europe and the eastern cities of North America was inauthentic. With the closure of the American frontier in the 1880s, the Canadian West emerged as the perceived final frontier for European settlement in North America. It was a mythic space where people felt they could free themselves from the perceived constraints of social traditions, class systems, and political structures. Antimodernism, individualism, and social Darwinism framed ways of seeing Canada's frontier. The frontier was also perceived as a wild, primitive land, as symbolized by the mythical cowboy who was decisively masculine, strong in physique and character, and as free as the land he roamed. The mythical Canadian cowboy was projected as a gentleman, and symbolized seemingly lawful and peaceful settlement of the West. The gentlemanly nature of Canada's frontier—an imagined landscape with little room for women—extended to North West Mounted Police (NWMP) and Christian missionaries who believed they benevolently wielded the power of Dominion law and God over First Nation inhabitants. The construction of

"Indians" on the frontier was dualistic in the style of Rousseau's noble savage.[133] On one hand, they were perceived as the "last best" remnant of authentic human nature, while, on the other hand, uncivilized "savages" in need of Euro-Canadian civilization. Indians were the oppositional other of the Euro-Canadian frontier, and were relegated to a symbolic primitive past. The colonialist cultural mentalities of romanticism, imperialism, and expansionism shaped ways of seeing Canada's professed last and best frontier.

In the early-twentieth century, tourism emerged as a means to defy the disappointments of history, and assert the imagined landscape of Alberta as the Last Best West. The tourist trade involved the assembly of goods and services from a cross-section of cultural spheres, and, at a time of regional and provincial self-reflexivity in Canada, Alberta was ripe for cultural expression. The Last Best West revealed the need for cultural producers—civic and provincial boosters, artists, and writers, for example—to express meaning and understanding generated from within Alberta. It was a means to resist meaning imposed by the Ontario heartland, and to inscribe locally-constructed meaning on the Alberta landscape. While the Last Best West challenged the hegemony of Ontario-centric Canadian nationalism, it also asserted hegemony over other possible interpretations of Alberta—the voices of First Nations, non-British settlers, women, and the working class, for example. In many ways, the imagined landscape of the Last Best West was an inversion of lived reality. Western regionalism was born from the contradictions of the imagined and lived experience. The Last Best West revealed a utopian way of seeing how things ought to have been. The ideology structured an imagined past, perceived present, and anticipated future in Alberta. It enabled cultural producers in Alberta to rewrite the past through tourism, and project Alberta as the success story of western Canadian settlement.

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[133] Feifer, *Tourism in History*, 139, observes that Jean-Jacques Rousseau marked the mid eighteenth-century philosophical shift toward Romanticism. He espoused the "doctrine of the natural man."

Chapter Two

Civic Boosterism and the Last Best West: Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, 1912-1935

> It takes many years of wide publicity to create a desire in the minds of people at great distances to attend any event.
>
> E.L. Richardson, 1928

Exhibitions and fairs were a popular form of boosterism in Alberta. Annual exhibitions provided communities with an opportunity to showcase agricultural and industrial progress, and were a means to attract investors and settlers. They were also social gatherings, and booster-minded organizers embraced annual events as an opportunity to educate the public.[134] Education took many forms from instructional exhibits on latest farming techniques and homemaking tips, for example, to inscribing the imagined landscape with meaning through parades and sideshow events. The overriding goal of educational entertainment was to engender a common sense of community in residents and visitors. Thus, exhibitions not only showcased external reality—grains and livestock—but also ways of seeing. Boosters had little patience for critics, and "knockers" were charged with lacking community vision.[135] A united vision was perceived as essential to progress and prosperity at a time of increasing civic competition for investors, immigrants, and government subsidies.[136] Exhibitions and fairs were a means for booster-minded leaders to project a unified way of seeing their community.

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[134] Faye Reineberg Holt, *Awed, Amused, and Alarmed: Fairs, Rodeos, and Regattas in Western Canada* (Calgary: Detselig, 2003), 107, 7-8. Also see Wetherell, 309.

[135] Artibise, 520.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the role of civic boosterism in constructing the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede from 1912 to 1940.[137] I propose that civic boosters adopted the imagined landscape of the Last Best West as they organized and publicized the annual exhibition. The process of inscribing Calgary as the heart of the Last Best West went through three cultural turning points in the early-twentieth century. The first turning point was in 1912 when three experienced parties—Calgary exhibition staff, prominent Alberta ranchers, and Wild West performer Guy Weadick—organized a frontier days celebration and cowboy contest. This event demonstrated to civic boosters the commercial and community value of Calgary's imagined frontier past. The second turning point was in 1923 when the financially-strapped Calgary Industrial Exhibition Company (CIEC) approached Weadick to manage a Stampede entertainment programme at the annual fair. The overwhelming popularity and financial success of the 1923 exhibition resulted in the annual inclusion of the Stampede. In the 1920s, the rodeo competition and frontier celebration emerged as central to the annual exhibition. By the 1930s, the Stampede at Calgary was an internationally-recognized tourist attraction alongside the Canadian Rockies. The third cultural turning point in Calgary's adoption of the Last Best West was, in 1932, when Weadick sued CIEC for ownership of the Stampede brand. The lawsuit forced CIEC to formally declare civic ownership of the

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[136] Artibise, 518-20, observes the competitive nature of prairie boosters in the early twentieth century. He notes that cooperation existed within cities, but that community competed against each other for city status, eastern industry, railway contracts, and advantageous relations with the federal government.

[137] Archival research on the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede was conducted at the Glenbow Archives in Calgary, Alberta. Primary sources included Calgary Industrial Exhibition and Stampede annual reports, promotional literature, newspaper clippings, correspondence, photographs, and legal documents.

Stampede brand. This assertion solidified the Last Best West as the dominant way of seeing the civic landscape.

1. "To making a united Alberta": Calgary Exhibition, 1886-1911.

In the early-twentieth century, the exhibition in Calgary—known from the 1920s as the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede—emerged as a prominent annual event in Alberta. The Calgary and District Agricultural Society organized the first agricultural exhibition in the fall of 1886. The purpose of the event was to present Calgary to Canada and the "Old Country."[138] Prizes were awarded to top livestock and grain producers, as well as for "ladies work" in embroidery, knitting, and painting. The purpose of the exhibition was also to unify a diverse society. "One of the great tasks before us," it was declared in the *Calgary Herald* in 1886, "is to make a united Alberta out of all the Canadians, English, Scots, Irish, and Americans who have picked out this fair land for their home. And nothing will tend to further this work so much as an occasional gathering of our citizens."[139] By the 1890s, the exhibition in Calgary had grown in popularity. To entertain exhibitors and non-exhibitors, Indian, cowboy, and bicycle races were added to the schedule.[140] However, economic depression, poor weather, and unprofitable crops eventually caused the agricultural society to abandon the annual event. In the late 1890s, the society could not rebound from financial losses and folded.

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[138] Glenbow Archives, M2160, no. 2 (5a). "Saturday, April 17th, 1886, A Fall Meeting." In Early History of the Exhibition: As Taken from the Herald Files, n.p., 1886.

[139] *Calgary Herald*, June 19, 1886, quoted in James Gray, *A Brand of Its Own: The 100 Year History of the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1985), 9.

[140] Gray, 11.

In 1899, A.E. Cross, a businessman, rancher, and politician, revived the exhibition spirit. With the support of civic and business leaders in Calgary, Cross established the Inter-Western Pacific Exhibition Company (IWPEC).[141] Over the next ten years, the Calgary exhibition grew in popularity. The entertainment program was expanded to attract non-exhibitors, and midway games, professional fair acts, and sporting events were added to the schedule. In 1903, C.W. Peterson was hired as full-time IWPEC manager and E.L. Richardson as his assistant. Peterson was pleased with the success of the exhibition, but he realized that to truly launch Calgary as a prominent city in Alberta and Canada, IWPEC needed to move beyond putting on a small-time fair. Calgary needed to host a widely-publicized, big-city spectacle. The Dominion Exhibition was just the event, and Peterson successfully lobbied for Calgary to host the 1908 celebration.[142]

The Dominion Exhibition was a federally-sponsored event that showcased regional and national achievements. Under the direction of Richardson who would remain with the exhibition for thirty-nine years, IWPEC was determined to silence critics who claimed Calgary was too small to host such a prestigious event.[143] Richardson solicited the experience of organizers in Winnipeg, Toronto, and Chicago, and local and provincial associations for everything from horse breeders to handicrafts. The 1908 Dominion Exhibition was launched with a parade on July 1, the annual holiday to commemorate Canadian Confederation in 1867. Floats wove through downtown Calgary representing industry, commerce, and provincial and federal governments, and the province's cultural diversity—British, Scandinavian, German, American, African American, French Canadian, and First Nation groups. Spectators to the exhibition grounds on Alberta Day (July 2), Farmer's Day (July 3), and American Day (July 4) were entertained with vaudeville acts, trained animal performances, Japanese trapeze artists, mock bullfights, and the Strobel airship—a propeller-driven, sixty-foot balloon that passed over the grandstand three times daily.[144] One of the highlight attractions was the Miller Brothers 101 Ranch Wild West Show, a troupe of stage cowboys and Indians that entertained the Calgary crowd with trick riding, fancy roping, sharpshooting, and battles. The Dominion Exhibition was the most ambitious IWPEC project to date, and it was considered a great success with over one hundred thousand visitors and $24,000 in profit.[145]

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[141] Gray, 15-16.

[142] Gray, 20-23.

[143] Holt, 151.

Richardson and IWPEC were determined to build on the momentum of the Dominion Exhibition, and secure Calgary as a prominent city alongside Winnipeg, Vancouver, and Halifax. The national celebration had reached more residents and visitors than any previous event in Calgary. Civic boosters saw the success of the Dominion Exhibition as proof of Calgary's progress and prosperity. Boosters understood the value of publicity as a means to attract immigrants and investors, and build a solid and strong community. In 1909, IWPEC hosted the Alberta Provincial Exhibition. Richardson requested that Calgary become the permanent home to the Government of Alberta event. The government rejected the offer on the basis that each municipality should publicize itself.[146] In turn, Richardson established IWPEC as the Calgary Industrial Exhibition

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[144] Holt, 153.

[145] Gray, 29.

[146] The decision in 1910 that each city should be responsible for publicizing itself corresponded with the creation of the Government of Alberta Publicity Bureau. The role of the Bureau was to publicize the province through agricultural exhibitions and publications. See Province of Alberta, "Report of the

Company (CIEC) to better promote industry, manufacturing, and modern agriculture in the Calgary area.[147]

2. "Make it the best thing of its kind": 1912 Stampede at Calgary

While Richardson had successfully organized annual exhibitions that showcased Calgary to Canada and the world, he reluctantly involved CIEC in the next event to achieve widespread publicity for Calgary—the 1912 Stampede. The idea to host a championship cowboy contest was initially proposed by Guy Weadick, a trick roper and rider with the 101 Ranch show who had performed at the 1908 Dominion Exhibition. Weadick was originally from the industrial and manufacturing city of Rochester, New York. Like many easterners living in polluted and crowded cities, Weadick was attracted to the romance of the American frontier. As a young man, he moved to the northwestern United States to become a cowboy.[148] His skills were not in working as a cowboy, however, but in performance. He toured the vaudeville and Wild West Show circuits with his wife Florence LaDue, an accomplished trick rider and roper, and African-American bulldogger, Will Picket. Weadick had a flair for pageantry and publicity, and set his sights beyond working as a performer. He envisioned a "Stampede" where cowboy would

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Publicity Bureau." *Sessional Papers, 1910, Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Alberta*, 1911.

[147] Gray, 34-35.

[148] Donna Livingstone, *Cowboy Spirit: Guy Weadick and the Calgary Stampede* (Vancouver: Greystone Books, 1996), 10. The unfolding of events between Weadick, McMullen, Day, and the Big Four has become part of Stampede lore. Popular history and academic writing on the Stampede often unknowingly reiterate popular myths. My explanation of the origins of the Stampede has been guided by the work by Donna Livingstone, vice-president of program and exhibit development at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary. Livingstone's research included Glenbow archival fonds on Guy Weadick, Norman Luxton, and the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede. She recognizes James Gray, *A Brand of Its Own* as a valuable secondary source.

compete against cowboy, and cowgirl against cowgirl, for a share of unprecedented cash prizes. The Stampede competition would include bucking horse, steer roping, bulldogging, and trick and fancy roping.[149] During his career as a working and stage cowboy, Weadick had become familiar with the ranching community in Calgary and southern Alberta. In 1908, while in Calgary with the 101 Ranch show, Weadick proposed an idea that would mark a cultural turning point for the City of Calgary.

In 1908, Weadick met with H.C. McMullen, livestock agent of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and pitched his idea of a Stampede competition. McMullen liked the idea, but thought it would be difficult to find financial support.[150] Three years later, while observing the popularity of rural rodeos, McMullen reflected on his conversation with Weadick. He decided the Stampede was a worthy proposal, and contacted the ambitious performer in Europe. He requested that Weadick return to Calgary to sketch out a plan. Weadick and McMullen solicited civic business leaders and politicians for financial sponsorship for the event, but they were turned down on the premise that ranching was a thing of the past and farming was the future. They were also unsuccessful in securing the Victoria Park exhibition grounds for the event. Apparently, Richardson was busy enough with year-round livestock shows and horse auctions to be involved in the start-up event. Wealthy Medicine Hat rancher Addison Day heard about the idea from Tom Mix, a 101 Ranch colleague of Weadick, and Day met with McMullen at the Alberta Hotel in Calgary. At the end of the meeting, Day offered McMullen $10,000 in cash for the event, plus top horses and stock. The next day, Weadick pitched the event to four of the most powerful ranchmen in Alberta—George Lane, Pat Burns, A.E. Cross, and Archie McLean. The "Big Four" supported the Stampede a cost of $100,000 under the condition that it would be an authentic celebration of the frontier West. "Make it the best thing of its kind in the world," Weadick was told.[151] The well-known ranchmen met with CEIC board of directors, and persuaded Richardson to rent the Victoria Park exhibition grounds to the Frontier Days Celebration Committee (FDCC). The committee determined that Day would provide the horses, stock, and supplies, and that Richardson would act as treasurer, McMullen as director, Lane as chairman, and Weadick as general manager.[152].

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[149] Gray, 38.

[150] Livingstone, 31.

Weadick duties were to "manage, produce, and publicize the event."[153] Capitalizing on his extensive professional network, he lured top American, Canadian, Mexican, and First Nation cowboys and cowgirls—many of whom were Weadick's colleagues from the 101 Ranch show—to Calgary with the opportunity to win cash prizes and world titles. Horses, steers, and calves were brought from the United States. Weadick invited frontier artists Charlie Russell and Ed Borein to exhibit their work, and secured M.B. "Doc" Marcell as the official photographer.[154] For a $390 fee to Reverend George McDougall, missionary at the Morley reserve west of Calgary, Weadick also arranged the participation of hundreds of First Nation people.[155] Weadick understood the value of publicity, and used his Wild West media contacts to aggressively promote the Stampede with press releases, handbills, official advertisements, posters and an event program.

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[151] Livingstone, 38.

[152] Livingstone, 36-39.

[153] Livingstone, 39.

[154] Seiler, 228-29.

[155] Livingstone, 42.

Weadick coined the Stampede, "The Last and Best Great West," a farewell tribute to the "dying race" of true frontiersmen.[156]

The 1912 Stampede was a cultural turning point for the city of Calgary. The spectacle demonstrated to sceptics who had originally rejected the idea on the basis that "farming was the future" that a Calgary sense of community grounded in a ranching spirit and built on a common understanding of western Canadian history could serve to fuel booster goals of progress, prosperity, and social unity. The Frontier Days Celebration Committee and its supporters—local business owners, volunteers, and the media, for example—adopted the imagined regional landscape of the Last Best West to construct the 1912 Stampede. In doing so, the Stampede reoriented the typical booster focus on the future—economic growth and material success—to include a utopian past. The cultural turning point for the City of Calgary was to adopt the Last Best West—in particular, the cowboy—as the essence of civic identity and community solidarity. The 1912 Stampede served to centralize the Last Best West in the Calgary imagination. The Last Best West was promoted under the guise of educational entertainment, and was strategically constructed through the *Stampede at Calgary, Alberta 1912* program guide, Stampede parade, and Stampede rodeo competition.

3. Printing the Frontier: *Stampede at Calgary, Alberta 1912*

The Frontier Days Celebration Committee was determined to make the Stampede an authentic and educational event. The Stampede would be without the "villainy," "circus tinsel," and "far fetched fiction" of a Wild West Show, it was declared. It would be "educational, historical, and thrilling entertainment."[157] One means to educate the public was through the production of print media. FDCC published handbills, flyers, posters, newspaper advertisements, and the program guide, *Stampede at Calgary, Alberta 1912*. The program revealed the imagined landscape of the Last Best West in which frontier icons—cowboys, Indians, Mounties, and Christian missionaries—were presented as heroes of western settlement. The program fused the perceived lawless American frontier with a Canadian frontier of gentleman ranchers, law-bearing Mounties and peaceful Christian missionaries. The gentlemanly frontier served to legitimize Euro-Canadian dominance in present-day Calgary, and reaffirmed in residents and visitors the dominant narrative of Alberta history.

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[156] Calgary Stampede Committee, 3.

The cowboy exemplified the character of the Last Best West in *Stampede at Calgary*. The program recognized the distorted image of the cowboy in popular culture, a wanted to set things straight. The "real" cowboy was reported to be courteous, truthful, honest and brave. He was a "highly skilled professional," one day dragging a steer out of quick sand, and the next day rising against horse thieves in the name of "wild justice." The cowboy of popular imagination, the program guide lamented, was characterized by "his sombrero and his chaperajos, and jingling heavy spurs," and by tales of "his most reckless moments...when he tones down his constitution with frontier whiskey and rides his horse into saloons and caracoles crazily through the town shooting and whooping."[158]

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[157] Lorain Loonsberry, "Wild West Shows and the Canadian West," in *Cowboys, Ranchers and the Cattle Business: Cross-Border Perspectives on Ranching History*, ed. S. Evans, S. Carter and S. Yeo (Calgary: University of Calgary, 2000), 147.

[158] Calgary Stampede Committee, 49.

In spite of the declared attempt to dispel the cowboy myth, *Stampede at Calgary* played into popular sentiment of the cowboy as the noble hero and the wild man.

Depictions of the cowboy in *Stampede at Calgary* were shaped by the cowboy of the American imagination. For example, the dress of the cowboy was said to be a modification of the Mexican vaquero, and the list of rangeland vocabulary—cavajara, remuda, trail herd, and maverick—reveals influences from Mexico and the United States.[159] The program's adoption of the mythical American cowboy as representative of the Canadian counterpart was characteristic of a cultural trend in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Canadians consumed American dime-store novels, theatre, art and later, motion pictures, and American representations invariably influenced Canadian notions of their frontier.

One form of popular culture that had a tremendous impact on perceptions of the Canadian frontier was the Wild West Show.[160] The creator of the Wild West genre was William "Buffalo Bill" Cody who prided himself in accurate re-enactments of historic events that occurred on the American frontier. His cast included legendary figures such as Annie Oakley, Sitting Bull, and Métis North-West rebellion leader Gabriel Dumont, "real" cowboys and cowgirls, and "real" Sioux American Indians. His professed authentic plots always involved the pony express, buffalo hunts, train hijackings, and Indian battles, and "much trick riding and roping and sharp shooting."[161] In his nearly forty years in the entertainment business, he toured Toronto, London, Paris, Rome and Berlin, and his pinnacle season was the 1893 Chicago World's Fair that welcomed twenty-seven and a half million visitors. His success spawned numerous rival companies, including the Miller Brothers 101 Ranch Show that performed at the 1908 Dominion Exhibition in Calgary. The success of the Wild West Show in North America and Europe was in its ability to bring the adventure and romance of the frontier to city dwellers who were thought to lead passive and formulaic lives. It was not an accurate portrayal, according to Mrs. Walter Parlby, an English settler in Alberta. In 1910, Parlby wished to enlighten the ill informed, writing:

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[159] Calgary Stampede Committee, 49.

[160] Loonsberry, 141-42.

[161] Seiler and Seiler, 56. R.C. Macleod, "Dumont, Gabriel," in *Oxford Companion to Canadian History*, 2004, notes that Dumont was a Métis military leader in the 1885 North-West Rebellion. Dumont later performed in Cody's Wild West shows.

> To a vast majority of the untravelled, and less well read, public in the old country, the Canadian West is still a place of wild and woolly ways, a land given over to broncho busting, grizzly bears and picturesque cowboys; an illusion fostered by the oft-recurring "Wild West" shows, with their lurid presentments of Red Indian warfare, broncho-busting and shooting; a most thrilling entertainment, I have no doubt, to the peaceful dwellers in the British Isles, but how very far removed from the actual facts I should very much like to show.[162]

The historical American cowboy did in fact have a great impact on the Canadian ranching community.[163] In the 1880s, American cowboys were sought for their horsemanship and cattle skills, and acted as managers and foremen at large ranch operations. Experienced Americans served as mentors to "greenhorns" lured west by the romance of the frontier, and many upper-class men from Britain and Ontario learned the requisite "riding, roping, and cutting out" from American cowboys.[164] Americans were so prevalent that one British rancher who re-located from the United States in 1886 claimed that Canadian ranching was dominated by American cowboys, cattle, horses, techniques, and supplies.[165] The prevalence of American cowboys in the Canadian West was largely due to the closing of the American frontier in the late 1880s. Working cowboys and ranch owners displeased by agricultural settlement and poor beef prices in the United States looked to the Canadian West to pursue open-range ranching. Americans who settled in Canada contributed significantly to the overall development of the ranching industry.

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[162] Mrs. Walter Parlby, "Canada—The Hope of the World: An English Lady's Opinion of the Opportunities of the West," in "Why Go to Canada," supplement to the *Calgary Daily Herald* (June, 1910), quoted in Francis, *Images of the West*, 132.

[163] Warren Elofson, *Cowboys, Gentlemen and Cattle Thieves: Ranching on the Western Frontier* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's, 2000), xv-xvi, 31-32, argues that historians tend to emphasise the British character of Canadian ranching. He suggests that although the British certainly influenced the culture of large-scale ranches, the American influence was pervasive throughout the industry. He proposes that a bottom up instead of a top down approach to the study of early ranching society clearly illustrates the American influence.

In spite of the American influence on ranching operations, aspects of Canadian cowboy were of a decidedly British quality.[166] It is in this British tradition that the myth of the "gentleman" cowboy emerged. In 1880, when the Dominion passed a ranch policy that permitted the leasing of up to 100,000 acres at an annual fee of one cent per acre for twenty-one years, men and women from Ontario and Britain moved west with the idea of raising cattle.[167] They came from a variety of social backgrounds, and privileged settlers brought British high-society with them. They endeavoured to replicate British social and cultural norms, and built a close-knit ranching community that enjoyed polo, tea parties, and croquet games.[168] The beef industry was big business, and large ranch owners formed a powerful elite centred around Calgary. Ranchers operated meat-packing and slaughter houses, sat on city council and local school boards, and their money backed the *Calgary Herald* and urban infrastructure.[169] The Ranchmen's Club of Calgary established in 1891 boasted an exclusive membership, and cattlemen entertained and conducted business in Calgary at the Hull Opera House and upscale Alberta Hotel.[170] Wealthy British ranchers were seemingly as comfortable in the city as they were on the range, and embraced the persona of the gentleman cowboy.[171]

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[164] See Simon M. Evans, "Tenderfoot to Rider: Learning 'Cowboying' on the Canadian Ranching Frontier during the 1880s," in *Cowboys, Ranchers and the Cattle Business: Cross-Border Perspectives on Ranching History*, ed. S. Evans, S. Carter and S. Yeo, (Calgary: University of Calgary, 2000), 61-80; Alan McCullough, "Not an Old Cowhand – Fred Stimson and the Bar U Ranch," in *Cowboys, Ranchers and the Cattle Business: Cross-Border Perspectives on Ranching History*, ed. S. Evans, S. Carter and S. Yeo, (Calgary: University of Calgary, 2000), 35-36; and Shirley Ann McDonald, "The Sheppard Journals: British Cowboys in the Canadian West" (M.A. thesis, Ottawa: National Library of Canada, 2001), 50, available on-line from Theses Canada (Ottawa: National Library of Canada), amicus no. 27759449.

[165] Elofson, 43-44.

[166] Lewis G. Thomas, "The Ranching Tradition and the Life of the Ranchers," in *Ranchers' Legacy*, ed. P.A. Dunae (Edmonton, University of Alberta, 1986), 6-8, makes the argument that the ranching community as predominantly British is justified. He recognizes the stock-hand as American in tradition, but ranching society—a society he defines in terms of the owner-class—was British.

[167] Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, 237.

Stampede at Calgary played into myths of the gentleman cowboy in its framing of the Last Best West. The front cover of the program illustrated the four main sponsors of the event—prominent Old Timer cattlemen Burns, Lane, Cross, and McLean. Biographical sketches of each of the men presented them as archetypical western ranchers. Burns, for example, was "born in "'53"" in Ontario, and reportedly answered the call of the West at a young age. Hard work was rewarded with a vast fortune, and, according to the program, "Wherever the language of the range is spoken, in legislative halls, in hotel lobbies, at conventions, banquets, and cowcamps, the name of P. Burns is familiar to all, and his cherry smile, and hearty hand grasp are as welcome as the first grass after a hard winter.[172] Burns was a leading member of an elite group of wealthy Calgarian men who saw themselves as self-made men of the frontier. They espoused social Darwinism, and asserted "the rule of the law, the power of the church…and the inevitable correctness of British traditions."[173] Through supporting events such as the 1912 Stampede, these powerful Calgarians reinforced their social position and cultural attitudes.

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[168] McDonald, 44, 56.

[169] Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, 238.

[170] See Lewis G. Thomas, "The Rancher and the City: Calgary and the Cattlemen, 1883-1914," in *Ranchers' Legacy*, ed. P.A. Dunae (Edmonton, University of Alberta, 1986), 49-50.

[171] McDonald, 59. Also see David Breen, *The Canadian Prairie West and the Ranching Frontier: 1874-1924* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1983).

In *Stampede at Calgary*, the gentlemanly nature of the Canadian cowboy was extended to the settlement of the Canadian frontier itself. In contrast to American cowboy who was "a force for law and property in a territory where no writ runs that is not signed by the strong hand," *Stampede at Calgary* reported that the strong hand of the Canadian law came from the North West Mounted Police (NWMP).[174] "Mounties" were characterized as gentlemen of the frontier; men who had brought peace and tranquility to what had been a land plagued by "murders and massacres and "tribal wars," according to *Stampede at Calgary*."[175] The "Mountie" as the bearer of law and order was illustrated on the back cover of *Stampede at Calgary*. The foreground portrayed a NWMP officer astride his horse, and in the background, settlers (presumably cowboys as cattle roamed nearby) and Indians living peacefully side-by-side. The Rocky Mountains framed the horizon, and the illustration was entitled, "LAW AND ORDER."[176] According to the program, the North West was well disposed to welcome a force that would "suppress fighting and whiskey trade and crime of any kind, and...establish peace and deal out British justice to all men, both red and white alike."[177]

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[172] Calgary Stampede Committee, 19.

[173] Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, 286.

[174] Calgary Stampede Committee, 49.

[175] Calgary Stampede Committee, 59.

[176] Calgary Stampede Committee, back cover page.

Casting the Mountie as the benevolent warden of the Last Best West and its inhabitants disregards the colonial purpose of the national police force. Officers were dispatched to the North West in 1874 to clear the way for expansionism, namely, to subjugate First Nation communities. The signing of prairie treaties in the 1870s abolished Native title to the land, and relegated First Nations to Indian reserves. The Indian Act passed in 1876 created a system of "wardship, colonization and tutelage." It placed First Nations as subjects under the benevolence of the Dominion, and the act intended to assimilate them into Canadian culture.[178] The imperial role of the Mountie remained unquestioned in *Stampede at Calgary*, and the myth of the peacekeeping warden served to reconfirm Euro-Canadian dominance in Alberta.

The gentlemanly nature of the Canadian frontier was also extended to Christian missionaries in *Stampede at Calgary*. The missionary was attributed to having influenced the "sentiment of the people" on the frontier, and spread the word to the Indians that the "armed men" from the East had not arrived to fight but to protect.[179] The biographical sketch of Father Lacombe exemplified the character of the missionary to the North West. It portrayed Lacombe as a priest devoted to the spiritual and corporeal welfare of First Nations and Métis, and as being regarded as "little less than a demigod" by followers. He was considered an authority on the Cree language and tribes of the Western Plains, and acted as a spokesman on their behalf in Ottawa. Father Lacombe was reportedly instrumental in the Dominion decision to establish Indian reservations. "He provided a home for them where they can live forever," it was stated in *Stampede at Calgary*." "Is it any wonder then," the program furthered, "that his slightest wish is law, and that he is revered and loved by every red man in the Northwest?"[180]

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[177] Calgary Stampede Committee, 59.

[178] Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, 157-58.

[179] Calgary Stampede Committee, 59.

Missionaries certainly played a significant role in negotiating peace between various interests in the North West, and their skills as translators and diplomats were welcomed by settlers and the Dominion. Images of pioneer Christian missionaries who ventured to the western wilderness with "little more than the staff and script of a medieval pilgrim" served to validate moral character behind the law and order of the Last Best West.[181] Missionaries were valorized as heroic men bringing salvation to unenlightened inhabitants of the wilderness, be they pagan First Nations or lapsed-Christian traders. Missionary activity had changed significantly by the 1912 Stampede, and it was the nineteenth-century benign bearer of God's word—and the word of Euro-Canadian culture—who was heralded in the program.[182] As with the Mountie, the missionary contributed to the subjugation of First Nation communities for the purpose of assimilation, Christianization, and Canadian expansionism. Alongside the Dominion, the missionary acted as a benevolent provider. In spite of their professed good intensions, however, Christian missionaries were agents of power and control on the Canadian frontier.

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[180] Calgary Stampede Committee, 62.

[181] Katherine Hughes, *Father Lacombe: The black-robe voyageur* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1911), 1, available on-line from University of Alberta, Peel's Prairie Provinces, no. 3597.

[182] Gail Elizabeth Edwards, "Creating textual communities: Anglican and Methodist missionaries and print culture in British Columbia, 1858-1914 (Ph.d. diss., University of British Columbia, 2002), 7-9, available on-line from Theses Canada (Ottawa: National Library of Canada), amicus no., 27109845. Edwards makes the observation that missionary activity in British Columbia adapted with industry and settlement changes on the frontier. She notes that the First World War marked the beginning of a new missionary society.

The North American "Indian" was the oppositional other of the Last Best West constructed in *Stampede at Calgary.* The Indian was the object of Mountie pacification and missionary salvation, and signified both the wild and endangered frontier in the Canadian imagination. The noble savage of Romantic sensibility elevated Indians as the embodiment of wilderness, and the essence of the wild man, a man free of oppressive civilization. Paradoxically, it was because of the perceived lack of civilized life that Canadians held distain for Indians, and found reconfirmation of the superiority of European culture.[183] The expansionist project to settle the West left little room for the region's original inhabitants.

In *Stampede at Calgary*, the Indian was the cultural other of Euro-Canadian and American frontier icons. First Nations symbolized the taming of the West, as depicted on the back cover illustration in which a tribe appears to live under the watchful eye of the North West Mounted Police. This watchful eye extended to events at the Stampede itself. In the early-twentieth century, Dominion Indian Affairs agents were concerned over the implications of granting permission to First Nations to leave reserves to participate in rodeos and at fairs. Agents felt that fairs would expose First Nations to immoral influences such as alcohol, and feared that by wearing traditional costumes and performing dances at fairs, First Nations would embrace parts of their culture the government was trying to abolish.[184] At the same time, it was understood that the Indian as a symbol of the frontier was valued at rodeos and fairs. At the 1912 Stampede, Weadick and McMullen, with the support of influential Albertans, convinced Indian Affairs to retract its initial decision, and allow First Nations to participate in the parade, at rodeo events, and as spectators.[185] Indian Affairs conceded on the grounds that Stampede organizers arrange transportation, rations, establish "easily policed and patrolled" Indian camps, and enforce a camp curfew.[186] The watchful eye of the Dominion, NWMP, missionaries, and Stampede organizers followed First Nation people from the reserves to rodeo grounds.

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[183] Jasen, *Wild Things*, 15.

[184] Jan Penrose, "When All the Cowboys Are Indians: The Nature of Race in All-Indian Rodeo," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 93, no. 3 (2003): 693.

Situating First Nations as the cultural other of the frontier gaze rendered Native culture as a relic of the past, and constructed a cowboy/Indian dichotomy in which there was no space for First Nation cowboys. Jan Penrose argues that "Indians have been cowboys for as long as cowboys have existed in Canada," yet First Nation cowboys have historically been denied legitimacy.[187] First Nations and Métis worked on pioneer ranching operations and larger British ranches, and were valued for their "skills in breeding, breaking and riding horses." They performed in Wild West Shows, competed in early ranching contests, and entered rodeo competitions. Although rodeos gave First Nations more control over their performances than Wild West Shows, they tended toward timed events as "the clock could not be racist."[188] At the 1912 Stampede in Calgary, First Nation cowboys mainly participated in horse racing events. The only Native to compete in each of the four main events—bucking horse, bareback, steer-roping, and bulldogging—was legendary Tom Three Persons, a Blood from southern Alberta. Not only did he hold his own, but he won the bucking horse event by taming the never-ridden Cyclone. The press response to Three Persons winning the icon event reflected a patriotic discomfort in that the only Canadian champion at the Stampede was of Native ancestry. Ensuing fabricated rumours regarding the horse's health and Three Person's run in with the law and liquor reinforced the cowboy/Indian dichotomy, and the frontier gaze of Indians existing outside Canadian society.[189]

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[185] Penrose, 697-98.

[186] Glenbow Archives, M1287, no. 1, letter from Department of Indian Affairs to Guy Weadick, July 24, 1912.

[187] Penrose, 701.

[188] Penrose, 691-93, 699.

The Last Best West illustrated in *Stampede at Calgary* was decisively masculine in character, and women, although contestants in a number of rodeo events, were conspicuously absent in print media constructions of the frontier gaze. Men undoubtedly outnumbered women on the late nineteenth-century frontier, however, ranching culture was not as masculine as popular history would have us believe. Some of the earliest ranching women in Alberta were Native, and their skills in "riding, breaking horses, skinning, tanning and butchering" proved invaluable to pioneer operations.[190] Non-Native female ranchers were from diverse ethnic and class backgrounds—much like their male counterparts—and were similarly lured west by the romance of the frontier. Some women built small ranches from modest resources with their husbands and children while others contributed to larger operations in attempts to replicate British lifestyles and values. Ernestine Hunt was an unusual woman in that she came to the North West alone with the

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[189] Penrose, 698. Also see Hugh A. Dempsey, *Tom Three Persons: Legend of an Indian Cowboy* (Saskatoon: Purich, 1997), 46-48.

[190] Sarah Carter, "'He Country in Pants' No Longer – Diversifying Ranching History," in *Cowboys, Ranchers and the Cattle Business: Cross-Border Perspectives on Ranching History*, ed. S. Evans, S. Carter and S. Yeo (Calgary: University of Calgary, 2000), 156.

"vague idea" of starting her own ranch.[191] Wives and daughters of family operations contributed to all aspects of ranching, and, much like the men, were involved in a cross-section of domestic, commercial and town-related activities. Gender roles certainly existed, but interdependence between husband and wife was essential for success, if not just survival.[192]

Many women became capable cowgirls, and participated in formal and informal rodeo contests, and worked as performers in Wild West Shows.[193] They enjoyed a certain freedom from the constraining expectation of femininity placed on women in the late Victorian era, and their involvement in a traditionally male sport afforded them much popularity and press coverage.[194] Cowgirls were welcomed at the 1912 Stampede in Calgary, and female events included bronco riding, relay race, fancy riding, and fancy roping.[195] Florence LaDue and Bertha Blancett competed in Calgary, and their photographs in *Stampede at Calgary* presented them as "prominent" cowgirls.[196] Lucille Mulhall, regarded in popular history as America's first cowgirl, also competed at the Stampede, as did Fannie Sperry and Goldie St. Clair. Although women participated in the rodeo competition, their relative absence in the frontier gaze constructed in *Stampede at*

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[191] Hugh Dempsey, *The Golden Age of the Canadian Cowboy* (Saskatoon: Fifth House), 38-39.

[192] Carter, 158-61.

[193] Mary Lou LeCompte. "Home on the Range: Women in Professional Rodeo: 1929-1947," *Journal of Sport History* 17, no. 3 (winter 1990): 320.

[194] LeCompte, 322; also see Colin D. Howell, *Blood, Sweat, and Cheers: Sport and the Making of Modern Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2001), 112-16, for discussion of women and sport in the Victorian era.

[195] Calgary Stampede Committee, 11-13.

[196] Calgary Stampede Committee, 58.

Calgary re-confirmed the frontier image as masculine, and unsuitable for Euro-Canadian and American women.

Stampede at Calgary constructed a Last Best West that fused imaginings of a Wild West with a gentleman's frontier. The archetypical American cowboy as the embodiment of freedom, masculinity, and bravery represented the perceived wildness of a West before the coming of civilization. The Canadian cowboy countered the Wild West image, and embodied the civility of British society on the Canadian frontier. British civility extended to the North West Mounted Police, and accompanied by Christian missionaries, the Canadian frontier was presented as a lawful, just, and peaceful land. First Nations as the object of pacification represented both a wild and tamed West, and their lost way of life symbolized the passing of an older time. Women were on the periphery of the frontier gaze, and their relative absence reconfirmed the masculine nature of the Last Best West. *Stampede at Calgary* declared the event as a time for "joy," "reminiscences," and "hearty greetings." It would have a nostalgic "tinge of sadness," however, as spectators were told they would "gaze upon the 'Sunset of a Dying Race.'"[197]

4. Staging the Frontier: 1912 Stampede Parade and Rodeo Competition

The Frontier Days Celebration Committee was determined to offer educational entertainment to the tens of thousands of visitors and competitors from across North America. The cultural pageant kicked off its tribute to by-gone days with a colourful parade depicting the unfolding of western Canadian history. Parades had been part of community festivals in western Canada since the first recorded fair at Fort Edmonton in

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[197] Calgary Stampede Committee, 3.

1879. Parades were free entertainment, and advertised upcoming festivities and sideshows, as well as communities and local businesses. Importantly, at a time of limited access to radio and newspapers, and multiple languages spoken among immigrants, parades were a means to convey cultural and commercial messages to spectators.[198] The marching of the Last Best West in the Stampede parade served as a subtle but powerful means to convey British imperial grandeur.

McMullen was in charge of organizing the Stampede parade. His first challenge was to secure downtown streets on Labour Day from the Trade and Labour Council of Calgary. At first the council was unwilling to relinquish their Labour Day parade, but a $1,500 contribution to the council appeared to smooth things over.[199] The spectacle of western Canadian history was led by nearly two thousand First Nation men, women and children from various tribes in Alberta and the United States. They were dressed in full "heritage" costume, and according to a writer from the *Calgary Herald*, "One could moralize for a mile of the superiority of the red men for the purpose of pictorial procession....They appear to have come out of the sunset whilst in comparison we look like tourists from Bruce County."[200] Christian missionaries followed, as did Hudson's Bay fur traders, Red River carts, whiskey traders, and original men of the 1874 North West Mounted Police march west. Pioneer cowboys, ranchers, settlers with chuckwagons and stagecoaches were followed by rodeo cowboys and cowgirls—most of whom were employed by the Miller Brothers 101 Ranch Wild West Show. Concluding the procession was a string of floats representing industry and labour unions.

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[198] Holt, 10, 49, 51.

[199] Livingstone, 46.

[200] Edward Brado, *Cattle Kingdom* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1984), 284.

The historical gaze constructed at the Stampede parade served to educate new Albertans and reinforce in all spectators an appropriate and safe past—one without conflict, oppression or exploitation. The harmonious marching of cultural icons of the Last Best West reinforced the myth of a unified, peaceful past, and presented the unfolding of history as inevitably leading to Euro-Canadian dominance and industrial progress. Cultural icons were presented as ahistorical artefacts, and were either authentic—original Mounties of '74 and Canadian veterans of the Riel Rebellion, for example—or authentic representations of the nineteenth-century frontier, fur traders and cowboys. The true authenticity of each cultural icon lacked importance as it was the aura surrounding the image that led to its credibility.[201] Weadick took care in constructing this aura of authenticity. In a newspaper advertisement recruiting parade cowboys and cowgirls, he notified that "full western equipment and dress was required as no one riding with a flat saddle would be allowed to participate."[202] The imperial gaze presented in the Stampede parade capitalized on Last Best West imagery, and valorized nineteenth-century frontiersmen as folk heroes of western Canadian history.

The highlight attraction of the four-day Stampede was the rodeo competition. The cowboy spectacle drew more people to Calgary than any other event in city history. For spectators, the vast majority of whom had no actual connection to the days of the open range, rodeo cowboys were the incarnation of fictional dime-novel heroes and the legendary Buffalo Bill Cody. The *Stampede at Calgary* program guide presented the rodeo competition as a glimpse into so-called authentic cowboy life on the open range and at the ranch—a form of Dean MacCannell's staged authenticity in which spectators could peek at the work lives of others.[203] It reported that roping sports were rooted in the everyday cowboy skills of branding and cutting, and that the rodeo grew from casual contests of the open range. Ranches soon held competitions, it was reported, and regulated events gradually replaced "free-for-all contests." Roping was presented as "great sport" for cowboys and spectators alike.[204]

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[201] Urry, 117-18, makes the observation that an object's authenticity is irrelevant, and that it is the aura of authenticity that matters.

[202] Gray, 38.

At the time of the Stampede in 1912, spectators had been enjoying rodeo events in Alberta since the early 1890s. The growth of rodeo paralleled sporting trends in Canada in the early-twentieth century. Changing demographics and consumer capitalism had transformed rural games into a highly-organized sporting culture with rules, cash prizes, and spectators. Sport historian Colin Howell proposes that "holiday sporting competitions served to confirm and legitimize the Euro-Canadian bourgeois hegemony." Much like parades, sporting events were thought to "win the consent of Aboriginal and immigrant groups to the new national order."[205] The sporting ethic of muscular masculinity shaped both sport and the national mentalities in the early-twentieth century. At a time when the middle and upper classes were concerned with the feminizing of boys, cowboys embodied the manly traits of strength, bravery, and athleticism. Steer wrestling and bronco busting at the 1912 Stampede rodeo exemplified the early sporting ethic of the "manly" athlete.[206]

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[203] See MacCannell, 98-99, for his discussion of the back stage and the attraction of the work lives of others; also see Claire Eamer and Thirza Jones, *The Canadian Rodeo Book* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1982), 8-9, who observe that the rodeo was the "daily grind" of ranch life.

[204] Calgary Stampede Committee, 7.

[205] Howell, 28-30, observes that urban-based, middle-class sporting culture in early twentieth-century Canada asserted "respectable" sport as a means to promote gentlemanly behaviour, individualism, and patriotism.

The popularity of the 1912 Stampede had much to do with timing. The event capitalized on popular sentiment that the Canadian frontier, as it had been experienced in the late-nineteenth century, was a thing of the past. By 1912, Alberta was no longer seen as a *terra incognita*, but a settled land. Calgary was a booming urban centre with a population that had grown by over 55,000 residents since the turn of the century. The city boasted modern infrastructure such as paved roads and a streetcar system, and its stockyards and tanneries contributed to a civic manufacturing industry accounting for a quarter of all manufacturing in Alberta.[207] The mainstay of the provincial economy—agriculture—was diversified by coal, forestry, and professional occupations. Rapid urbanization, industrialization and agricultural settlement had changed the Alberta landscape. The Stampede was a spectacle of otherness far removed from the familiarity of urban industrial life and the daily toiling of the land.

The Stampede capitalized on nostalgia, and on the opportunity to assert British traditions in Alberta. In 1911, Alberta possessed a population of approximately 400,000, forty-nine percent of whom were of non-British origin. An "Alberta elite"—men and women who controlled political, legal, cultural, and educational institutions—tended to be of Anglo-Saxon Protestant origins, and had links to Ontario or Britain. They believed in the superiority of British traditions, and saw non-British immigrants as a threat to their vision of Alberta's progress and prosperity.[208] The 1912 Stampede was an opportunity to "educate" non-British residents on appropriate ways of seeing Alberta. It served as a means to impose uniformity on a province comprised of German, Scandinavian, Ukrainian, African-American, Chinese, and Japanese immigrants.[209]

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[206] Howell, 5, 7, discusses "manly" sport.

[207] Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, 280.

The perceived closure of the Canadian frontier occurred gradually, and was linked in popular sentiment to the fencing of the open range by agricultural settlers. The arrival of the farmer changed spatial and societal patterns, and the fenced landscape symbolized the end of an old order. Historian Warren Elofson disputes the argument that agriculture led to the fencing of the open range, and proposes that open-range ranching in Alberta was undermined from its infancy. High winter mortality had taught ranchers that winter feed was essential, and increasingly they took to cultivating fields. Operations with fewer cattle made a more successful transition, and, within a few years, they were able to provide sufficient feed for herds throughout the winter. Ranchers built fences to keep cattle close to food sources. Fences also allowed for greater control of bloodlines and disease. Elofson argues that by the late 1880s and early 1890s, most operations were involved in a combination of ranching and mixed farming.[210] Puritans of the open range opted to sell, as did ranchers who saw profit in the high demand for agricultural land. By the turn of the century, the new ranch/farm operation was standard practice.

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[208] Howard Palmer, "Strangers and Stereotypes: The Rise of Nativism, 1880-1920," in *The Prairie West: Historical Readings*, ed. R. Douglas Francis and Howard Palmer (Edmonton: Pica Pica, 1992), 309-11.

[209] Palmer, 310-318, offers insight on Alberta's diverse immigrant groups, and what he refers to as Alberta's "ethnic pecking order."

[210] Elofson, 137-44.

Historians tend to agree that the end of open-range ranching in Alberta can be attributed to winter of 1906-1907. The cold and snow began in November and did not let up until April. By spring, thousands of cattle had frozen or starved to death. Ranchers took months trying to find and regroup surviving cattle, and many operations never recovered.[211] Many ranchers, including the Big Four, chose to cut their losses and sold their land and remaining cattle. For ranchers who stayed or individuals who bought in, the days of the open range were decisively over. As Elofson writes, "A cowboy could no longer be just a cowboy."[212] The open range persisted in Alberta's budding tourist trade, however, and cowboys could still play cowboys—and cowgirls could play cowgirls—at agricultural fairs, city exhibitions, and rodeos across the province.

The 1912 Stampede offered working cowboys an opportunity to show and profit from skills learned on the open range and in ranch/farm operations. Many rodeo cowboys and cowgirls at the Stampede were performers as opposed to working cowboys, and, like Weadick, had learned the trade while on the Wild West Show circuit. While agricultural fairs and exhibitions provided cowboys a venue to re-enact the daily grind of a life they knew, or at least imagined, they equally provided spectators with an opportunity to indulge in the romance of the Last Best West. The Frontier Days Celebration Committee constructed the imagined frontier through the visual spectacle of a historic parade and rodeo competition. Both spectacles were deemed to be educational and entertaining. They provided viewers with cultural context from which they could join cowboys and cowgirls in re-enacting life on the late nineteenth-century frontier. At the 1912 Stampede, spectators, too, could play cowboy or cowgirl. Thus, tourism transformed lived experience into a touristic fantasy staged on a mythic frontier.

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[211] Brado, 271.

[212] Elofson, 144.

5. "A stampede of passengers": Tourism and the 1912 Stampede

The 1912 Stampede in Calgary drew spectators and competitors from Canada and the United States, and as far away as Mexico and Europe. Many out-of-town visitors arrived by rail, and the Canadian Pacific Railway boasted 40,000 ticket sales during the Stampede.[213] The Frontier Days Celebration Committee anticipated that spectators would make a holiday of the event, and in *Stampede at Calgary*, presented the CPR as the modern-day trailblazer to the West. "'The Stampede' of to-day differs from that of a hundred years ago—," it was reported, "it is a stampede of passengers in the luxurious trains of the Canadian Pacific Railway to the chain of attractive splendid mountain hotels."[214] "Picturesquely located at convenient points," it was reported, "[CPR hotels] afford to the tourist and the health-seeker alike, charming retreats for rest and recreation; to the athlete, tennis, golf and boating; to the hunter, excellent sport, and to the botanist, untold wealth of specimen and flora."[215] The committee recognized the Canadian Rockies as a popular tourism destination, and the Canadian Pacific Railway as the veritable tour conductor.

By situating the Canadian Rockies as true to a Stampede holiday, FDCC tapped into Alberta's oldest and most-established tourist trade. The Canadian Rockies had been a tourism destination since the mid-nineteenth century. Many of the first tourists were wealthy British men who travelled to Rupert's Land for sport hunting, health, and adventure.[216] They saw themselves as sporting gentlemen, and sought First Nations and Métis as hunting guides and objects of interest.[217] The North West emerged as a fashionable addition to a North American or world grand tour, in part, because anticipated Canadian expansionism situated the western wilderness as endangered space. Tourists shared with expansionists an imperial sensibility, and many British men travelled to the North West to hunt and explore a remote corner of the British empire.[218]

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[213] Gray, 39.

[214] Calgary Stampede Committee, 51.

[215] Calgary Stampede Committee, 51.

Present-day Alberta became less remote with the completion of the transcontinental railway in 1885. The value of mountain scenery was quickly realized by William Cornelius Van Horne, general manager of the CPR, and by Sir John A. MacDonald, Prime Minister of Canada. Together, the CPR and the Dominion worked to establish the Canadian Rockies as a world-class tourism destination. In 1887, the Dominion passed the Rocky Mountains Park Act to secure the recently-"discovered" Banff hot springs and surrounding timber and mineral resources as federal land. The scenic and recuperative qualities of the mountains served the National Policy of "usefulness" in which Canada's lands were to be exploited for the benefit of the nation.[219] Mountain scenery also provided the CPR with an opportunity to offset the crippling expense of the western rail lines by catering to wealthy tourists. To "import the tourists," Van Horne added first-class passenger trains and dining car service to the transcontinental line. He envisioned a network of CPR hotels to accommodate rail tourists, and, in 1886, completed Mount Stephen House and Glacier House in British Columbia.[220] In 1888, Banff Springs Hotel—a hotel "devoted entirely to serving every need and whim of the traveller"—was opened, and, in 1890, the first chalet was built at Lake Louise.[221] By the turn of the century, the Dominion and the CPR had established the Canadian Rockies as a popular tourism destination.

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[216] Greg Gillespie, "'I Was Well Pleased with our Sport among the Buffalo': Big-Game Hunters, Travel Writing, and Cultural Imperialism in the British North American West, 1847-72," *Canadian Historical Review* 83, no. 4 (December 2002): 562.

[217] See Jasen, *Wild Things*, 17; also see Jasen, *Wild Things*, 134-149 for discussion of the tourist-guide relationship.

[218] Women also travelled in Canada in the mid-nineteenth century, many as immigrants, or as the wives of government officials or missionaries. Many pre-Confederation publications by women were not travel books but guides to immigration and settlement in the eastern colonies of British North America. Women's accounts of pleasure travel to Canada in the 1850s were published in writing about the United States, and visits to Niagara Falls and the eastern colonies were presented as side-trips of a greater American tour. In a study of women and English-language travel writing, LaFramboise notes that female-authored narratives of pleasure travel in Canada rarely extend west of Lake Huron. Although the writers told of the sublime nature of Niagara Falls and the northern wilderness, women appeared to seek civilization over the wilderness. Accounts by women stand in sharp contrast to the standard male-authored narrative of the 1850s in which men sought the wilderness, in particular the North West, for adventure, sport, and exploration. LaFramboise proposes that the West was perceived as a land for young men. See LaFramboise, 18-19, 25-26.

In promoting the Canadian Rockies alongside the Stampede, FDCC linked the Calgary frontier days celebration to a history of frontier festivals in the mountain parks. Since 1894, the Town of Banff had held Banff Indian Days in cooperation with the CPR and local businesses. The first event is credited in popular lore to legendary Tom Wilson, a veteran railway worker who led hunting, fishing, and climbing trips from his horse corral on Banff Avenue.[222] In June, 1894, it is said, he was called upon by the CPR to entertain tourists confined to the Banff Spring Hotel property by the flooding Bow River. Ever aware of the anticipations of tourists, Wilson arranged for First Nation men and women from the nearby Stoney Indian reserve to entertain the guests on the hotel property with horse races, bucking and roping contests, traditional dancing, and tipi pitching. Guests were fascinated by the spectacle, and, under the direction of Norman Luxton from 1909 to 1950, Banff Indian Days became a successful an annual event.[223] Many First Nation spectators and competitors at the 1912 Stampede were annual fair-goers to the Indian Days in Banff. By promoting the Canadian Rockies as a worthy side-trip, FDCC situated the 1912 Stampede within a frontier tradition well established in Banff National Park.

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[219] Robert Craig Brown, "The Doctrine of Usefulness: National Resources and National Parks Policy in Canada, 1887-1914," *Canadian National Parks: today and tomorrow*, ed. J.G. Nelson and R.C. Scarce (Montreal: Harvest House, 1970), 49.

[220] Hart, 7, 13-14.

[221] Hart, 16, 62.

[222] Hart, 59, credits the first event to Tom Wilson. Holt, 172-73, observes that the origins of the Indian Days is unclear. Popular accounts credit the involvement of Tom Wilson, Norman Luxton, and the Brewster brothers.

The Frontier Days Celebration Committee, civic boosters and local business considered the 1912 Stampede a tremendous success. Its success was a culmination of annual exhibitions that had been held in Calgary since 1886, in particular, the Dominion Exhibition in 1908. Through annual exhibitions, booster-minded staff and civic and business leaders in Calgary had learned how to host agricultural competitions. They also understood the value of horse races, cowboy stunts, and historical parades in attracting and entertaining spectators. The 1912 Stampede brought together three experienced parties: exhibition staff and civic leaders familiar with hosting exhibitions in Calgary, the Big Four sponsors who required the event be authentic and educational, and Weadick, a Wild West Show cowboy with a flair for pageantry and publicity. Their combined efforts produced an event that symbolized a cultural turning point for the City of Calgary. The 1912 Stampede demonstrated the commercial and community value of the Last Best West. It served to reorient the civic booster mentality of material progress and economic growth to include a gaze upon a utopian past. The committee adopted myths of the Last

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[223] See Laurie Meijer Drees, "Making Banff a Wild West: Norman Luxton, Indians and Banff Tourism, 1902-1945" (MA thesis, University of Calgary, 1991).

Best West, and wove a story of fearless cowboys and colourful Indians, and of a gentlemanly West of Mounties and Christian missionaries. It constructed the imagined frontier in print through the *Stampede at Calgary* program guide, and at the Stampede parade and rodeo competition. Civic boosters used the cultural pageant to promote a unified understanding of the past and present. In doing so, the 1912 Stampede was an indication that ranching history and cowboy culture could be a valuable means to define civic identity.

6. "Calgary has found something the people want": Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, 1923-1929

In spite of the success of the 1912 Stampede, the frontier days celebration was not repeated until 1919.[224] Always the entrepreneur, Weadick held similar cowboy contests in 1913 in Winnipeg, and in 1916 in New York.[225] Calgary did continue to host an annual exhibition under the management of Richardson and the Calgary Industrial Exhibition Company (CIEC). The 1914 Calgary Exhibition was overshadowed by the discovery of oil in Turner Valley, south of Calgary, and for four months the city was transformed by start-up oil stock companies, real estate speculators, and get-rich-quick schemes.[226] The First World War ended the short-lived boom, and the Victoria Park exhibition grounds became home to 2,500 Canadian soldiers. Wartime exhibitions celebrated Canada's military strength. In 1915, four thousand soldiers marched in the opening-day parade, and, in 1916, mock trench warfare and military exercises were held as attractions.[227] Calgary followed the wartime trend of using local exhibitions as a means to generate and demonstrate public support for Canada's war effort.

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[224] It is unclear why the event was not repeated in Calgary. In Glenbow Archives, M2160, no. 41. "Guy Weadick's Statement, First History of Stampede," in *High River Times*, 8 February 1940, Weadick wrote that the "Big Four" intended the event to become an annual celebration under the direction of the Western Stockgrowers Association. He explained, "But after the show in 1912, so many folks sprang up with ideas on how the 1913 show should be run, that the Big Four gratefully backed away from it. The same resulted at the end of the 1919 stampede."

[225] Livingstone, 58, 67.

[226] Gray, 46.

In 1919, Richardson contacted Burns, Lane, Cross, and McLean, and proposed that they sponsor a "Victory Stampede" in celebration of Allied success in the First World War. The Big Four agreed, and Lane contacted Weadick to manage the "Peace Celebration."[228] "The Western spirit of the 'old days' still prevails," the Stampede committee reported, and they modeled the Victory Stampede after the event in 1912.[229] The Victory Stampede was also considered a great success. When it was clear there would not be another Stampede in Calgary soon, Weadick and LaDue returned to the vaudeville circuit for another season. The couple had developed a liking for Alberta, and, in 1920, purchased a dude ranch near Longview, south of Calgary.[230] The ranch became their home base for twenty-seven years.

During his tenure with the Calgary Exhibition, Richardson remained steadfast to the CIEC mandate to publicize the city's "business life," "prospects," and "intellectual, commercial and moral energy."[231] Richardson well appreciated the value of city fairs as a form of civic boosterism. The CEIC sponsored a number of livestock, agricultural, and sporting events, and in doing so, the exhibition company promoted Calgary and provided citizens with "good recreation."[232] With the onset of the 1920s, it became increasingly difficult for Richardson to achieve CIEC goals of civic and industrial boosterism. Poor crop conditions and a general economic downturn resulted in a significant decline in attendance at the Calgary Industrial Exhibition, a trend noted at exhibitions across North America.[233] In an attempt to revitalize attendance and restore company finances, Richardson looked to improve the entertainment value of the annual event.[234]

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[227] Gray, 46.

[228] Livingstone, 72.

[229] Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, *Calgary 1919 Stampede Peace Celebration: Official Souvenir Programme* (Calgary: Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, 1919), n.p.

[230] Livingstone, 75.

[231] This was the original mandate of CIEC's predecessor, the Calgary and District Agricultural Society formed in 1886. See Glenbow Archives, "A Fall Meeting."

In 1922, Richardson initiated the second cultural turning point in Calgary's adoption of the Last Best West as true to civic identity. Looking to rejuvenate the annual exhibition, Richardson approached Weadick to organize a Stampede entertainment programme at the Calgary Industrial Exhibition.[235] Weadick accepted the offer, and the 1923 exhibition proved overwhelmingly successful. Not only did ticket revenues pay off CIEC debts, but also gave the company surplus monies for future events. Richardson attributed the "magnificent showing" to a combination of factors. The Stampede as the main entertainment program was highly popular. "The riding was exceptionally good and produced numerous thrills," he reported. He also acknowledged the Stampede parade as having set the tone for the week ahead, and the Buffalo Barbecue as a fitting end to the festivities. Morning street displays reportedly turned downtown Calgary back to "old cow-town days," and the closure of 8th Avenue downtown to all but saddle horses and horse-drawn vehicles delighted the public. Cooperation between old-timers, stockmen, Mounties, Native Sons, the Hudson's Bay Company, and local businesses was reportedly unprecedented. Last but not least, the recent opening of the Banff-Windermere Highway had encouraged the arrival of thousands of American motorists.[236] Richardson was elated with the popularity of the Stampede, and saw the "entertainment programme" as a means to fund the Calgary Industrial Exhibition and increase prizes to agricultural exhibitors.[237] "Calgary has found something the people want...," he declared, "something that will make the Calgary Exhibition famous throughout Canada and the United States."[238]

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[232] Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Calgary Exhibition, Annual Report 1920* (Calgary: Calgary Industrial Exhibition, 1920), par. 9, p. 4; and Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Calgary Exhibition, Annual Report 1921* (Calgary: Calgary Industrial Exhibition, 1921), par. 2, p. 4. Recognition of the value of city fairs as advertising was discussed in terms of the short-lived Calgary Winter Carnival.

[233] Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Annual Report 1921*, par. 1, p. 3; also see par. 4, p. 4.

[234] This was retrospectively noted three years after the 1923 exhibition in Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, Annual Report 1927* (Calgary: Calgary Industrial Exhibition), par. 3, p. 9.

[235] Glenbow Archives, "Guy Weadick's Statement."

From 1923, the Stampede programme under the management of Weadick became an annual feature of the re-named Calgary Exhibition and Stampede.[239] Richardson recognized the support of the press as central to the event's success, and appreciated the coverage it received across North American and Great Britain.[240] The most valuable publicity the Exhibition received was not articulated as news, but as entertainment. In the early 1920s, motion pictures surpassed Wild West Shows as popular diversion, and the

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[236] See Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Calgary Exhibition, Annual Report 1923* (Calgary: Calgary Industrial Exhibition, 1923), p. 4-7.

[237] Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Calgary Exhibition, Annual Report 1923* (Calgary: Calgary Industrial Exhibition, 1923), par. 1, p. 8; also see Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, Annual Report 1926* (Calgary: Calgary Industrial Exhibition, 1926), par. 6, p. 9.

[238] Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Annual Report 1923*, par. 1, p. 8.

[239] From 1924 CEIC began to refer to the event in annual reports as the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede. The name was not legally changed until 1933. See Glenbow Archives, M2160, no. 4(c), Letter from Bennett, Hannah and Stanford to E.L. Richardson Re: Bylaws & Change of Name, 12 December 1933.

[240] Calgary Industrial Exhibition, Calgary Exhibition, *Annual Report 1924* (Calgary: Calgary Industrial Exhibition, 1924), par. 7, p. 5.

Stampede in Calgary was a fashionable backdrop. In 1925, the Calgary Jubilee Exhibition and Stampede welcomed Universal Pictures and movie star Hoot Gibson to the Victoria Park fairgrounds. Richardson anticipated that the movie, *Calgary Stampede*, would be viewed by 30 or 40 million people, offering the city unprecedented publicity.[241] The next year, the Canadian Government Motion Picture Bureau and the Dominion Department of Trade and Commerce produced a movie reportedly more thrilling than the Gibson film and distributed it to theatres from Halifax to Victoria, across the United States, and as a special short feature in Britain.[242] In 1928, the Stampede was the backdrop for *His Destiny*, an unabashed plug for the annual event. Weadick produced and acted in the film, and Burns and Cross financed the project.[243] In 1931, cameraman Alvin Wyckoff from Hollywood attended the Stampede, and 1932 saw the arrival of studio directors from Pathe, Paramount, and Fox.[244] Through the popularity of motion pictures, CIEC tapped into publicity that no amount of money could buy.

With increasing fame of the Calgary Exhibition and its Stampede programme, Richardson sought to "improve the event from both the spectators' and contestants' viewpoints."[245] Annual exhibitions adopted themes: 1925 was Calgary's 50th Anniversary

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[241] Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Calgary Exhibition, Jubilee and Stampede, Annual Report 1925* (Calgary: Calgary Industrial Exhibition, 1925), par. 5, p. 6.

[242] Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, Annual Report 1928* (Calgary: Calgary Industrial Exhibition, 1928), par. 4, p. 10, notes that the 1925 film tied for first place in a survey conducted by the *Exhibitors' Trade Review*, a significant entertainment trade journal in the 1920s and 30s. The name of this Dominion film was not listed.

[243] Gray, 87-88.

[244] Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, Annual Report 1931* (Calgary: Calgary Industrial Exhibition, 1931), par. 2, p. 6; and Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, Annual Report 1932* (Calgary: Calgary Industrial Exhibition, 1932), par. 9, p. 5.

[245] Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Annual Report 1923*, par. 2, p. 6.

Celebration; 1927 introduced the Grand Novelty Revue in honour of Canada's 60th birthday; and 1931 celebrated sponsor Senator Patrick Burn's 75th birthday. The rodeo competition itself was tailored to suit the tastes of the predominantly urban crowd. In 1927, Weadick introduced steer decorating—looping a ribbon around a steer's horn—in place of bull-dogging—an event credited to legendary African-American cowboy Bill Pickett. Apparently, in 1903, he "leaped from his horse and wrestled a steer to the ground, biting the steer's upper lip."[246] The latter was noted by Richardson as "objectionable" to the viewing audience.[247] The Indian encampment at the fairgrounds was always a popular attraction. At the 1925 Jubilee Celebration, only older First Nation men and women unable to work reserve farm land were permitted by Indian Affairs to attend. This decision suited Richardson as older Indians were "most interesting from a tourist standpoint."[248] The exhibition also capitalized on the popularity of horse racing, and Calgary became part of the prairie horse racing circuit. Horse races eventually replaced automobile races, and, in 1926, the exhibition's racing department made a profit for the first time in its history.[249] Throughout the 1920s, Richardson demonstrated increased understanding of tourist anticipations, and each year sought to improve the entertainment value of the exhibition. The need to exceed the entertainment of previous years was exemplified by concern that the 1926 exhibition would not be able to complete with the 1925 Jubilee celebration. To surprise spectators, parade chairman James Smart kicked off the 1926 procession of western Canadian history astride an elephant.[250] Exotic and outlandish spectacles served to configure the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede as bigger and better every year.

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[246] Livingstone, 20, notes that Bill Picket performed his bull-dogging act at the 1912 Stampede dressed as a Spanish bullfighter. Demetrius Pearson, "Shadow Riders of the Subterranean Circuit: A Descriptive Account of Black Rodeo in the Texas Gulf Coast Region," *Journal of American Culture* 27, no. 2 (2004): 191, observes that black competitors were not allowed to participate in early American rodeos. He notes that until Pickett became famous for his bull-dogging technique, he dressed as a Spanish bullfighter.

[247] Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Annual Report 1927*, par. 6, p. 6.

[248] Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Annual Report 1926*, par. 3, p. 7, par. 2, p. 8

[249] Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Annual Report 1926*, par. 2, p. 7; and Gray, 73, credits horse racing to increased gate and grandstand revenues at the exhibition in Calgary. Gray, 43, 46, notes that CIEC hosted automobile and motorcycle races in Calgary as early as 1912. In 1917, automobile races were added to the exhibition entertainment programme for the first time. The touring troupe of automobile racers from the United States were reportedly a highlight attraction. Also see Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, Annual Report 1917* (Calgary: Calgary Industrial Exhibition, 1917), par. 3, p. 3.

In the 1920s, CIEC saw the annual event as a prominent tourist attraction and a vital form of boosterism for the City of Calgary. The event was part of Alberta's and Canada's budding tourist trade, and Richardson saw its success as dependent on the health of the industry. As in 1912, the Canadian Rockies were situated as complementary to a Stampede holiday. Richardson understood the value of Calgary's proximity to the national parks, and jointly promoted tourism in Calgary and the Canadian Rockies. In 1927, he observed that:

> [Tourists] are so well pleased with their holiday at Calgary that they give the event much valuable publicity in their respective districts and thereby send a greater volume of business back the next year. We are using every endeavour to make the beauties of our wonderful mountain playground known and we believe we are assisting materially in increasing the number of people who enjoy the Canadian Rockies each year.[251]

Event posters advertised "Canada's Beautiful Playground," and encouraged spectators to visit the "previously inaccessible beauties of Yoho Valley, Emerald Lake and Golden."[252] Richardson heralded the completion of the Banff-Windermere highway as a factor in the success of the 1923 Calgary Exhibition and Stampede. He also anticipated increased tourist traffic to Calgary with the future completion a road between Field, Golden, and Revelstoke. He advocated the construction of gravelled roads in southern Alberta, and agreed with the National Parks Branch assertion that "until [road] conditions are changed, we cannot expect much increase in the present [tourist] traffic."[253] Richardson saw CIEC as central to tourism in Calgary, and worked to establish the Exhibition and Stampede as a premier attraction in Alberta and Canada. "Nowhere is it possible to put on more thrilling cowboy sports than in the 'City of the Foothills,'" he declared.[254]

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[250] Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Annual Report 1926*, par. 3, p. 6.

[251] Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Annual Report 1927*, par. 1, p. 8.

[252] Calgary Stampede, "The Stampede" historical posters, 1927-1929, available on-line from http://calgarystampede.com/about/history/historical_posters.html.

The decision to add a Stampede entertainment programme to the 1923 Calgary Industrial Exhibition proved to be a profitable venture for CIEC in terms of the booster ethos of economic growth, material success, and the production of a unified way of seeing. Importantly, it was a cultural turning point for the institutionalization of the Last Best West in Calgary boosterism. "It takes many years of wide publicity to create a desire in the minds of people at great distances to attend any event," Richardson reported, "and the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede is now in the fortunate position of being able to reap some of the benefits."[255] CIEC promoted Calgary as the Last Best West through posters, program guides, film, parades, street displays, old-timer dances, and the rodeo competition. In doing so, it created a profitable and attractive tourist gaze for the City of Calgary. A tourist gaze grounded in the Last Best West appeared to resonate with civic boosters and leaders. Considering increased spectatorship, apparently the tourist gaze resonated with residents and visitors, as well. According to an editorial writer, the Stampede was true to the city's "progressive western spirit":

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[253] Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Annual Report 1923*, par. 10, p. 7; and Calgary Industrial Exhibition, "Annual Report, 1927," par. 7-8, p. 8.

[254] Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Annual Report 1925*, par. 9, p. 10.

[255] Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Annual Report 1928*, par. 3, p. 13.

> Manager Richardson and Guy Weadick certainly are masters at the art of giving the people of Western Canada a show that keeps their blood tingling, for they not only thrill us with the Stampede events, with its truly amazing display of early western life, but also combine with it the best that can be secured in platform attractions and other features in keeping with our progressive western spirit."[256]

A spirit of optimism surrounded the Stampede, and, as reported by Richardson, "Those associated with the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede can certainly look forward with every confidence to further development."[257]

7. Ownership and the Tourist Gaze: Guy Weadick v. Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, 1932-1935

The economic dislocation that ushered in the 1930s put to test much of CIEC's optimism. Following trends at fairs across North America, the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede experienced a considerable decrease in attendance, and faced plummeting gate and grandstand revenues, as well as reduced government grants.[258] The board of directors made substantial cuts to race purses, parade expenses, judges' fees, and employee salaries.[259] However, the greatest challenge in the 1930s was not economic, but legal. In 1934, Weadick sued Richardson and CIEC for wrongful dismissal after the 1932 Calgary Stampede, and claimed ownership over the title "Stampede." The lawsuit reflected the contested nature of tourism imagery and perceived ownership of the production and end product of the tourist gaze.

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[256] Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Annual Report 1928*, par. 10, p. 11.

[257] Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Annual Report 1928*, par. 3, p. 13.

[258] Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, Annual Report 1930* (Calgary: Calgary Industrial Exhibition), par. 1, p. 4; Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Annual Report 1931*, par. 4, p. 4; and Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Annual Report 1932*, par. 1, p. 5.

[259] Gray, 90-91.

Rights to the title "Stampede" were at the heart of the lawsuit. Weadick claimed that as an independent contractor to CIEC in 1912, 1919, and from 1923 to 1932, he was the sole proprietor of the "ideas, methods, and original material" behind the Stampede. He claimed to have been the mastermind behind Calgary's internationally renowned fair, having conceived everything from main-street decoration and the wearing of cowboy hats to importing Brahma steers and welcoming Hollywood film makers.[260] Weadick argued that with his wrongful dismissal after the 1932 exhibition he took the rights to the Stampede programme making it unlawful for CIEC to put on a similar celebration. He appealed to the Supreme Court of Alberta to levy a permanent injunction against CIEC's use of the word "Stampede," and to prevent the company from hosting a similar event.[261]

Weadick's $100,000 claim for damages and wrongful dismissal was not the first time entitlement to the word "Stampede" had been called into question. Peter Welsh was a Scottish immigrant and owner of one of the first livery stables in Calgary. In the 1920s, he shifted his focus from selling horses to settlers to supplying bucking broncos to rodeos across North America. In 1925, Welsh created the Alberta Stampede Company, and staged rodeo shows in eastern Canada and the United States.[262] Welsh advertised his travelling rodeo as "The Thrill of the Century." "Not a wild west show or circus," he claimed in the *Toronto Star*, "but *a real championship cowboy contest*."[263] Weadick was unimpressed with Welsh's use of the word "Stampede," and conceivably the unwanted success of a fellow rodeo entrepreneur. He published a letter in the periodical *Billboard* clarifying for the public that Welsh had no association with the Calgary Stampede. Welsh did not appreciate Weadick's "general observations on the conduct of the [Alberta Stampede] shows," and sued CIEC and Weadick for libel.[264] Welsh did not follow up on his threat of legal action, perhaps due to the pending bankruptcy facing his company at the time. The incident motivated CIEC to seek an official ban against the use of word "Stampede" by any other company incorporated in Alberta. Premier Brownlee supported the request, and prohibited its use unless approved by CIEC.[265]

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[260] Glenbow Archives, M2160, no. 14, "Weadick Says Many Of His Ideas Used by Stampede Board," in *Calgary Herald*, 22 March 1934.

[261] Glenbow Archives, M2160, no. 14, "'Stampede Weadick Sues for $100,000 Damages," in *New York Press*, 5 May 1934.

[262] See Holt, 99-104 for a history of the travelling rodeo show.

In 1932, Weadick challenged the provincial ruling, and sought to incorporate the southern Alberta ranch as the "Stampede Ranch Company." Weadick and LaDue promoted their ranch as "A Real Place for Real People." Advertisements paralleled Wild West boosterism. Guests were invited to participate in roping and branding events, saddle up for chuckwagon and trail rides, and join winter dog sled excursions to the mountains. The main ranch house was a virtual museum of the Weadicks' vaudeville and Wild West travels, and photographs of rodeo stars, English royalty, and prominent Alberta cattlemen displayed their extensive network of professional contacts.[266] Weadick's request to incorporate the ranch as the "Stampede Ranch Company" was rejected by the Province of Alberta and CIEC. Weadick responded by contacting lawyer A.M. Naismith to enter negotiations with Richardson. The outcome was in Weadick's favour, and, in June 1932, he was granted permission to use the name. The one stipulation was that he did not offer products or services similar to the Stampede programme of the Calgary Exhibition.[267]

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[263] *Toronto Star*, "Cowboys! Cowgirls!! Wild!!! Wooly!!!! Western!!!!!" in *Toronto Star*, 13 June 1927, available on-line from the University of Alberta, Toronto Star Pages of the Past, http://micromedia.pagesofthepast.ca.login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/PageView.asp, accessed 4 September 2004.

[264] Glenbow Archives, M2160, no. 13, Letter from Sinclair to Bennett, Hanna and Sanford Re: Weadick vs. The Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, April 7, 1934, par. 2, p. 2.

[265] Glenbow Archives, "Letter from Sinclair Re: Weadick," par. 3, p. 2. Also see Livingstone, 93-95.

At the time of negotiations over the proposed Stampede Ranch Company, relations between Weadick and CIEC were already strained. In CIEC reports filed for the lawsuit, Richardson asserted that Weadick had been increasingly neglectful of his duties leading up to the 1932 Calgary Exhibition and Stampede. He reported that Weadick had been unreasonably pessimistic as to the success of that year's Stampede programme. Weadick's cynicism reportedly culminated at the directors meeting in May 1932 in which he presented a bleak picture to CIEC staff.[268] Reflecting on the Stampede manager's performance and outlook, Richardson reported that Weadick's attitude in 1932 "was so different from what it had been before that there was cause to worry as to whether it would be safe for him to be associated with the event."[269]

Whether a prediction on Richardson's part or a retrospective interpretation, Weadick provided grounds for the general manager's concerns. On the final night of the 1932 Exhibition and Stampede, he allegedly declared to a number of CIEC staff that he had had enough of the event. "I'm going to tell the crowd that they can take the show and keep it, for I'm through, after to-night," he was reported to have said.[270] According to event staff, Weadick made his way to the platform where champion cowboys were to receive their prizes, and in a quite intoxicated state, proceeded to introduce each winner. Concerned that he would address the crowd with his intended speech, staff disconnected the microphone just as Weadick reportedly declared, "I put on your first Stampede and I've just put on your last."[271] Richardson ensured this statement was the case and, under the guise of economy, discontinued the position of Stampede manager.[272]

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[266] Livingstone, 79-80.

[267] Glenbow Archives, "Letter from Sinclair Re: Weadick," par. 4, p. 2. Also see Livingstone, 108.

[268] Glenbow Archives, M2160, no. 13, "Notes Re Weadick Case Re 1912 Stampede," 7 December 1934, par. 2, p. 2.

[269] Glenbow Archives, M2160, no. 13, "Memorandum" by E.L.R [E.L. Richardson], 19 March 1934, par.2, p. 1.

Weadick looked upon future Stampedes in Calgary as an appropriation of his hard work and creativity. In the spring of 1934, he levied a lawsuit claiming wrongful dismissal and demanded $100,000 in damages. Honourable Mr. Justice Ives presided over the case, and presented his decision in the spring of 1935. He agreed that Weadick had grounds to claim wrongful dismissal. Although CIEC hired the Stampede manager based on an yearly contract, Ives felt Weadick was entitled to a reasonable notice of termination. He granted Weadick six month's salary at a sum of $2700.[273] Ives rejected CIEC's defence that immediate termination was justified based on Weadick's disloyalty and intoxicated behaviour in 1932. Drinking was an acceptable part of Weadick's job, according to Judge Ives:

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[270] Glenbow Archives, M2160, no. 13, "Re Weadick's Actions Saturday night, July 16th, 1932," 4 February 1935, par 2, p. 1.

[271] Glenbow Archives, "Weadick's Actions," par 3, p. 2.

[272] Glenbow Archives, M2160, no. 14, "Committee to Handle Show From Now On," in *Calgary Daily Herald*, 18 August 1932, par 4; and Glenbow Archives, M2160, no. 13, "Memo Re Weadick Suit," n.d, par. 1, p. 1.

[273] Glenbow Archives, M2160, no. 13, "Guy Weadick v. the Calgary Exhibition & Stampede Company, Oral Judgment of the Honourable Mr. Justice Ives," n.d., par. 1, p. 1.

> I think [the Saturday night event] was not serious in the minds of the Directors. These men know life pretty well I should say. They must have realized that the position occupied by this Plaintiff was such that it necessitated on his part the indulgence in much more alcohol than was required of other employees....His drinking with guests and with contestants and with those connected with the Stampede, prompted generally the welfare of the Stampede.[274]

Weadick's cowboy persona, apparently, relinquished him from irresponsible and intoxicated behaviour.

As to Weadick's claim of damages and entitlement to the name and concepts behind the Stampede, CEIC mounted a significant defence. Richardson argued that the *Calgary Exhibition and Stampede was a community affair:*

> [It is] a result of the ingenuity, ideas, co-operation and endeavors of cowboys, rangemen, ranchers and old-timers, Indians and police of Alberta, and of the citizens of the City of Calgary, and of the officers, directors, associate directors and shareholders of the [Exhibition].[275]

The event was born of the creative energy and frontier spirit of true Calgarians, CIEC claimed. Its success was credited to altruistic residents who lent money and supplies, and volunteered their time for the betterment of the city. The Stampede was heralded as being built by the community and belonging to the community.

Weadick, on the other hand, was framed as spurious by CEIC. As reported in the *Calgary Albertan*, CEIC claimed that:

> If Weadick ever produced a championship cowboy contest...it was not originated by him, but was copied and imitated by him from numerous contests in Western Canada and the United States.[276]

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[274] Glenbow Archives, "Oral Judgment," par. 2, p. 1.

[275] Glenbow Archives, M2160, no. 14, "Exhibition Defence Filed in Weadick's Action for $100,000," in *Calgary Albertan*, 11 April 1934, par. 15.

[276] Glenbow Archives, "Exhibition Defence Filed," par. 17.

Weadick's contribution to the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede was considered neither unique or novel. Much like his vaudeville and Wild West career, he reportedly mimicked trendy forms of entertainment. Weadick did not create the Stampede any more than he created the word "Stampede," argued organizers. Stampede was a common term used "in connection with cowboy contests and meets, rodeos, roundups, agricultural fairs and exhibitions, western celebrations and shows," they declared.[277] The law sided with Richardson and CIEC, and Weadick was denied entitlement to the word and its associated products and services.

The lawsuit marked the third cultural turning point in the adoption of the Last Best West as the essence of civic identity in Calgary. Weadick's challenge over ownership of the production and end product of the Stampede brand compelled CIEC and civic boosters to formally define the relationship between civic identity and the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede. Weadick's claim that Calgary's icon attraction was his own creation mobilized civic boosters to stake out the cultural territory of the Stampede. No longer merely an educational and entertaining annual celebration, Stampede brand was declared as the essence of civic spirit. Weadick was rejected as a "knocker," and his contribution to the Stampede reduced to imitation. The conflicting arguments that framed the Stampede as organic to Calgary while at the same time a copy of popularized cowboy events was unchallenged by civic boosters who returned to the usual rhetoric of declaring the cultural pageant as unique. "Calgary has found something the people want," Richardson had declared in 1923. Twelve years later, when Weadick challenged CIEC for ownership of the Stampede brand, CIEC saw its role as defending what the people wanted, and, thus, formally declared the Last Best West as the essence of civic identity.

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[277] Glenbow Archives, "Exhibition Defence Filed," par. 17.

8. Conclusion

In the early-twentieth century, the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede emerged as a means to inscribe meaning on the civic landscape. Civic boosters adopted the Last Best West as the foundational narrative, and, in doing so, asserted a utopian past, harmonious present, and boundless future. A unified way of seeing served the booster ethos of community solidarity. Civic cohesion also promoted provincial cohesion, and, through the annual exhibition, Calgary was situated as the heart of Alberta's Last Best West. The three cultural turning points in the adoption of the imagined landscape reveal the cultural mentalities, historical conditions, and ways of seeing that shaped tourism in Alberta in the early-twentieth century.

The first turning point was the 1912 Stampede in which the underlying narrative of civic boosterism in Calgary shifted from a focus on the future to include a focus on the past. The historical gaze encouraged spectators to indulge in the romance of the nineteenth-century frontier. The *Stampede at Calgary* program guide constructed a wild yet gentlemanly frontier of cowboys, Indians, Mounties, and Christian missionaries. The romantic sensibility of tourism suited the imperialistic nature of the historical gaze, as observed at the Stampede parade. The procession of colonial history served to reassert Euro-Canadian dominance, and narrated the "grand epic" of western Canadian history. Heroic frontier icons framed a unified and utopian past. The cowboy was the archetypical hero, and symbolized the rugged character of the frontier. The success story of start-up cowboy Pat Burns reflected the belief that, through hard work and personal character, Calgarians could re-create themselves in a land free of social and political constraints. The 1912 Stampede demonstrated to boosters the commercial and community value of a historical gaze, and was a cultural turning point in imagining Calgary's civic landscape.

The forces of consumer capitalism marked the second cultural turning point in civic adoption of the Last Best West. In the early 1920s, the Calgary Industrial Exhibition Company was finding it increasingly difficult to achieve its mandate of providing citizens with "good recreation."[278] The company was in debt, and added a "Stampede entertainment programme" in hopes of boosting attendance and revenues. The experiment was a success, and the Stampede became the highlight attraction at the annual exhibition. The popularity of the Stampede programme in the 1920s coincided with tremendous growth in Alberta's tourism industry. Paved roads and automobile use increased tourist traffic to Calgary and the Canadian Rockies. Exhibitions became highly structured, and were a part of greater rodeo and horse racing circuits, as well as a professional fair circuit of midway, side-show, and concession companies.[279] The popularity of the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede as a holiday sporting competition and cultural pageant was reflective of tourism in Canada in the 1920s.

The contested ownership of the Stampede brand marked the final cultural turning point for Calgary in the early-twentieth century. Weadick's 1934 claim over the "ideas, methods, and original material" compelled CIEC to evaluate the relationship between identity and festivity. The lawsuit inversely caused CIEC and civic boosters to assert public ownership over the Stampede brand. With the closure of the case in 1935, the Stampede brand was heralded as a community good, and the Last Best West became institutionalized culture in Calgary. Dissenters were relegated as knockers, and, in the case of Weadick, he was rejected by the Calgary establishment for fifteen years.[280] Calgary emerged from the lawsuit as the heart of Alberta's Last Best West, and civic and business leaders, and exhibition staff adopted the imagined landscape as Calgary's true nature.

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[278] See Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Annual Report 1920*, par. 9, p. 4; and Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Annual Report 1921*, par. 2, p. 4. Recognition of the value of city fairs as advertising was discussed in terms of the short-lived Calgary Winter Carnival.

[279] See McKay, 33, for discussion of the rise of tourism in the 1920s; see Holt, 19-22, for discussion of the professionalization of exhibitions.

Formally inscribing the Last Best West as the essence of civic identity constructed a dominant way of seeing Calgary and its inhabitants. The dominant narrative offered little space for other interpretations, and First Nations, labourers, or eastern-European immigrants, for example, were relegated to the periphery. Ironically, by heralding the cowboy and the frontier as the essence of civic identity, the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede played into the very stereotype it was trying to dispel. The purpose of hosting bigger and better exhibitions, such as the 1908 Dominion Exhibition, was to elevate Calgary from its small-town, backwoods status, and show Canada and the world the city's progress and prosperity. Inversely, it was in the backwoods image of cowboys and the western frontier that the Calgary Exhibition grew and prospered. The Last Best West trapped Calgary in mythic past that would always be in conflict with lived reality. The conflict between myth and reality reveals the Last Best West as a culturally-reflexive narrative that constructs ways of seeing in Alberta.

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[280] Livingstone, 117-18, notes that, in 1946, Ken Cappock, editor of *Canadian Cattlemen*, suggested a "Weadick Day" to recognize Weadick's contribution to the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede. This proposal was not accepted. In 1950, however, when Weadick and LaDue relocated from High River to Phoenix, Arizona, Weadick was recognized for his efforts. He received a gift of $10,000 and a gold cigarette case with the engraving, "His countless friends and admirers will always remember that it was Guy Weadick who originated and gave to the world, the famous Calgary Stampede."

Chapter Three

Provincial Boosterism and the Last Best West: Government of Alberta Tourism Publicity, 1905-1940

> Every satisfied tourist will being another. Thus the good name and fame of Alberta will be spread.
>
> E.O. Duke, 1935

Early twentieth-century boosters in Alberta embraced print media as an effective tool to attract immigrants and investors to the province. Handbooks, brochures, flyers, maps, and newspaper advertisements carried the message of provincial and civic progress to potential settlers in eastern Canada, the United States, and Europe. Tourists also consumed print media, and, with the increasing popularity of travel in Alberta in the 1920s, boosters began to target holidaymakers. Initially, boosters saw tourists as future settlers or investors, and addressed them through settlement publicity.[281] By the late 1920s and 1930s, tourism was considered a valuable industry, and boosters used increasingly sophisticated print media to showcase Alberta destinations. Through tourism publicity, boosters advertised Alberta's progress and prosperity, and, importantly, promoted a particular way of seeing the province. Print media is inherently selective in its content, and chosen text and photographs illustrate what historian W.L Morton calls a "literary landscape."[282] Thus, early twentieth-century tourism publicity reveals dominant ideas of how Alberta ought to be or ought to have been. Analysis of print media reveals a search for meaning and understanding in Alberta. This search inscribed utopian ideals on the Alberta landscape, and strove to engender an imagined community through the production and consumption of tourism publicity.[283]

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[281] Dawson, "Consumerism and Tourism," 27-28, observes that, in British Columbia, tourists were seen as future agriculturalists or industrialists.

[282] See Morton, "Seeing a Unliterary Landscape," 17.

In the early-twentieth century, the Government of Alberta emerged as a prominent tourism booster in Alberta.[284] Provincial involvement in tourism stemmed from the work of the Publicity Bureau, a "general free information bureau" formed in 1910 in the Alberta Department of Agriculture.[285] Under the direction of Charles Hotchkiss from 1910 to 1918, the main objective of the Bureau was to attract settlers to the province, and it did so through exhibitions and publications. From 1916 to 1931, the Publicity Bureau was renamed the Publicity Branch and the Publicity and Statistics Branch.[286] In the 1920s, under Publicity Commissioner Colin Groff, the Bureau outlined four main responsibilities: publicity and information, motion pictures, agricultural exhibits, and statistics.[287] Groff was an experienced publicist, and recognized the promising tourist trade in Alberta. Under his direction, the Bureau conducted a 1923 tourism campaign to the Pacific States and began to advertise to tourists. The Bureau also filmed motion pictures on rural Alberta, and published settlement handbooks, pocket map books, and an Alberta photograph album. D.A. McCannel replaced Groff in 1927, and Statistician Brownlee appears to have operated the Bureau from 1929 to 1931.[288] In 1931, the Publicity Bureau was transferred to the Alberta Executive Council. Once again under the direction of Groff, the Bureau assumed responsibility for publicizing the government and the province. In the 1930s, the main focus was on tourism instead of immigration, and tourism was seen as a means to elevate Alberta from financial difficulties. Tourism was heralded as vital to a healthy Alberta economy. In 1936, the Bureau was transferred to the Department of Industry and Trade. It compiled visitation statistics, published travel guides worked in cooperation with local, regional, and national tourism boosters—railway and steamship companies, civic boards of trade, motor associations, and auto camps, for example. By 1940, tourism was considered an essential industry in Alberta, and the Government of Alberta Publicity Bureau assumed a leading role in the provincial tourism economy.

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[283] Anderson, 76-78, notes the role of print-capitalism and print-language in creating imagined communities.

[284] A comprehensive review of surviving early twentieth-century Government of Alberta Publicity Bureau documents was conducted at the Alberta Legislative Library, University of Alberta Bruce Peel Special Collections, and the University of Alberta Libraries Peel's Prairie Provinces. Primary sources included Government of Alberta sessional papers, settlement and tourism publications, photographs, and newspaper clippings. Secondary research on Canadian tourism and Canadian history complemented archival research.

[285] Province of Alberta, "Report of the Publicity Commissioner, 1910," par. 10, p. 230.

[286] From 1910 to 1940, the Publicity Bureau changed names and departments a number of times within the Government of Alberta. To avoid confusion, I will refer to it as the "Publicity Bureau" or the "Bureau."

[287] Province of Alberta, "Report of the Publicity Bureau," *Sessional Papers, 1923, Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Alberta*, 1924, par. 2, p. 78.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the literary landscape of the Last Best West constructed through Publicity Bureau tourism publications. Analysis of tourism publications reveals that the Bureau went through four phases of publicity. The first phase (1905-1919) involved selling leisure to settlers, and the recognition that Alberta's mountains, lakes, and wildlife were appealing attributes to settlement. The second phase (1920-1929) demonstrated awareness of Alberta as a popular destination for Americans, and involved selling settlement to auto tourists. The third phase (1930-1938) marked the emergence of tourism-specific publicity, and framed the tourist gaze in terms of industry, history, and landscape. The fourth phase (1939-1940) refined the tourist gaze, and elevated nineteenth-century folk heroes as the essence of the imagined frontier. Thus, Alberta emerged in Publicity Bureau publications as the Last Best West. Such representation involved the politics of cultural selection, and cultural hegemony shaped how the Alberta landscape was imagined.

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[288] McCannel resigned from the position of Publicity Commissioner on October 1, 1928. Statistician Brownlee appears to have assumed some of McCannel's responsibilities. He wrote annual reports for 1929 and 1930. Groff was reappointed in the fall of 1931. He had left the position in 1927 to work as a publicist for the Canadian National Railways.

1. A Very Eden for the Settler: Leisure and Settlement Publicity, 1905-1919

Government of Alberta involvement in the provincial tourism economy stemmed from early immigration policy and publicity. In 1910, the Liberal government under Premier Arthur Sifton established the Publicity Bureau in the Alberta Department of Agriculture.[289] Charles Hotchkiss was Publicity Commissioner from 1910 to 1918, and used exhibitions and publications to attract settlers to the province. Agricultural exhibitions across North America were a successful form of publicity, and the Government of Alberta sponsored civic fairs, including the Calgary Industrial Exhibition.[290] Alberta farmers received top prizes at agricultural competitions—confirming Alberta as a land of abundance—and Publicity Bureau officials passionately recruited fairgoers as future settlers. Offices in Winnipeg, Montreal and Toronto were inundated with requests for settlement information, and the Bureau received the occasional inquiry from editorial writers and tourists. The Bureau responded by mailing settlement publications to interested parties in eastern Canada, the United States, and overseas.[291]

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[289] Province of Alberta, "Report of the Publicity Commissioner, 1910," par. 10, p. 230.

[290] In Calgary Industrial Exhibition Company annual reports from 1913 to 1935, manager E.L. Richardson acknowledged funding from the City of Calgary, and Provincial and Dominion Departments of Agriculture. For example, see Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Annual Report 1920*, par. 1, p. 4.

The Publicity Bureau understood the need to situate Alberta as attractive to potential settlers. In *The Province of Alberta: an official handbook containing reliable information concerning its resources* (1907), Alberta was portrayed as a land of unbridled agricultural potential awaiting the industrious and hard-working settler. Life in Alberta was not all work, however, as there was sport to be had. Alberta offered the gentleman hunter moose, elk, caribou, and deer, and, mountain goats and sheep with the assistance of a hunting guide who could be acquired at any railway station in the mountains. The publication reminisced about the "very Eden for the sportsman" that existed in Alberta in the nineteenth century.[292] It conceded, "Civilization has cleared away the buffalo, and all that remains of them now is an occasional head lying bleaching on the prairie."[293] "Surviving representatives" of the fondly-remembered frontier could still be seen. The settlement handbook assured readers a small herd existed in Banff National Park and a second herd was east of Edmonton. In *Official Handbook*, scarcity and abundance characterized descriptions of wildlife and sport hunting. Recognition of the scarcity of game—southern Alberta as "somewhat denuded of water fowl," for example—was met with indications of wildlife management, giving the impression that the Government of Alberta would ensure that the province remain a sportsman's Eden.[294]

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[291] Province of Alberta, "Report of the Publicity Commissioner, 1910," p. 229-30.

[292] Gillespie, 557, observes that mid nineteenth-century big-game hunters imposed an imperial sensibility on the western Canadian landscape. Big-game hunters considered the sport as noble and manly, and regarded subsistence hunters as uncivilized. *An Official Handbook* clearly situated hunting in Alberta as a leisure activity not a means of subsistence. By making reference to Alberta's hunting past, *An Official Handbook* situate the modern deer and duck hunter within the perceived gentlemanly sporting tradition of nineteenth-century big-game hunting. Also see G. Colpitts, "Wildlife Promotions, Western Canadian Boosterism, and the Conservation Movement, 1890-1914," *American Review of Canadian Studies* vol. 102 (spring/summer 1998): 103-130; and Wetherell, 165-85, discusses hunting and fishing in early twentieth century Alberta.

[293] Department of Agriculture, *The Province of Alberta: An official handbook containing reliable information concerning its resources* (Edmonton: Department of Agriculture, 1907), 51.

Official Handbook offered settlers a second leisurely pursuit—a trip on the Athabasca and Peace River steamboat. "It is possible to make a most enjoyable and instructive pleasure trip through the north country," the handbook reported. It was a journey "regularly taken by those in search of adventure," including a "lady novelist" from France.[295] By the 1910s, Canada's north had become a popular destination for tourists preferring to leave the comfort of the train behind, and travel off-the-beaten path. "Most writers who traverse The Dominion enter it at the Eastern portal," reported Agnes Cameron in *The new North* (1909), "and travel west by the C.P.R., following the line of least resistance till they reach the Pacific."[296] On the other hand, Cameron, a teacher and journalist from Victoria, British Columbia, saw Canada as having a third dimension. In 1908, Cameron and a female companion embarked for the Arctic and what she described as "the last unoccupied frontier under a white man's sky."[297] It may have been out of an awareness of increased pleasure travel to the Arctic that the Publicity Bureau inserted this brief note in *Official Handbook*.[298]

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[294] Department of Agriculture, *Official Handbook*, 52.

[295] Department of Agriculture, *Official Handbook*, 55-56.

[296] Agnes Deans Cameron, *The new North: Being some account of a woman's journey through Canada to the Arctic* (New York and London: D. Appleton and Company, 1909), 2; available on-line from University of Alberta, Peel's Prairie Provinces, no. 3138,.

[297] Cameron, 3.

[298] For further reading on female travel writers in the North see Pernille Jakobsen, "Touring Strange Lands: Women Travel Writers in Western Canada, 1876 to 1914 (M.A. thesis, University of Calgary, 1997), available on-line from Theses Canada (Ottawa: National Library of Canada), amicus no. 18224820, 29-30; and LaFramboise, 124-67.

In the early 1910s, the Publicity Bureau was overwhelmed by requests for information and maps on Alberta, and attributed the high numbers of settlers to the back-to-the-land trend.[299] Rural life was glorified in the urban imagination as being pure and productive; working close to the soil was working for provincial and national prosperity.[300] While many settlers were attracted to rural Alberta, immigrants also relocated to Alberta's cities. Calgary and Edmonton boasted modern amenities, industries, and infrastructure. Urban growth was a concern, and, for example, in 1914, the City of Calgary commissioned urban planner Thomas Mawson to establish a preliminary plan for the booming city.[301] Alberta also attracted industrial workers, and coal mining and lumber towns grew in size. Agriculture was the mainstay of the provincial economy, however, and cities and towns were structured to serve the beef, grain, dairy, and produce industry.[302]

With the onset of the First World War, immigration slowed tremendously. Settlers arriving from Europe and the "Mother Country" had all but ceased, and the Publicity Bureau set its sights on immigration from central Canada and the United States.[303] Although the war interrupted settlement, it also stimulated a boom in the agricultural sector. As a result, farmers eagerly tried to meet international demand for Canadian wheat. Backed by bank loans and credit, they expanded their lands, adopted new technologies, and increased production.[304] In the flurry of high wheat prices and heady success, Alberta farmers and agricultural advocates experienced, to some extent, the elusive fertile garden promised by late nineteenth-century expansionists. Farmers emerged in the First World War as the "pioneers of the Empire and nation," and agricultural production in Alberta was seen as central to Canada contribution to the war.[305]

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[299] Province of Alberta, "Report of the Publicity Bureau," *Sessional Papers, 1914, Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Alberta*, 1915, par. 3, p. 178; and Province of Alberta, "Publicity and Immigration," *Sessional Papers, 1915, Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Alberta*, 1916, par. 4, p. 223.

[300] Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, 304.

[301] See Thomas Hayton Mawson, *Calgary: A preliminary scheme for controlling the economic growth of the city* (London & New York: T.H. Mawson City Planning Experts, 1914), available on-line from University of Alberta, Peel's Prairie Provinces, no. 3376. Importantly, this report was commissioned the same year oil was discovered in Turner Valley, south of Calgary.

[302] Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, 274, 301.

[303] Province of Alberta, "Publicity and Immigration, 1915," par. 3, p. 223.

The Publicity Bureau continued to recruit settlers during the war, and anticipated an influx of immigrants once peace in Europe was reached.[306] In keeping with their mandate to provide information to prospective settlers, the Bureau published *Alberta: A Survey of the topography, climate, resources, industries, transportation and communication, and institutional services of the Province of Alberta* (c. 1919). The booklet portrayed the province as an agricultural empire, and a land with untapped coal reserves, petroleum fields, and reservoirs of natural gas. The Bureau also capitalized on Dominion parks and lake resorts in pitching Alberta to prospective settlers. Jasper was described as a short mountain trip "already" popular for camping and fishing, and Banff as having excellent sports, and a hot spring of "high restorative virtue for invalids."[307] The Dominion mountain parks—Jasper, Banff, and Waterton Lakes—were said to be popular among citizens and tourists, and were outlined for their scenery, wildlife, and tourist services were classified as complete or incomplete. Dominion prairie parks—Buffalo Park, Elk Island, and Antelope Park—were presented as game preserves for plains bison, elk, moose, antelope, and deer, and as having few services for the visitor. Rural lake resorts near Edmonton and Red Deer complemented the recreational activities of the Dominion parks. They offered "fine opportunities for pleasure-seekers and for men, women and children in need of wholesome rest and repair."[308] Gull Lake was described as situated "in the midst of beautiful, rolling, agricultural land," and as having a fine beach and tree growth. Sylvan Lake and Wabamum were as popular for bathing, boating, and fishing, and Cooking Lake was highlighted as a favoured weekend resort for Edmontonians and popular amongst cottagers.

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[304] Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, 328.

[305] Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, 320.

[306] Province of Alberta, "Report of the Publicity Commissioner," *Sessional Papers, 1916, Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Alberta*, 1917, par. 4, p. 165.

[307] Department of Agriculture. *Alberta: A Survey of the topography, climate, resources, industries, transportation and communication, and institutional services of the province of Alberta* (Edmonton: Department of Agriculture, [1919]), 61.

The inclusion of information on Dominion parks and lake resorts in settlement literature encouraged prospective settlers to envision a lifestyle of both work and play. It also reflected awareness on the part of the Publicity Bureau that Alberta was a tourist destination, increasingly so for Americans who came to Canada in lieu of Europe during the war.[309] In spite of recognition of a tourist trade, opportunities at mountain and lake resorts were presented as weekend jaunts, perhaps from Edmonton or Calgary. By promoting the scenic and recreational qualities of the province, *Official Handbook* and *Survey* presented Alberta as an attractive place to settle.

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[308] Department of Agriculture, *Survey*, 62.

[309] Province of Alberta, "Publicity and Immigration, 1915," par. 5, p. 223.

With the end of the First World War came the end of inflated international demand for wheat, and Alberta farmers struggled to repay wartime debts in near-drought conditions. Aware of their fallen status as the original "sons" of the empire to "eternally bitching 'sons of the soil,'" Alberta farmers emerged in the 1920s as separate, and politically-powerful social class.[310] Farmer alienation, combined with urban poverty, industrial unemployment, and distrust of the eastern heartland, manifested itself politically with the overwhelming support of the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA), a farm advocacy group. Established in 1909 to support farmers and endorse cooperative business practices, the UFA reluctantly entered provincial politics in 1921. The party mandate was to "replace the old party system and its competitive approach with a co-operative spirit and 'group government' principles."[311] Under the leadership of Herbert Greenfield, the newly-elected provincial government concentrated its efforts on revitalizing the agricultural recession of the early 1920s, and implemented policies for farm credit and debt relief. In support of its federal, third-party counterpart, the National Progressive Party, the UFA postponed all active settlement publicity, and focused its resources on existing Albertans.[312] Given that enticing settlers had been a primary role of the Publicity Bureau since its inception in 1910, it followed that its energies were to be directed elsewhere. Significantly, in 1923, the Publicity Bureau gave unprecedented coverage "to the matter of encouraging tourist traffic."[313]

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[310] Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, 320, 329.

[311] Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, 410.

[312] Province of Alberta, "Report of the Publicity Commissioner and Statistician," *Sessional Papers, 1922, Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Alberta*, 1923, par. 4, p. 95.

[313] Province of Alberta, "Report of the Publicity Commissioner, 1923," par. 3, p. 79.

2. "Alberta's Mountains, Parks, Lakes, Rivers and Highways Beckon the Tourist": Tourism and Settlement Publicity, 1920-1929

Increasing numbers of American tourists to the province had caught the attention of the Publicity Bureau. Under the direction of newly-appointed Publicity Commissioner Colin Groff, an experienced newspaper reporter and editor, the Bureau responded with an organized campaign in the United States. In 1923, Groff conducted a promotional tour of the Pacific States in cooperation with the Calgary Board of Trade—a booster-minded organization with interests the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede.[314] The purpose of the tour was to advertise Alberta to settlers and tourists, and promote the recently-opened Banff-Windermere highway. The highway was touted by the National Parks Branch as the final link to the 6000-mile Grand Circle Tour. This driving tour connected the Canadian Rockies to the Pacific States, Grand Canyon, and Yellowstone and Glacier national parks.[315] Throughout the 1920s, the Government of Alberta increasingly saw American auto-tourists as a value source of revenue.[316]

The rise of the automobile in the 1920s instigated state involvement in the Alberta tourism economy. Auto-touring and camping excursions to prairie lake resorts and Dominion mountain parks stimulated provincial construction of gravelled roads, municipal investment in auto-camping facilities, and private entrepreneurship in tourist services such as hotels, garages, and cafes. Automobile associations lobbied the

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[314] In 1923, the annual Calgary Industrial Exhibition added a Stampede entertainment programme under the direction of Guy Weadick. It was a highly-publicized event, and Richardson, exhibition manager, heralded the Banff-Windermere highway as contributing to its success. See Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Annual Report 1923*, par. 10, p. 7.

[315] National Parks Branch, *The Banff Windermere Highway* (Ottawa: Department of the Interior, 1923), 14.

[316] McKay, 34, observes that the rise of tourism in Nova Scotia in the 1920s was also in response to increased visitation by American tourists.

Government of Alberta to construct and improve roads and facilities, magazines advertised the latest trends in auto-tents, and the *Edmonton Journal* regularly printed a holiday checklist for auto maintenance and repair.[317] By the mid 1920s, automobile day-trips and summer vacations were part of the middle-class lifestyle in Alberta, and thousands of American motor tourists visited the province annually.[318] Auto-touring had emerged as the preferred mode of travel. It was perceived to free tourists from the constraining schedules and itineraries of the CPR, and represented "New Freedom" in which motorists felt they could reject all that was modern, and return to a simpler time.[319] The Publicity Bureau was aware of the popularity of auto-touring, and distributed information on Alberta to auto camps, and responded to inquiries from prospective tourists.

Two publications characteristic of the second phase of Government of Alberta tourism publicity were *Alberta: A Land of Opportunity* (1924), and a Mundy Map Company map book issued by the Publicity Bureau in 1923. *Land of Opportunity* was a settlement handbook, and presented to future immigrants Alberta's natural resources, industry, and modern development. As with *Survey*, the publication offered information on pleasure travel. Instead of being directed to the resident settler, however, it spoke to the tourist. In "Scenery for the Tourist," Alberta was described as being home to world-famous mountain scenery, palatial hotels, and attractive camping grounds. Under "Motoring in Alberta," tourists were advised that the province had satisfactory auto camp grounds and active auto clubs. The Publicity Bureau assumed many tourists would arrive from Montana, and directed them to the Blue Trail, the "main motor trail leading into Alberta."[320]

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[317] Kelly Buziak, *Taking to the Road: Early Auto Touring and Camping in Alberta* (Wetaskiwin, Alberta: Friends of Reynolds-Alberta Museum Society, 1992), 1-37.

[318] Wetherell, 191-2; also see Department of Agriculture, *Alberta: A booklet of information on the progress, the resources and the opportunities of the Province of Alberta, Canada*, 1927 ed. (Edmonton: Department of Agriculture, 1927), 30.

[319] Lynda Jessup, "The Group of Seven and the Tourist Landscape in Western Canada, or The More Things Change...," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 37, no. 1 (spring 2002): 154, observes the rise of the automobile challenged the monopoly of rail travel in North America. Jessup cites Warren James Belasco, *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910-1945* (Johns Hopkins paperbacks ed. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1997), 19, 20, who proposed the automobile represented New Freedom, a return to a time before rail.

The Publicity Bureau also distributed a settlement map book published by the Mundy Map Company. *Mundy's Auto Road Guide to Alberta* (c. 1927) appears to be a subsequent edition of this map book.[321] *Mundy's Road Guide* offered detailed road maps, as well as advice to intending settlers, travel information for tourists, and space for businesses to advertise. The Publicity Bureau took advantage of the opportunity to present Alberta to motorists, and placed a centrefold advertisement to promote the province. As with the road guide itself, the advertisement blended tourism and settlement publicity. The heading "Alberta's Mountains, Parks, Lakes, Rivers and Highways Beckon the Tourist" spanned the two-page spread in bold letters, and four boxes highlighting mountain parks encircled descriptions of coal, gas, oil, timber, fisheries, and clay. The Government of Alberta invited tourists to climb, fish, boat, and motor in its vast prairies and mountains. At the same time, tourists were encouraged to visit the coal industry, view the oil and gas fields, and see lumber mills at work.[322] The dual promotion of a nature holiday and industrial progress was characteristic of early twentieth-century tourism publicity that saw tourists as potential agricultural or industrial settlers.[323] The Publicity Bureau adopted this approach in the 1920s as it began to recognize the value of actively promoting the province to tourists.

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[320] Department of Agriculture, *Alberta: A Land of Opportunity* (Edmonton: Department of Agriculture, 1924), 31-32.

[321] The 1923 Report of the Publicity Commissioner to the Department of Agriculture notes that a new map of Alberta published by the Mundy Map Company was widely distributed by the Publicity Branch. The University of Alberta Bruce Peel Special Collection holds a Mundy publication that appears to be a subsequent edition of the 1923 reference. See Mundy Map Company, *Mundy's Auto Road Guide to Alberta with large folding map of the Peace River Country and map of the Western Canada & Northwest States* (Edmonton: Mundy Map Company, [1927]), 1-24.

Government involvement in publicity of any regard was a contentious issue in the fiscal climate of the late 1920s. When D.A. McCannell, editor of the Alberta Farm Journal, replaced Croff as Publicity Commissioner in 1927, he found he had to defend the duties of the Bureau. "I am fully convinced," he argued, "that the benefits of increased immigration...and the favourable attention attracted to the Province fully warrant the expenditure of time and money made in this form of work."[324] However, Liberal representative Joseph Shaw differed in opinion, and advocated dissolution of the Publicity Bureau entirely. He characterized the office as an unnecessary frill in a time that required government economy, and felt that agricultural exhibits and immigration publicity should be the responsibility of the Dominion of Canada.[325] Supporters of government involvement in promoting the province saw publicity as a necessity of modern times. Not only must the government continue to use modern advertising methods, advocates argued, but it must also realize that "today the several Canadian governments are vying with all the other big business concerns in the variety and attractiveness of their advertising appeals." Gone were the days of "perfunctory advertisements" and "dull" language. The government bureaucrats, supporters contended, must continue to "tell the public what they have to sell or give" as a "condition of the province's larger success."[326]

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[322] Mundy Map Company, 12-13.

[323] Dawson, "Promise of Tourism in British Columbia," 37.

[324] Province of Alberta, "Report of the Publicity Commissioner and Statistician," *Sessional Papers, 1927, Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Alberta*, 1928, par. 1, p. 65.

[325] Alberta Legislature Library, Public Affairs Bureau Archival Papers, "Follow-up on Farm Displays is Advocated," 9 March 1928, in Newspaper Clippings File, 1928-1970, n.d.

3. Doing "whatever possible" to Promote Tourist Traffic: Tourist Trade to Tourism Industry, 1930-1937

At the onset of the 1930s, Alberta was once again in economic disrepair. With agricultural crisis on the farms, and poverty and unemployment in the cities, the government realized the tenuous nature of what the province had to "sell or give." The Publicity Bureau was determined to curtail any extensive publicity, and proceeded cautiously with regards to settlement publicity. The Bureau stated that the purpose of reduced publicity was to avoid "undue influx of people or embarrassment in a complex economic situation."[327] Tourism was one avenue open to the Bureau to continue and expand its promotional work. During the Depression, tourism boosters across Canada saw tourism as an industry able to withstand economic downturns, and even flourish to bring local economies back to prosperity. World markets were beyond local control, but locally, it was argued, people could control tourism.[328] Advertising was key, and the Government of Alberta was determined the province would not be left behind. In 1931, the Publicity Bureau was transferred from the Department of Agriculture to the Executive Council. This transfer gave raised the status of the Bureau within government, and ensured its involvement in all departments and overall governmental publicity. Experienced Colin Croff was re-appointed as Publicity Commissioner, and under his guidance, the Bureau did "whatever possible in promoting this [tourist] traffic."[329]

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[326] Alberta Legislature Library, Public Affairs Bureau Archival Papers, "Alberta Advertises," 25 September 1928, in Newspaper Clippings File, 1928-1970, n.d.

[327] Province of Alberta, "Report of the Publicity and Statistics Branch," *Sessional Papers, 1931, Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Alberta*, 1932, par. 1, p. 56; and Province of Alberta, "Report of the Publicity and Statistics Branch," *Sessional Papers, 1930, Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture of the Province of Alberta*, 1931, par. 1, p. 53.

[328] Dawson, "Consumerism and Tourism," 110-11; and Dawson, "Promise of Tourism," 36.

The initial years of the 1930s marked the third phase of Government of Alberta publicity, and the production of tourism-specific publications. Characteristic of this phase was *Alberta, Canada: A Paradise for Vacationists* (c. 1933). This publication was a auto-touring map book, and the bulk of the guide illustrated seven motor routes throughout the province. Descriptions accompanying routes from Medicine Hat to Calgary, or Edmonton to Jasper Park, for example, praised industry, history and landscape alike. The Turner Valley oil fields were well worth a visit as "its glow in the sky can be seen for fifty miles," Macleod was famous for the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, and west of Edmonton was "a fine stretch of farming country." Hunting and fishing remained prominent tourist activities, and the national parks were described as natural breeding grounds that stocked provincial forest reserves with big game animals for all time.[330]

Paradise for Vacationists did more than highlight "Alberta's happy combination of mountain and prairie," it also played into tourists' anticipations of travel to Alberta:

> To the tourist who has succumbed to the allurement of a holiday in the Canadian Rockies, the name of "Alberta" has come to be synonymous with mountain scenery of rare beauty, and with holiday resorts of a new and thrilling variety. To the many thousands who have yet to realize the delight of a vacation in Alberta, who know vaguely of vast and magnificent Alpine areas in North-western

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[329] Province of Alberta, "Report of the Publicity and Statistics Branch, 1931," par. 2, p. 56.

[330] Publicity Bureau, *Alberta, Canada: A Paradise for Vacationists* (Edmonton: Publicity Commissioner, Government Building, [1933]), 2-26.

> Canada furnishing fresh opportunities for holiday adventurers, this booklet is addressed as a means of making known how easily accessible to residents of any part of the North American continent are these mountain playgrounds of Canada.[331]

Readers were transported in their imaginations along modern roads and rail to the very heart of the mountain playgrounds where an ideal retreat of hunting, fishing and holidaying awaited. The publication verged on playing the part of matchmaker: the mountains beckoned, the tourist succumbed, and the outcome was satisfying to the soul. Although the mountains dominated the introduction, the prairies were also of unquestionable interest. Travel in the prairies was travel in an empire in the making. There were broad prairies with champion wheat, foothills with prize cattle, and handsome farmsteads that grew from pioneer days. Rural Alberta offered lakes, fishing and hunting, and two thousand miles of modern roads.[332] At a time of suppressed settlement publicity, for the tourist, Alberta emerged as a land of mountain playgrounds and prairie empires. For Alberta, tourists—most of whom were American—were welcomed as a valuable source of revenue, and the tourism industry was seen as a welcomed way out of economic disrepair.

Alberta may have been promoted as a paradise for holidaymakers, but, for many residents, the Depression years were far from it. Farmers struggled against drought, dust and debt, and industrial workers found themselves unemployed and unwanted in the cities and towns.[333] In a time of little faith in politicians, the land, and the economy, many Albertans tuned their radios every Sunday afternoon to William Aberhart, a Calgary high-school teacher and evangelical Baptist.[334] In the midst of the Depression, Aberhart was a voice of hope for not only religious but economic salvation. His radio program served as a medium to prophesise his faith in social credit, a theory presented by the Englishman C.H. Douglas in which wealth was to be distributed equally among workers in society. Aberhart lobbied the faltering UFA provincial government to adopt social credit, and when it was clear they would not, he created a political party. Within five months of the first Social Credit convention, Aberhart swept the provincial elections and became the Premier of Alberta.[335]

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[331] Publicity Bureau, *Paradise for Vacationists*, 2.

[332] Publicity Bureau, *Paradise for Vacationists*, 2-4.

[333] Waiser, *Park Prisoners*, 85-87.

Shortly after Aberhart's victory in 1935, he abolished the position of Publicity Commissioner on the basis that "he did not believe in the benefits of tourism." Remaining Bureau responsibilities were merged into the Department of Trade and Industry. The press criticized his decision, claiming that Alberta was sitting idle while neighbouring provinces "reaped millions of dollars from the influx of tourists."[336] Not all Social Credit politicians agreed with Aberhart's lack of faith in tourism, and, in 1936, the member of the legislature for the riding of Rocky Mountain advocated the importance of the tourist trade. "Hard-surfaced roads from the international boundary to the great national parks...will induce many tourists to come to our province," E.O. Duke declared. "Every satisfied tourist will bring another. Thus the good name and fame of Alberta will spread."[337] The Aberhart government warmed to the prospects of tourism, and, in 1937, published *Alberta, Canada: a never-to-be-forgotten vacation.*

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[334] Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, 411-12.

[335] See Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, 414-17, for interpretations of Aberhart's overwhelming popularity.

[336] Alberta Legislature Library, Public Affairs Bureau Archival Papers, "Telling the World About Alberta," 11 May 1927, in Newspaper Clippings File, 1928-1970, n.d.

Never-to-be-forgotten vacation was similar to its predecessor, *Paradise for Vacationists*, in that it was a auto-touring map book promoting a nature holiday, industrial progress, and local history. The seven motor routes differed with minor updates to road improvements, and the publication gave further details on hotel and camp accommodation. New subjects were added including canoe trips, golf courses, winter sports, and points of interests such as the Cardston Mormon Temple and Drumheller badlands. The publication continued to tap into history: the Old Jasper Trail was once a fur trade route, the Athabasca River was the Great River of the Woods, and buffalo herds once roamed the open plains. What this publication did not invoke with words, however, it did through its use of photography.

The government had made use of photographs since settlement publications, yet *Never-to-be-forgotten vacation* demonstrated an understanding of the power of visual images, and maturity in layout and design. Photographs of the mountain parks were by far most frequent, and tended towards picturesque views, and activities such as sightseeing, canoeing, skiing and fishing. The image of the solitary canoe, fisherman, and horseback rider reinforced the notion of an individualized experience in the mountains. In the case of sharing the national parks with company, photographs epitomized the private, intimate experience of auto camping, roadside sightseeing and golfing with friends. The non-mountain landscape was characterized by the lone automobile on a prairie road, and was accompanied by the statement, "the lure of the open road is strong."[338] Other prairie photographs epitomized the Golden West: one was of a harvested field, and another of a farmer holding a shovel—the sole farm tool depicted in an era dominated by tractors, combines and trucks.

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[337] Alberta Scrapbook Hansard, 7th Legislature 8 February 1934 to 23 April 1935, "Construction of Hard-Surface Roads Urged: Plenty of Tar Sands Material Available Socred Tells House," 15 April 1935, in *Calgary Albertan*, First Session, 6 February-7 April.

By the late 1930s, the Government of Alberta had embraced tourism as an essential part of the provincial economy. For a Social Credit government initially sceptical of the benefits of tourism, during the Depression, tourism was increasingly recognized as a viable and profitable industry. It was no longer simply a means to further industrial progress and settlement, but was an entity in and of itself.[339] In 1936, the Bureau was transferred to the Department of Trade and Industry under Minister Ernest Manning. Although there appears to have been no publicity commissioner, the statistician H.P. Brownlee who had been with the Bureau for approximately ten years remained in its service. Under Brownlee, the Bureau exercised increased cooperation with motor associations, civic travel bureaus and tourist service providers, and recorded visitor statistics to Alberta and the national parks. Hunting and fishing parties were reportedly increased—including a visit by Mr. and Mrs. Lerner, prominent worldwide big game hunters from New York—and the Bureau expressed a bright future in big game tourism.[340] By the late 1930s, the Government of Alberta had joined other enthusiastic supporters of tourism. Motorist tourists were regarded as a valuable source of revenue, and tourism as a means to provincial progress and prosperity.

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[338] Provincial Tourist and Publicity Bureau, *Alberta, Canada: a-never-to-be-forgotten vacation* (Edmonton: n.p., n.d.), 15.

[339] Dawson, "Promise of Tourism," 37, observes that, during the Depression in British Columbia, tourism was increasingly seen as a viable industry.

[340] Province of Alberta, "Publicity and Statistics," *Sessional Papers, 1937-8, Annual Report of the Department of Trade and Industry of the Province of Alberta*, 1938, par. 1-2 p. 56.

4. Adding color to many a holiday moment: Tourism and the Utopian Frontier, 1939-1940

The march of progress and prosperity heralded by tourism boosters was not to be halted as a result of the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939. On the contrary, boosters continued promotional campaigns, and worked to organize and strengthen the tourist trade.[341] The Second World War was perceived as advantageous for tourism in Canada. Not only would Canada attract Americans who would have normally travelled to Europe, it was argued, but Americans would bring with them much-needed U.S. currency.[342] Travel across "The Friendly Border" was presented as an act of solidarity with the Allies. Tourists were assured that money spent in Alberta would "go right back to the good old U.S.A. to help buy materials to aid Canada and Great Britain to win the war."[343] Alberta joined the national campaign to endorse a premium rate on U.S. currency, and renewed its efforts in attracting American tourists to the province.[344]

During the war, the Publicity Bureau continued its efforts publishing and distributing tourism literature. However, publications shifted in focus from the map-book style characterized by a fusion of a nature holiday, industrial progress, and history to a fourth phase of government publicity. This wartime phase was characterized by travel guides. Guidebooks revealed the virtual erasure of industry and modernity from the imagined Alberta landscape, and were crafted with a generous dose of romantic imagery. This new style of publication framed Alberta as a utopia for the tourist. It focused on being there as opposed to getting there, and stressed activities, emotions and advice. *Facts about Alberta* (c. 1938) was characteristic of this shift in tourism publicity in which the Government of Alberta spoke as a knowledgeable and concerned friend to "Mr. Tourist."[345] "Never put a rod in a damp bag." "Brush up on your woodlore." "Boss your canoe. If the river starts to boss get to shore and investigate."[346] The publication went beyond benevolent advice to tell tourists exactly what to expect, and, in a personal tone, just what to do:

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[341] Dawson, "Promise of Tourism," 204, observes that tourism strengthened in British Columbia during the Second World War. Also see Karen Dubinsky, *The Second Greatest Disappointment: Honeymooning and Tourism at Niagara* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1999), 234.

[342] Dawson, "Promise of Tourism," 208.

[343] Provincial Tourist and Publicity Bureau, *Facts about Alberta*, 7; and Publicity Branch, *We like Alberta*, n.p.

[344] Dawson, "Promise of Tourism," 207-8, notes that the Canadian Travel Bureau campaigned for a set exchange rate on the U.S. dollar. In *We like Alberta*, the government endorsed a ten percent premium on U.S. currency.

> For life at its best try this: Tumble out of bed in the grey dawn, splash in zippy mountain water, dress in the range togs, saddle your favourite mount and ride into the rising sun. An hour later you'll approach the ranch table with a hunter's eye and an appetite you've never known before.[347]

Tourists, it was implied, needed to be taught how to be tourists.

People living in "stuffy cities" were invited to ride the open range in a "true atmosphere of the Old West." This atmosphere was established as recent memory in *Facts about Alberta*. The days of "the virgin territory inhabited by a handful of white traders and hunters, Cree Stony, Blackfoot and Sarcee Indian tribes" were presented as a mere few years ago. In order to demonstrate the "phenomenal growth of Alberta since the turn of the century," *Facts of Alberta* offered a "brief sketch" of the frontier written by pioneer Bleasdell Cameron. Cameron wove a story of Fort Edmonton complete with warring Indian tribes, plotted ambush, and female hostages. He concluded his tale with the Snake Women of Jasper, a victim of the fort battle who fled to the wilderness, only to be brought back two years later "fighting and scratching." She reportedly married a Shushwap Indian, and "passed out of the white men's ken."[348] Cameron's sketch was characteristic of tourism advertising in the 1930s. Competition for American tourists to Canadian destinations had increased, and each province sought to situate itself as an exotic land.[349] Alberta turned to fictionalized history of a mythic frontier to frame the province for American tourists.

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[345] The exact date of publication of Facts about Alberta is unknown. The column heading, "The Friendly Border," indicates that the booklet may have been published at a time of awareness of hostilities in Europe.

[346] Provincial Tourist and Publicity Bureau, *Facts about Alberta*, 19, 27.

[347] Provincial Tourist and Publicity Bureau, *Facts about Alberta*, 30.

Alberta characterized by myths of the past was intensified in *We like Alberta, Canada. So Will You!* (c. 1940). The very ornaments of a true Alberta vacation—a vacation only to be had in the Canadian Rockies—were Mounties, Indians, pioneer guides and trappers.[350] Folk heroes decorated the mythical frontier stage in which tourists were the leading characters. The tourist's role was explicitly detailed in the publication: you will want to peek beyond ridges and explore hidden places, you will linger at each scenic viewpoint and travel leisurely, you will find new challenges, and you will find yourself. Tourists were constructed as explorers, adventurers and soul seekers. Two hundred miles of modern highways in the mountain parks, however, only brought tourists to the mere surface of authentic travel. They were advised to seek out Swiss guides for glacier expeditions, sure-footed ponies for exploring uncharted lands, and game wardens for insider tips on hunting the denizens of the forest. After a hard day of intense exploration, there was still fun to be had. Tourists were directed to swim, golf, canoe, or ski; one could even take in the fine arts at the Banff School.[351] The picturesque, the exploration, and the fun were all epitomized in the publication's many photographs. A collage of photographs literally cut and pasted onto one another reinforced the holiday experience. In *We like Alberta*, the province was characterized as the Last Best West with all the adventure of a rugged frontier yet all the facilities of modern travel.

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[348] Provincial Tourist and Publicity Bureau, *Facts about Alberta*, 5-6.

[349] Dawson, "Tourism and Consumerism," 118, observes that British Columbia capitalized on British imperial grandeur and Indian imagery to attract tourists in the 1930s.

[350] Publicity Branch, *We like Alberta*, n.p.

By the 1940s, the Government of Alberta had firmly framed the province as the Last Best West. The dominant narrative was a product of the utopian legacy of the expansionist era. Its transition from settlement to tourism publicity was a means in which the government could continue its utopian boosterism. Importantly, it was also a means to self-actualize the past, and promoted a unified way of seeing in Alberta. The Last Best West was evident in the settlement publications, *Official Handbook* (1907) and *Survey* (1919). Alberta was portrayed as a land of untapped potential where the settler could create a new life and a new lifestyle; first as a sport hunter, and, later, as a holiday-maker to lake resorts and Dominion parks. Characteristic of emerging tourism publicity in the 1920s, *Land of Opportunity* (1924) and Publicity Bureau advertising in *Mundy's Road Guide* (1927) addressed the tourist as a potential agricultural or industrial settler. The automobile was also recognized as the chosen mode of travel. With the popularity of auto touring and awareness of the economic value of tourism, the Government of Alberta embraced tourism as a viable industry in the 1930s. *Paradise for Vacationists* (c. 1933) and *Never-to-be-forgotten Vacation* (1937) were characteristic of 1930s tourism publicity. The auto-touring map books highlighted industry, history, and landscape, and, at a time of cautious settlement publicity, Alberta was promoted as an ideal retreat for the tourist. The ideal nature of Alberta was expanded upon in wartime literature in which industry and modernity were virtually erased. The government adopted the role of the benevolent guide, and directed tourists to activities and emotions. Characteristic of the travel guide, *Facts about Alberta* (ca. 1938) and *We like Alberta* (ca. 1940) established the province as an ahistorical frontier complete with present-day folk heroes from a utopian past. By the 1940s, Government of Alberta tourism publicity had effectively constructed Alberta as the Last Best West.

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[351] For the role of the Banff School in constructing Banff as a tourism destination, see PearlAnn Reichwein, "Holiday at the Banff School of Fine Arts: The Cinematic Production of Culture, Nature, and Nation in the Canadian Rockies, 1945-1952," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 39, no. 1 (forthcoming January 2005).

5. Refining the Last Best West: The Politics of Cultural Selection

From 1905 to 1940, the Publicity Bureau used print media to frame Alberta as the Last Best West. Cowboys, pioneers, trappers, Indians, and Mounties characterized the iconic landscape of the Canadian Rockies, and, in its shadow, the foothills and prairies. Nineteenth-century icons symbolized the frontier ideals of a self-determined, industrious people settling a land of abundance. In an inversion of the everyday, the Publicity Bureau elevated Alberta from the economic disillusionment of dust, drought, and debt, and presented the province as the success story of western Canadian settlement. The process of refining the Last Best West in tourism publicity illuminates the cultural mentalities and historical conditions that shaped Alberta's imagined landscape.

The emergence of frontier icons as representative of Alberta was characteristic of a worldwide trend in the 1920s to seek authenticity and truth in seemingly pre-modern people and places.[352] Antimodernism encouraged boosters and cultural producers in Alberta to excavate the perceived endangered treasures from the fertile garden, and preserve them as the essence of Albertan identity. McKay observes that in Nova Scotia "Many of those who incorporated a Folk ideal into their deepest imaginings may have been striving for an honest and authentic response to the emptiness of life in a capitalist order."[353] Thus, in Alberta, Last Best West imagery can be interpreted as a search for meaning and understanding at a time of great disillusionment with lived reality. Morton observes that disparity always exists between the actual landscape and the landscape of literary creation.[354] This disparity reveals cultural ideals and ideas held by agents of cultural production such as the Government of Alberta.

Refinement of the Last Best West was also reflective of the dawning realization of the commercial value of romantic imagery. Romanticism marked a late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century shift in ways of seeing natural and cultural landscapes. A romantic sensibility framed so-called wild places as sublime and picturesque, and pre-industrial people as possessing cultural essence. In Alberta, frontier icons reflected the perceived security and simplicity of life before rail and the farmers' fence. The Publicity Bureau capitalized on romantic imaginings of the frontier West, and transferred tourists' nostalgia for simpler times to modern-day tourist goods and services.[355] The Government of Alberta used commercially-viable frontier imagery—cowboys, Indians, Mounties, and mountains—to construct the province as a "frontier setting of thrilling romance."[356]

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[352] McKay, 37.

[353] McKay, 300.

[354] Morton, "Seeing an Unliterary Landscape, 20.

The Publicity Bureau recognized that the vast majority of tourists to Alberta arrived from south of the border. Thus, the framing of the Last Best West was influenced by the commercial imperative to attract and host American tourists.[357] Urry proposes that tourists are motivated by difference; they seek to differentiate the familiar from the far away.[358] In the 1920s and 1930s, the role of the Publicity Bureau was to assemble signs and symbols seen as out of the ordinary for American motor tourists. As a result, the Publicity Bureau capitalized on the imagined Canadian frontier to differentiate Alberta from northwestern states such as Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming. Images of trappers, traders, Mounties, and Canadian Pacific hotels constructed an exotic and gentlemanly Canadian frontier. Unlike print media at the 1912 Stampede in Calgary, the Publicity Bureau did not fuse the mythical American cowboy into Alberta's Last Best West. Instead, chosen imagery implied that American motor tourists would leave the Wild West of reckless cowboys and sharp shooter at the border in Montana. Once in Alberta, they would experience the gentlemanly frontier of Mounties and mountains.[359]

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[355] See Jasen, *Wild Things*, 7-13 for discussion of romanticism and tourism; McKay, 29, observes that the Folk in Nova Scotia were seen as the essence of true Nova Scotian identity; and Dawson, "Promise of Tourism," 126, observes that pre-modern imagery in advertising in the 1930s reflected nostalgia for a so-called simple, pre-modern life.

[356] Publicity Branch, *We like Alberta*, n.p.

[357] Increase tourist traffic to Alberta was noted in the following annual reports: Province of Alberta, "Report of the Publicity Commissioner, 1923," par. 2-3, p. 79; "Report of the Publicity and Statistics Branch, 1930," par. 4, p. 53; "Report of the Publicity and Statistics Branch, 1931," par. 2, p. 56; and "Publicity and Statistics, 1937-8," par. 2, p. 55. The increase is, at times, directly attributed to American tourists. In some cases, the increase in traffic is not attributed to any particular nationality. Auto-touring map books and travel guides, however, framed travel to Alberta in terms of access from Canada/US border. Thus, I interpret Publicity Bureau observations of increased traffic to awareness of increased American visitation. McKay, 34, also makes the observation that Nova Scotia tourism was directly influenced by anticipations of American tourists.

[358] Urry, 12.

The Canadian Rockies emerged in government tourism publicity as the "last best" wilderness for hunters, explorers, and soul seekers. However, the gradual dominance of the mountain landscape in the 1920s and 1930s occurred at a time of great strains in federal-provincial relations. Since Alberta achieved provincial status in 1905, the provincial government had advocated for control of public lands. Lobbying intensified in the late 1920s as rapid urbanization and industrialization led to increased demand for power and raw materials. National Parks Commissioner James Harkin felt the pressure of Government of Alberta demands for access to park natural resources, and foresaw the impending transfer of natural resources to the provincial domain. In 1930, a principle of inviolability was legislated in the new National Parks Act, but protecting the national parks from resource extraction came at a cost, namely the alienation of Spray Lakes, Kananaskis, and Canmore in Banff National Park from federal to provincial control.[360] National park historian PearlAnn Reichwein suggests that "Harkin's boundary surgery proved effective in warding off immediate industrial encroachment on Banff National Park."[361] Strained federal-provincial relations over entitlement to natural resources was apparent in *Paradise for Vacationists*. "With this great mountain region within its borders," the Publicity Bureau reported:

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[359] For an example of Canadian frontier images see Provincial Tourist and Publicity Bureau, *Never-to-be-forgotten vacation*, 7. For an example of American influences in the construction of a Canadian frontier gaze see Calgary Stampede Committee, 49.

[360] PearlAnn Reichwein, "'Hands Off Our National Parks': The Alpine Club of Canada and Hydro-development Controversies in the Canadian Rockies, 1922-1930, *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 6 (1996): 152-53.

[361] Reichwein, 153.

> Alberta now possesses, through the foresight of those who have been charged with the administration of its lands, what is probably the largest single area in the world set aside as a national park, preserved for all time as the playground for the countless of thousands who will in future years come to share the glories and the joys of a holiday season in these parts.[362]

The Publicity Bureau goes to great length to avoid crediting the Dominion for its leadership in establishing, managing, and protecting national parks located in the so-called "Alberta Rockies." The Bureau implies provincial stewardship of national park land, and, thus, transforms Government of Alberta motives from exploitation to benevolence. The Government of Alberta cast itself as a steward, when, in fact, provincial interests in exploiting national park resources resulted in alienation of federal park land in exchange for national park inviolability. Alleged stewardship in *Paradise for Vacationists* de-politicized federal-provincial relations and the contested nature of the mountain landscape.

The dominance of the Canadian Rockies marginalized the prairie landscape in tourism publicity. By 1940, utopian ideals once reserved for agriculture were fully transferred to the picturesque mountain landscape. The prairies could be gazed upon from afar, but drought, dust, and debt relegated agriculture to a locale overshadowed by mountain peaks. Pioneers were celebrated as the founding folk of the ever-receding prairies. Pioneers of the Last Best West were disassociated from disgruntled Alberta farmers of the 1920s and 1930s who demanded social and economic reform. Instead, the nineteenth-century sodbuster was heralded as the essence of Alberta.[363] The marginalization of the prairies occurred under United Farmer of Alberta and Social Credit provincial governments. Both political parties represented third party "protest" politics. Their popularity was a result of widespread dissatisfaction with eastern-based Liberal and Conservative politicians. UFA and Social Credit identified with western regionalism, and saw Alberta as exploited by Ontario and eastern corporations. In the midst of escalating western alienation, both parties increasingly framed Alberta as a utopian frontier. While they felt the province was politically misunderstood and exploited in Dominion politics, they misrepresented the lived experience through tourism publicity. By constructing Alberta as the Last Best West through tourism, both parties widened the disparity between the actual and imagined landscape. Thus, the Publicity Bureau under UFA and Social Credit governance contributed to western alienation and regional disillusionment in Alberta.

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[362] Publicity Bureau, *Paradise for Vacationists*, 3.

[363] Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, 331-32, suggests that between 1880 and 1930 three periods of socio-agricultural history existed. In my view, the first period was characterized by pre-1900 sodbusters and expansionism, the second period by turn-of-the century optimistic settlers, and the third period by post-WWI agriculturalists and farm modernization.

Refinement of the Last Best West in Publicity Bureau publications from 1905 to 1940 reveals the politics of cultural selection inherent to the structuring of the tourist gaze.[364] By 1940, selected cultural myths characteristic of a utopian nineteenth-century frontier—cowboys, trappers, Mounties, and Indians—elevated the dominant narrative of the Last Best West. Alternative perspectives related to occupation, class, gender, and race were marginalized, and tourism publicity worked to silence the voices of others in the provincial experience.[365] Cultural hegemony was reinforced in a cross section of cultural spheres—art, literature, and Calgary Stampede motion pictures, for example—and to this end, tourism was part of a broader cultural current. Through the subtle efforts of largely the urban, middle and upper classes, the Last Best West was asserted as the dominant way of seeing Alberta.

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[364] See McKay, 39-40, for discussion of cultural selection in Nova Scotia.

[365] McKay, 35, makes the observation that the economic dislocation of Nova Scotia in the 1920s and 1930 resulted in a lack of challenge to the "antimodernist common sense."

The dominant way of seeing Alberta was a reflection of the dominant ideal of how Alberta ought to be and ought to have been. Inversely, it revealed awareness that the Last Best West didn't quite exist.[366] Unlike the expansionist utopian West which heralded promise for a land *yet* to be settled, the utopian tradition of the Last Best West was in response to the disappointments of a land *already* settled. The fertile garden had proven itself an illusion, but, through tourism publicity, the Government of Alberta ensured the land of opportunity would persevere. Tourism publicity asserted faith in the land, and faith in opportunity—opportunities both within the tourism industry and for tourists. Such optimism for tourism revealed the underlying disappointment that Alberta had not achieved promised prosperity and longed-for national grandeur. Through tourism, however, ideals of grandeur self-actualized the past, and ensured Alberta would remain the Last Best West.

6. Conclusion

In the early-twentieth century, the Government of Alberta Publicity Bureau took a leading role in directing Alberta's tourism economy. Tourism stemmed from the awareness of the value of leisure activities in attracting potential settlers in the 1910s.

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[366] In a study of farm periodicals from 1900 to 1920, historian David Jones notes a subtle but compelling distinction between the West of Dominion immigration publicity and that of farm periodicals. "In the promotional literature the image [of Eden or of the garden]," he argues, "was more a given state of affairs; in the agricultural press it was more an object to be sought, an ideal state that was merely possible." The subtle difference demonstrates recognition by the farm press that the agrarian myth had not manifested into reality. Editors of periodicals took it upon themselves to ensure farmers appreciated the unique privilege of their occupation. See David Jones, "'There is Some Power About the Land': the Western Agrarian Press and Country Life Ideology," in *The Prairie West: Historical Readings*, ed. R.D. Francis and H. Palmer (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 1992), 465.

State interest in the burgeoning tourist trade emerged in the 1920s, and was secured by the rise of the automobile. Alberta had become a popular destination for American auto-tourists, and resident travel within Alberta was a common feature of the middle-class lifestyle. Initially, tourism was seen as a means to attract wealthy American settlers and investors. The government capitalized on industry, local history, and the natural landscape to promote the province. The government-sponsored tourism infrastructure, road building, and a Pacific State promotional tour, and distributed auto-touring map books. By the late 1920s, tourist traffic was recognized as a valuable source of revenue for Alberta.

Tourism-specific publicity emerged in the economic dislocation of the 1930s. The economic spin-offs of leisure travel transformed tourism from a loose network of boosters and business operators into a viable and essential industry in Alberta. Under the direction of the United Farmers of Alberta, tourism was seen as a means to elevate the province from the Depression. The Publicity Bureau published auto-touring map books, and directed the tourist gaze to agricultural and industrial progress and prosperity. The Bureau also tapped into the romantic sensibility of tourists, and presented the Canadian Rockies as a mountain playground. In 1935, the newly-elected Social Credit provincial government did not perceive tourism as a vital industry, and terminated the position of Publicity Commissioner. Premier Aberhart was criticized for his lack of vision by the press and tourism advocates. By the late 1930s, the Social Credit government recognized the value of the tourist trade, and embraced tourism as an essential industry in Alberta. Wartime publications in 1939 and 1940 marked the refinement of the Last Best West.

Publications shifted from promoting industry, history, and landscape to the construction of a utopian frontier.

From 1905 to 1940, the Publicity Bureau used print media to inscribe cultural meaning on Alberta. Through the selection of particular text and photographs, government publications refined and further defined Alberta's literary landscape. The literary landscape was an inversion of lived reality. It reflected an ideal state of being and way of seeing the imagined past, perceived present, and anticipated future. The assertion of the Last Best West revealed a desire to self-actualize the past, and rewrite history in order to secure Alberta as the success story of western settlement. The provincial government adhered to the booster ethos of community solidarity, and asserted the Last Best West in a time of economic, political, and social uncertainty. A common history of shared myths—certainly problematic in terms of the politics of cultural selection and representation—were hoped to unify a diverse Alberta society in an imagined frontier of British imperial tradition. Myth did not match reality, and, through tourism publicity, the government fuelled disillusionment and western alienation. Thus, Government of Alberta tourism publicity contributed to divergence between the landscape of the mind and the lived experience.

Conclusion

"Alberta Really is the True West": The Last Best West in Contemporary Alberta

> Alberta really is the True West. We aren't just putting on a show for city slickers: this is the real thing.
>
> Travel Alberta, 2004

Travel Alberta is the contemporary counterpart of the early twentieth-century Government of Alberta Travel Bureau. As a destination marketing organization, it is funded by Government of Alberta Economic Development, and its primary responsibility is to promote international travel to and domestic travel within Alberta. In doing so, Travel Alberta is a present-day provincial booster and cultural producer, and takes a leading role in shaping the tourist gaze. In 2004, the marketing organization encourages residents and tourists to respond to the "call of the land." "Stress free wide open country spaces," Travel Alberta reports, offer endless opportunities to "Get Back in the Saddle," "Get Back to the Farm," and "Get Back to Your Roots."[367] "Alberta really is the True West," it declares. The "True West" is characterized by the "spirit of [the] western lifestyle," a spirit reportedly found on Alberta's working ranches, family farms, and in country towns."[368] According to Travel Alberta, the essence of the province remains rooted in the land, and can be found in the everyday lives of cowboys, farmers, and rural

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[367] Travel Alberta, "Agricultural Experiences," available on-line from http://www1.travelalberta.com/content/Agricultural/, accessed 14 November 2004.

[368] Travel Alberta, "Wild West," available on-line from http://www1.travelalberta.com/content/wildwest/, accessed 11 November 2004.

Albertans. In 2004, the ideology of the Last Best West manifests as the True West in Travel Alberta tourism publicity.

In the early-twentieth century, Alberta as the Last Best West permeated a cross-section of cultural spheres. Professional and amateur collectors of the nineteenth-century frontier recorded Indian legends, pioneer biographies, western folksongs, and local histories.[369] Artists interpreted the Alberta landscape on canvas, and novelists wove literary accounts of the settlement experience.[370] Commercial interests from banks to breweries adopted frontier imagery to sell their products, and Alberta's progress and prosperity was characterized by a "progressive western spirit."[371] In the 1920s and 1930s, tourism emerged as a means to assemble a variety of cultural goods into a commercial product available for leisurely consumption. Thus, tourism restructured existing forms of cultural expression. In this light, travel can not be dismissed as a benign leisure pursuit, nor can the tourism industry be dismissed as an inconsequential purveyor of innocent frontier mythology. Instead, early twentieth-century travel and tourism revealed active engagement in the widespread structuring of a way of seeing in Alberta. This way of seeing served the booster ethos of community solidarity, and built an imagined community on imposed homogeneity and ways of seeing.

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[369] The University of Alberta Bruce Peel Special Collection houses the Alberta Folklore and Local History Collection. The archives in this collection reveal the desire for cultural producers to preserve the memories and experiences of early Albertans. The digital archives are available on-line from http://folklore.library.ualberta.ca/index.cfm. McKay, 8-9, 37, observes that in Nova Scotia amateur folklorists such as Helen Creighton sought to salvage the endangered treasures of provincial identity. He proposes that the search in Nova Scotia paralleled the broader cultural trend of folklore collection and protection in Canada, the United States, and Europe. Thus, the Alberta folklore movement was also part of broader cultural patterns in Canada.

[370] Francis, *Images of the West*, 162-171, observes that artists and writers in the 1920s reacted against romantic expressions of the West, and infused their work with western realism. In doing so, he argues they were searching to express an understanding of the West from within the West. He proposes that this was a search for regional identity.

[371] A progressive western spirit was observed by an editorial writer quoted in Calgary Industrial Exhibition, *Annual Report 1928*, par. 10, p. 11. The editorial writer suggested that the Stampede complemented the progressive spirit of western Canada and western Canadians. Also, the use of frontier imagery in advertising is exemplified in Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, *Calgary Exhibition and Stampede: Official Souvenir Programme July 9th to 14th, 1923* (Calgary: Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, 1923), n.p., in which an advertisement for the A.E. Cross-owned Calgary Brewing & Malting Company promoted "Chinook Beer" and "Buffalo Brand Aerated Waters." Indian imagery is used by the Royal Bank of Canada to sell "modern banking." See Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, *Souvenir Programme: Calgary Exhibition, Jubilee and Stampede* (Calgary: Calgary Exhibition and Stampede, 1925), 58. "Perils Have Not Passed," the advertisement stated. "When the white man came lurking Indians were a constant peril. Although years have passed since then, there are still those who prey upon the fortunes of the unsuspecting and uninformed. Those without the protection of modern banking facilities invite misfortune."

The Last Best West came to stand for a way of life in Alberta, and, arguably, for western Canada as a region. As an ideology, it asserted the primacy of the individual in determining his or, in some cases, her own success. Whether success came from farming, industry, oil, manufacturing, or tourism, the qualities of ingenuity, resourcefulness, and hard work defined frontier individualism. Nineteenth-century sodbusters and powerful Calgary cattlemen epitomized individuals who arrived with little, and, through their own efforts, harvested the bounties of the land. Primacy of the individual was grounded in the social Darwinian notion of the survival of the fittest. Last Best West ideology, not unlike the frontier thesis, ascribed to the power of the land in positively transforming human character and society.[372] Canadian cowboys, Mounties, and Christian missionaries epitomized what Lower perceived as the power to modify old institutions—British traditions—and give them new form and spirit—Euro-Canadian form and western Canadian spirit.[373] The Last Best West also asserted the primacy of uniformity and harmony. It transformed a past of conflict and oppression into a peaceful past of just settlement. The dominant narrative validated Euro-Canadian dominance and a colonial history of oppression over non-British and First Nations communities. Through the subtle cultural power of books, art, film, advertising, and tourism, cultural producers elevated the Last Best West as the dominant way of seeing Alberta.

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[372] The frontier thesis asserts that the physical environment of the frontier shapes people and society. For discussion of the frontier thesis in the Canadian tradition, see Lower, 47-50.

[373] See Lower, 48.

The dominant narrative of the Last Best West served social and political functions. In this sense, it was also a form of regionalist expression. On one hand, it offered resistance to Ontario-centric Canadian nationalism. In the early-twentieth century, Canadian nationalism was grounded in southern Ontario ways of seeing nature, culture, history, and relations with outlying "hinterlands." Since the 1880s, residents of Alberta sought to express their lived experience from a local perspective. They rejected eastern interpretations of Alberta in the same way they rejected eastern political parties and Ontario-minded "national" corporations. A western regional gaze shaped the work of cultural producers in Alberta, and how they expressed their relations with nature, culture, history, and the Ontario "heartland." By the 1930s and 1940s, the hinterland-heartland theory asserted by Innis and Creighton was accepted in Alberta as a valid interpretation of western Canadian history.[374] According to many Albertans, Ontario's commercial imperialism validated why Alberta had not achieved lasting national grandeur or enduring success. In spite of a past marred by disillusionment, envisioning Alberta as having a rich and successful past outside of its relationship with Ontario was a means for local cultural producers to resist Ontario-centric Canadian nationalism, and inscribe meaning on Alberta from within the province. Internally-inscribed meaning revealed politically-charged narratives, and, thus, the Last Best West reflected regional, as well as regionalist ways of seeing Alberta.

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[374] For discussion of the staples and Laurentian thesis, see Innis and Creighton.

Cultural expression from within Alberta was also a means to assert cultural hegemony over other interpretations of the provincial experience. The Last Best West did not offer an equitable voice to First Nations people, non-British immigrants, women, and diverse occupational groups. It masked political and social conflict that divided rural/urban, recent immigrant/long-term resident, rancher/farmer, Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal, and British/non-British. Albertans who believed in the superiority of British tradition asserted cultural hegemony over political, legal, cultural, and educational institutions in the province.[375] In the case of tourism, hegemony was asserted by the Government of Alberta Publicity Bureau, 1912 Frontier Days Celebration Committee, and the Calgary Industrial Exhibition Company. Booster-minded civic and provincial politicians, journalists, and community volunteers supported the vision of these dominant cultural producers, and contributed to the suppression of cultural expression that did not conform to the ideology of the Last Best West. Imposed uniformity served the booster ethos of community solidarity, and the assertion that British tradition must be the cultural norm.

While the ideology of the Last Best West reveals conflict between localized cultural expression and cultural hegemony, it also reveals the ways in which cultural producers capitalized on the commercial value of romantic imagery. The influence of romanticism, antimodernism, and consumer capitalism in forming the Last Best West demonstrates that it was not simply an internally-constructed way of seeing Alberta. It was also constructed in response to external influences. The imagined frontier proved to be valuable cultural capital. Civic and provincial boosters used frontier imagery to sell Alberta for settlement, investment, and travel. Tourism boosters understood the dollar value of American auto tourists to the provincial economy, and set out to meet American anticipations and expectations. Competition for American tourists was strong, and Alberta had to showcase itself as different—in spite of similarities—to neighbouring provinces and states. To differentiate Alberta as unique, boosters constructed the province as an exotic and gentlemanly frontier characterized by British imperial grandeur, primitive Indians, and the romance of the Canadian Rockies. Thus, tourism in Alberta was as much shaped by internal expression as by external forces, particularly the commercial imperative to attract American tourists.

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[375] Palmer, 309-11, identified an elite group of Albertans—the "Alberta elite"—that controlled political, legal, cultural, and educational institutions. The Alberta elite consisted of primarily Anglo-Saxon Protestant men and women with ties to Ontario or Britain. This group believed in the superiority of British tradition, and was concerned that non-British immigrants would hamper Alberta's progress and prosperity. Palmer links the rise of nativism with the hegemony of Alberta's elite.

The historical analysis of the ideology of the Last Best West underscores the perpetuation of the early twentieth-century tourist gaze lingering in Alberta's contemporary tourism industry. Frontier imagery still sells. To experience Travel Alberta's professed True West, tourists are directed to the Cowboy Trail, a 700-km themed drive in the alleged heart of Alberta's cattle country. The trail links Mayerthorpe, west of Edmonton, to Cardston and Waterton Lakes National Park near the United States border. "Icon attractions" direct the tourist gaze, for example: the Calgary Stampede where "the Old West comes alive with a city wide celebration of true western hospitality and rousing fun!;" the Glenbow Museum where "The World Meets The West;" Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, a provincial historic site and UNESCO World Heritage Site portraying the Blackfoot peoples; and Bar U Ranch, a national historic site revealing the days of "hard working cowboys."[376] "We aren't just putting on a show for the city slickers," Travel Alberta reassures virtual visitors to their website, "this is the real thing."[377] Romanticism and antimodernism continue to shape contemporary tourism in Alberta, and the imagined frontier remains valuable cultural capital. Alberta envisioned as the True West reveals a continuing nostalgia for a mythic past, and the anticipation that, through tourism, the past can be rewritten in order to project Alberta as a success story of western Canadian progress and prosperity.

The True West continues to assert the frontier as a unifying narrative for all Albertans. Much like the 1886 declaration in the *Calgary Herald* that an annual civic exhibition would facilitate the making of "a united Alberta," Travel Alberta promotes the True West as common to all Albertans.[378] Slogans such as "Get Back in the Saddle," "Get Back to the Farm," and "Get Back to Your Roots" suggest that Alberta's shared ancestry—in spite of diverse ethnic and occupational backgrounds—is tied to the land. Yet, many Albertans do not have direct or ancestral ties to Alberta's farming or ranching past. An alternative to the frontier narrative is to argue that, in a modern global world, diversity can be overcome through the shared experience of modern consumer culture. In this sense, the great unifier in contemporary Alberta is not the frontier, but drinking Starbucks coffee, driving an SUV, and seeing the latest Robert Redford film.[379] In a global world, the suave, gentrified "New West"—a consumer playground characterized by consumerism and leisurely escapes to ski hills and golf courses—constructs Alberta's imagined community.[380] Alberta as a natural playground has been a consistent theme in Alberta tourism, and New West ideas can be traced to late nineteenth-century CPR train travel and mountaineering in the Dominion national parks. Travel Alberta blends the so-called New and True West in the centennial edition of the *2005 Alberta Vacation Guide.* Tourists are encouraged to pursue outdoor adventures—mountaineering, caving, or canoeing, for example—and indulge in "a world run by the three 'Rs': ridin', ropin' and 'ranglin.'"[381] The New West as a modern consumer alternative to the frontier narrative is also a hegemonic imagined landscape, and speaks only to Albertans interested in and able to participate in conspicuous consumption. The New West and the True West are variations on Last Best West ideology. Alberta remains far too diverse to be distilled to a common imagined landscape.

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[376] Cowboy Trail, "The Cowboy Trail: Travel Guide Rocky Mountain Foothills" (brochure).

[377] Travel Alberta, "Wild West: Alberta really is the True West," available on-line from http://www1.travelalberta.com/content/wildwest/; accessed October 14, 2004.

[378] See *Calgary Herald*, quoted in Gray, 9.

[379] Liza Nicholas, Elaine Bapis, and Thomas Harvey, "Preface," in *Imagining the Big Open: Nature, Identity, and Play in the New West* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 2003), xi-xiii, argue that Robert Redford personifies both the Old West and the New West in the American tradition. They argue that Redford's film persona mythologizes the romantic West, while his role in the Sundance Film Festival, ski

In the early twenty-first century, the True West also goes beyond tourism to permeate a cross-section of cultural spheres. For example, in 2001, the Alberta Beef Producers (ABP) re-launched "If it ain't Alberta, it ain't beef," a marketing campaign originally created for the 1988 Winter Olympics Games in Calgary. The beef advocacy

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resort development, and as a landowner in Utah reflect the playful and affluent qualities of the New West. In this sense, Redford films fuel nostalgia for the perceived older West, and situate the viewer as a consumer of New West tradition.

[380] Gerald Friesen "Defining the Prairies, or, why the prairies don't exist," in *Towards Defining the Prairies: Region, Culture, and History*, ed. R. Wardhaugh, (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba, 2001), 22-23, proposes that the notion of a prairie regionalism has been replaced by a new version of the West characterized by youthfulness and the outdoors. For discussion of the gentrification of rural communities for urban escape see Dave Whitson, "Nature as Playground: Recreation and Gentrification in the Mountain West," in *Writing Off the Rural West: Globalization, Governments, and the Transformation of Rural Communities*, ed. R. Epp, and D. Whitson (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 2001), 147-50.

[381] Travel Alberta, *2005 Alberta Vacation Guide*, available on-line from http://www1.travelalberta.com/pdf/VacationGuide2005Themes.pdf, accessed 11 November 2004.

group was aware of the commercial value of romantic imagery noting, "Consumers continue to be moved by genuine images of rugged ranchers in the heart of Alberta's cattle country."[382] The updated campaign poster replaced the original three cowboys with cowgirls, and photographed the women against a foothill and mountain backdrop. Cowgirls were selected as signifiers of ranch culture, in part to honour the legacy of female ranchers, but also to reach out to the primary purchasers of food—women.[383] Alberta Agriculture, Food, and Rural Development (AFRD) also recognizes the value of romantic imagery and rural food production. AFRD encourages food producers to market rural and on-farm products and services—horse rides, u-pick berries, dude ranch bed and breakfasts, farmers' markets, and rodeos, for example—as a part of Alberta's reportedly underdeveloped agtourism industry. Agtourism—defined by AFRD as the marriage between agriculture and tourism—and the ABP campaign capitalize on romantic ideals of rural Alberta and rural food production.[384]

Essentialized images of family farms and rugged ranchers depoliticises food production in Alberta. These images disregard the lived reality in which corporate agribusiness—cattle feedlots and packers (e.g., Cargill), privatized seed research (e.g., Monsanto), and mega-barn hog production (e.g., Sunterra), for example—threatens the sustainability of family operations.[385] In Alberta, the government has welcomed and funded corporate agribusiness through tax incentives, grants and loans, low-wage labour laws, and lenient environmental regulations.[386] Local communities have been left to deal with the environmental and social impacts of corporate agribusiness while the provincial government slashes funding to rural social programs and education. Political scientists Roger Epp and Dave Whitson argue that rural areas are increasingly treated as dumping grounds.[387] While urban centres prosper in the clean "knowledge economy," rural areas are forced to deal with the personal, social, economic, and environmental side-effects of corporate agribusiness. Epp and Whitson remark that "even in the wealthiest province in Western Canada, rural people know all too well that the "Alberta Advantage" is not distributed evenly."[388] Agribusiness frames rural food production as "of the Folk" while the supposed Folk of corporate branding and agtourism—family farmers and ranchers—have been marginalized by the corporate takeover of the agricultural products they seemingly personify.[389]

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[382] Alberta Beef Producers, "Marketing Campaigns," para. 1, available on-line from http://www.albertabeef.org/marketing2.html; accessed October 14, 2004.

[383] Alberta Beef Producers, para. 4. The website describes the selection process in choosing models for the poster campaign. They were committed to depicting actual Alberta ranchers, and held a province-wide competition. The three "rancHERs," as the women were called, were selected to represent three age groups, and their biographies are linked to the website. Urry, 3, observes that signs and symbols—cowgirls, foothills, and mountains—act as signifiers to construct the tourist gaze. Also see MacCannell, 110-11, for discussion of the semiotics of tourist attractions. He notes that attractions are constructed by on- and off-site markers. Markers give value to an attraction and have multiple meanings.

[384] Agriculture, Food, and Rural Development, "About Alberta Agri-tourism," available on-line from http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/general/agritour.nsf, accessed November 11, 2004, defines agtourism as the "marriage" between agriculture and tourism.

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[385] See Darrin Qualman, "Corporate Hog Farming: The View from the Family Farm," in *Writing Off the Rural West: Globalization, Governments, and the Transformation of Rural Communities*, ed. R. Epp, and D. Whitson (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 2001), 21-23.

[386] Michael J. Broadway, "Bad to the Bone: The Social Cost of Beef Packing's Move to Rural Alberta," in *Writing Off the Rural West: Globalization, Governments, and the Transformation of Rural Communities*, ed. R. Epp, and D. Whitson (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 2001), 39-42, makes these observations in relation to the beef packing industry in Alberta.

[387] Roger Epp and Dave Whitson, "Introduction: Writing Off Rural Communities?" in *Writing Off the Rural West: Globalization, Governments, and the Transformation of Rural Communities*, ed. R. Epp, and D. Whitson (Edmonton: University of Alberta, 2001), xv, observe that rural areas have become dumping grounds and playgrounds for urban-based consumption.

[388] Epp and Whitson, xv.

[389] McKay, 279, observes that large-scale bread-making firms situate themselves in pre-industrial Nova Scotian tradition. It was the industrialization of bread making, however, that marginalized artisan bakeries. Nonetheless, firms continue to associate their products with traditional craft of bread making.

The myth of a utopian frontier frames more than food production and food producers in Alberta, it provides cultural context for the province's leading industry—oil. Gloria Miller argues that oil culture in Alberta is grounded in the cowboy myth of masculinity and rugged individualism. The oil industry heralds exploration, individualistic competition, and social Darwinian survival of the fittest.[390] She argues that the underlying ideology of the self-made man in the oil industry—much like the self-made cattlemen of early twentieth-century Calgary—exemplifies what is heralded as an entrepreneurial spirit. This spirit requires ruthlessness, strict adherence to the fiscal bottomline, and a self-sacrificing work ethic.[391] Miller proposes that oil culture and cowboy culture dominate Calgary, and many oilmen pursue the mythical frontier as weekend cowboys on personal ranches in southern Alberta. Oil culture has adopted Last Best West ideology, and cowboy-turn-oilman culture dominates Alberta's imagined landscape. As Alberta's leading industry, oil culture reveals dominant ways of seeing business in Alberta.

Business is characterized by Premier Ralph Klein's so-called "Alberta Advantage." The Alberta Advantage is a policy framework grounded in pro-business, low-tax, and less-government principles. Political scientist Claude Denis argues that the "Klein revolution" was not just economic, but cultural, and its ultimate goal is to shift toward a particular way of seeing. "Albertans must acquire certain outlooks, must adopt certain ways of doing things;" Denis observes, "they must accept as normal sacrifices that could be thought unreasonable. Put differently, Albertans must be weaned from the culture of the welfare state."[392] Claude proposes that the Klein revolution has moved the province into "new right" politics. The new right heralds rugged individualism, free-market capitalism, and competition over government-sponsored social programs and the welfare state.[393] Denis attributes Klein's "cowboy libertarian brand of populism" to deregulation, privatization, and government-defined moral regulation. It constructs a political-economic framework characterized by fierce global competition and entrepreneurial survival.[394] In this political-economic climate, Albertans are assured that today's hardships—cutbacks to medical care and education—are for the promise of a better tomorrow. Under Klein, the political landscape in Alberta translated frontier ideals—individualism, freedom from social and political constraint, faith in the province and its potential, and a survival of the fittest mentality—to further a neo-conservative, new right agenda.

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[390] Gloria Elizabeth Miller, "The Frontier Cowboy Myth and Entrepreneurialism in the Culture of the Alberta Oil Industry: Professional Women's Coping Strategies, an Interpretive Study of Women's Experience" (Ph.D. diss., University of Calgary, 1998), 92-94, available on-line at *Theses Canada* (Ottawa: National Library of Canada), amicus no. 21137677.

[391] Miller, 107, 109-18.

While the Alberta Advantage benefits agribusiness, logging, and oil and gas industries, many residents and communities experience the unaccounted for "advantage echo." Deregulation and privatization have resulted in increased electricity bills, auto insurance and health care premiums, school fees, and community user-fees. Services covered under Alberta Health Care have been curtailed, and many Albertans, in addition to Alberta Health Care premiums, purchase private health insurance.[395] Reduced funding to public education has resulted in cuts to so-called non-essential subjects and activities—art, music, theatre, and physical education—and increased privatization has been promoted as a means to give Albertan's "choice" in education. Tuition has increased at colleges, universities, and trade schools, making post-secondary education less accessible and a greater financial liability for many Albertans.[396] At a community level, the vitality of art, culture, and recreation is increasingly reliant on charitable gaming and provincial lottery revenue, corporate sponsorship, and volunteerism. In a booming provincial economy, the income gap has widened between affluent Albertans able to absorb increased costs of living, and lower- and middle-income Albertans.[397] Under-funded food banks, homeless shelters, and transitional housing have become common landmarks across Alberta. As observed by Epp and Whitson, the Alberta Advantage is not equitably distributed and enjoyed by all Albertans.[398] Individuals, families, organizations, and communities unable to succeed fully in an atmosphere of rugged individualism and a survival of the fittest mentality are marginalized from the alleged advantages of Alberta's less-government/pro-business political-economic framework. Klein's professed less-government framework, however, appears to apply more to taxpayer-funded social goods than pro-business economic intervention. Social capital—health care, education, a social safety net, and local natural and cultural heritage, for example—has been rendered a good of the global marketplace, a marketplace allegedly free of government intervention. In relinquishing social capital to the marketplace, the new right agenda under Klein has attempted to restructure ways of seeing citizenship and government responsibility in Alberta.

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[392] Claude Denis, "'Government can do what it wants': Moral Regulation in Ralph Klein's Alberta," *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 32, no. 3 (1995): 375.

[393] See Denis, 366-67, for discussion of the new right.

[394] Denis, 374.

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[395] Seth Klein and Catherine Walshe, *A Tale of Two Provinces: A Comparative Study of Economic and Social Conditions in British Columbia and Alberta* (Edmonton and Vancouver: Parkland Institute and Centre for Policy Alternatives, 1999), 17-18.

[396] See Trevor Harrison, and Jerrold Kachur, ed., *Contested Classrooms: Education, Globalization, and Democracy in Alberta* (Edmonton: University of Alberta and Parkland Institute, 1999), for discussion of new right politics and educational restructuring under the Klein government in Alberta.

[397] Patricia Lawrence, *Advantage for Whom?: Declining Family Incomes in a Growing Alberta Economy* (Edmonton: Parkland Institute, 2001), 13.

[398] Epp and Whitson, xv, observe the uneven distribution of the Alberta Advantage in relation to rural areas. The same observation can be made in terms of so-called advantages to low- and middle-income Albertans in rural and urban areas.

The contradiction of the new right agenda is that community sustainability relies on the very social capital relinquished by government to the marketplace. The erosion of social capital through reduced Government of Alberta funding to social programs is occurring at a time when the government recognizes social capital as vital to future development. For example, in *Rural Alberta: Land of Opportunity* (2004), the MLA Steering Committee for Rural Development recognizes that many rural communities are "on the verge of disappearing." Rural decline is attributed to a number of economic and social factors, including weakened social infrastructure due to the loss of school, health, culture, and recreation services.[399] To counter rural decline, the committee proposes a rural development framework in which education, health care, economic growth, and social and physical community infrastructure are recognized as vital to rural quality of life. "People want to live in communities that meet their physical, social, and cultural needs," it reported. Thus, rural communities must build sustainability on the very social capital that has been undermined by Klein's new right revolution. The steering committee does not look to the role of the Government of Alberta in rural decline. Instead, it detaches government policy from depoliticised demographic and economic trends impacting rural areas across Canada. Ultimately, the steering committee states that sustainability is the responsibility of rural communities, and the role of the government—at a time in which new right policies undermine public trust and social capital—is to guide and support community efforts.[400]

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[399] *Rural Alberta: Land of Opportunity* (MLA Steering Committee, March 2004), "Message from the MLA Steering Committee," i, available on-line from http://www.rural.gov.ab.ca/ralo_report.pdf, accessed November 11, 2004.

In *Rural Alberta: Land of Opportunity*, tourism is identified as a viable industry that can contribute to rural sustainability. It identifies ecotourism and agtourism as the fastest growing sectors of the tourism industry, and communities are to look to local arts, heritage, sport, and recreation, and environmental sustainability for ways to enter the tourism market. The steering committee recognizes that rural Alberta as a whole needs to be "packaged" for tourism.[401] If packaging follows Travel Alberta's current tourist gaze, it will continue to focus on essentialized narratives of rural life. It will perpetuate the myth of rural essence, and project Alberta as the spirit of the western lifestyle.[402] The professed spirit reveals little of the complexities of rural life, and depoliticises the struggle to keep rural communities alive. Moreover, it traps rural Albertans in the myth of the simple life.[403] This tourist gaze requires rural communities seeking sustainability through tourism to create and maintain social capital in the climate of Klein's new right revolution. In this context, limited resources from which to build natural and cultural heritage must also serve the commercial imperative of an essentialized rural tourist gaze.

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[400] *Rural Alberta*, iii.

[401] *Rural Alberta*, 14, 19, 21.

[402] This spirit is noted in Travel Alberta, "Wild West."

[403] See McKay, xv, for discussion of the myth of the simple life in tourism in Nova Scotia.

Thus, rural social capital has the tendency to be influenced more by romanticism, antimodernism, and consumerism than the lived reality of the rural experience.

The need to critique the ideological project reflected in the Last Best West—a project lodged deep in the political and economic power structures of Alberta—is in the need to recognize alternative ways of seeing. Denis argues that the ultimate goal of the Klein government has been a cultural shift to new right ways of seeing, a shift that he regards as not entirely successful.[404] The lack of success is evident in voices of dissent in a cross section of social and cultural spheres. Many Albertans defend taxpayer-funded services such as public health care, education, parks and recreation, arts and culture, and services for children, families, seniors, low-income, and Aboriginal Albertans. Many Albertans reject rugged individualism, and see themselves as contributing members of a greater community, and taxpayer-funded social services as vital to quality of life. In this sense, a critique of the ideological project reflected in the Last Best West poses the questions: what kind of a society do Albertans want to live in; and what is the role of the Government of Alberta in shaping this society? Actual and imagined landscapes underscore ways of seeing society and government, and the anticipated diverse responses challenge the homogeneity of the Last Best West ideology. Cultural plurality and democratic plurality demand recognition of the multiple meaning that are inscribed on the Alberta landscape. Multiple meanings—meanings that are gendered, ethnic, religious, political, rural, urban, and occupational—illuminate alternatives to the Last Best West. Challenging the dominant discourse opens the possibility for dialogue that reveals the complexity of Alberta's past in order to arrive at a richer sense of the lived presence. The call for multiple narratives displaces cherished myths of an imagined frontier, and offers the challenge of a new politics of culture in Alberta. New cultural politics may not shed the hegemonic forces of cultural selection or the dominance of particular imagined landscapes, yet, they pose the opportunity to construct more inclusive ways of seeing.[405]

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[404] Denis, 375.

The Last Best West continues to structure a way of seeing in contemporary Alberta. Much like the role of the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede and Government of Alberta Publicity Bureau in the early twentieth-century, the contemporary construction of the Last Best West through tourism, industry, and politics asserts a dominant narrative on the Alberta landscape. This narrative imposes uniformity where diversity exists. It simplifies complex people and places, and reduces each to the so-called common denominator of the frontier experience. In turn, it traps Albertans in unrealistic and constraining myths of a utopian past. The Last Best West is a limiting and limited identity. It speaks to a narrow understanding of the past and present. The challenge to contemporary Albertans is to find a way for multiple interpretations of the Alberta experience to be heard and respected. This challenge remains situated within the selective forces of consumer capitalism and the politics of the new right. However, it is a necessary challenge as diverse Albertans continue to struggle to reconcile lived realities with the imagined landscape.

In the mean time, as the government proposed in the late 1930s, "'Light, stranger, and meet your Alberta pards." You can still meet your pards every year at the Calgary Exhibition and Stampede. The Stampede invites you to don your "western duds, whether they are a bit dusty or the latest in cowboy fashion," and saddle up for a ten-day ride of pancakes, rodeo, and chuckwagons.[406] If you are unsure of what to wear, help is just a click away on the Calgary Economic Development website. Their Stampede promotional video, "Steer Eye for the City Guy," directs you to big belt buckles, plaid shirts, and cowboy boots.[407] Three rugged ranchers steer you away from Nora Jones, cappuccinos, and facial creams, and westernize your lifestyle with two stepping, cowboy coffee, and a straight razor. The Calgary Stampede website can further complete your cowboy or cowgirl transformation with a name from their "nickname finder."[408] According to the website, you can just call me "Sheila 'BuckedOff' Campbell." Apparently, Travel Alberta was right. The True West really does exist. It was right here in Alberta all along.

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[405] McKay, 308, challenges the discourse of the "Folk" in Nova Scotia. He observes that alternative ways of seeing that displace the Folk will be under the forces of cultural selection. He proposes that new frameworks may be able to break free from the constraining class and commercial forces that shaped the Folk.

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[406] Calgary Stampede, "The Event," http://www.calgarystampede.com/stampede/the_event/, accessed December 1, 2003.

[407] "Steer Eye for the City Guy" appears to be a spin off of the popular reality television show "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy." In "Queer Eye," five homosexual men offer fashion and style advise to seemingly culture-deprived heterosexual men. Real-life cowboys apparently offer the same advise to a meterosexual man in preparation for the Calgary Stampede. Steer Eye for the City Guy is available on-line from http://www.calgaryeconomicdevelopment.com/main/default.asp, accessed 7 November 2004.

[408] A cowboy or cowgirl nickname can be accessed at the Calgary Stampede website, available on-line from http://calgarystampede.com/fun/nickname_generator.html, accessed 7 November 2004.

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