



Faculty of Liberal Arts & Sciences

1991

Work, weather and the grid: Agriculture in Saskatchewan [Exhibition Catalogue]

Donegan, Rosemary

Suggested citation:

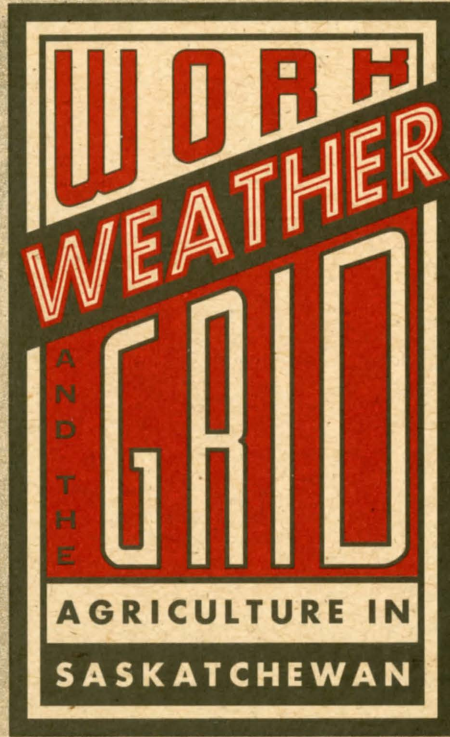
Donegan, Rosemary (1991) Work, weather and the grid: Agriculture in Saskatchewan [Exhibition Catalogue]. Dunlop Art Gallery, Regina. ISBN 978-0-920085-40-0 Available at <http://openresearch.ocadu.ca/id/eprint/1881/>

OCLC: 24738875

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R O S E M A R Y D O N E G A N



W O R K ,
W E A T H E R
A N D T H E G R I D :

A G R I C U L T U R E I N

S A S K A T C H E W A N

R O S E M A R Y D O N E G A N

*DUNLOP ART GALLERY
REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN*

Work, Weather and the Grid: Agriculture in Saskatchewan was one component of *The Regina Work Project*, a major collaborative project initiated in 1989 by Regina's public galleries and visual arts institutions, which examined the subject of work from a variety of points of view. The primary components of the project were the four exhibitions organized by the Rosemont Art Gallery, Neutral Ground artist-run centre, the MacKenzie Art Gallery and the Dunlop Art Gallery. The exhibitions were animated by extensive public programs, organized by the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Regina, the Western Canada Art Association and CARFAC Saskatchewan. The entire project opened on May 1, 1991 and the ensuing week was one of intense activity. As the permanent document of the Dunlop Art Gallery's exhibition, this catalogue is one of three coordinated publications to record the diverse activities and images comprising *The Regina Work Project*.

Work, Weather and the Grid: Agriculture in Saskatchewan based *The Regina Work Project* locally and historically within Saskatchewan. The exhibition was an innovative and provocative survey of the work underpinning Saskatchewan's major industry, farming, and how it has been represented in visual culture.

For those with a rural background, *Work, Weather and the Grid: Agriculture in Saskatchewan* had special impact. Saskatchewan's history is a strange duality, residing between and among familial mythologies of 'the past', 'the pioneer days', 'the old days', which are at odds with a codified textbook history written from another point of view. The history retold around the kitchen table often had little to do with the fragments of Saskatchewan history which appeared sporadically in school textbooks. The

effect of *Work, Weather and the Grid: Agriculture in Saskatchewan* was complex. It recognized two types of historical narrative. The exhibition validated personal experience and memory as important strategies within an incomplete or unsympathetic history, while, at the same time, proposing a reinterpretation of a dominant history. The conflation of the two revealed the multiple realities that are at the foundation of a regional identity.

The format of the installation, designed to resemble an agricultural fair, was an ideal, if somewhat unorthodox, method to convey these multiple histories. The layers of images, carefully organized, invited a sustained reading. Viewers of the exhibition were afforded an unprecedented degree of interpretative latitude.

Inasmuch as *Work, Weather and the Grid: Agriculture in Saskatchewan*, as a visual history, carried an inherent critique of a regional history, it also exposed unexpected facets of art production in Saskatchewan. The province has been identified politically and economically with the land (the basis of the provincial economy remains agricultural). Its visual culture, likewise, has grown from a landscape tradition. The prevailing imagery of the land has been widely represented within a limited set of landscape permutations. Stock icons of the Saskatchewan landscape, the big sky, vast fields, brilliant sunsets, countless painterly 'stooks', rolling hills and cloud formations are depicted as relentlessly as they surround the viewer on a long road trip. In some respects, the landscape genres have informed how the land is *seen*. Ironically, given the prominence of the land in the province's economy, its literature and its lore, there are few images that depict the labour that has been invested in it. A "working landscape", one that acknowledges the relationship between the land



and the people who live in it and work within it, has been a fugitive image. In this remarkable exhibition, the image of the working landscape has coalesced through a collection of fragments all keyed to a few direct images of agricultural work.

In the realization of this project, the Dunlop Art Gallery thanks, first of all, the exhibition curator, Rosemary Donegan, for her tireless research, careful selection and for developing this memorable and important installation. Her research has effectively dissected assumptions without minimizing or marginalizing. It has served to enrich an understanding of place.

The Dunlop Art Gallery is grateful to the many lenders to the exhibition whose generosity, patience and enthusiasm was crucial to the project.

The staff at the Dunlop Art Gallery devoted a great deal of time and energy to this project in all phases of its development. I would like to thank Bev Antal, Deborah Boren, Joyce Clark, Suzanne Probe, James Sather, Ingrid Jenkner, Beverly Oancia, and the former Curator/Director of the Dunlop Art Gallery, Peter White, for their ongoing support for this project.

Finally, the Dunlop Art Gallery is grateful to the vital support of The Canada Council for *Work, Weather and the Grid: Agriculture in Saskatchewan*. We also would like to recognize the many sponsors of *The Regina Work Project*: the Saskatchewan Arts Board, the Department of Communications, The

Regina Exhibition Association, Petro Canada, the City of Regina, the Family Foundation of the Government of Saskatchewan, the Western Canada Art Association, SaskTel and the University of Regina.

Helen Marzolf
Director/Curator

186. (Above) James Photo,
Prince Albert
Unidentified Farm n.d.



Figure 1. Installation View of *Work, Weather and the Grid: Agriculture in Saskatchewan*

W O R K

W E A T H E R

A N D

T H E G R I D :

A G R I C U L T U R E I N

S A S K A T C H E W A N

Since the earliest days of European settlement, agriculture has been the primary occupation on the Prairies. Farming and ranching have shaped and defined prairie culture. They are the reasons why the land was divided into a grid, why the province is subject to boom and bust economic cycles and why prairie institutions and politics developed in the way they did. Saskatchewan, in particular, is profoundly rural in character, but not in the European model of many small mixed farms producing for a local market. Saskatchewan's agriculture, dominated by mass single crop production (mono-agriculture), has always been organized for export to the industrial centres of Europe and North America.

Dryland farming and ranching – the art of husbandry on the prairies – is an attempt to find the best combination of work, seeds and animals to exploit the particularities of the soil and climate. Farming – the process of working the land, watching the weather and attempting to come to terms with farm economics – has been imagined, recorded and documented by artists and illustrators in visual images of Saskatchewan.

By locating these diverse images within their historical context and organizing their relationships to each other, the exhibition *Work, Weather and the Grid: Agriculture in Saskatchewan* allows the narratives and themes embedded in visual images of prairie agriculture to emerge. Using the perspective of “visual history” the exhibition includes painting, sculpture, the graphic arts, documentary photography and the promotional arts: advertising, postcards, newspapers and periodical illustration. These works were created by both professionally trained and self-taught artists, as well as by the anonymous “journeymen” of documentary photography and advertising. The exhibition is hung “salon style” similar to arts and crafts displays at rural fairs, in an attempt to recreate the familiarity, repetition and layering of popular memory that domi-

nate agricultural symbolism. The large number of images visually establishes a critical juxtaposition of representations, allowing for an exploration of aesthetic traditions, of the contrast between different media, of the diverse individual artistic intentions of the artists and of the broader social meaning of the images.

It is hoped that this exhibition will be seen as more than a pictorial history of agriculture in Saskatchewan, and that it evokes more than a heart-warming dose of nostalgia for the “good old days”. The individual images need to be understood in their historical reality *and* in their present context, which simultaneously contradicts and supports the memory of a time now past, while elaborating and elucidating how people tried to make sense of their lives as farmers and ranchers in “the last best West”.

Since the turn of the century, a distinctive imagery of prairie agriculture has emerged, rooted in the European tradition of depicting the working landscape. Paintings and photographs have documented the “Garden of Eden” that was promised to settlers: mammoth in scale, orderly, cultivated and sun-drenched. Multi-horse teams pulling reaper-binders, giant steam threshing outfits, rows of stooks stretching to the endless horizon and, more recently, legions of self-propelled combines moving obliquely through vast expanses of grain, are universal visual symbols of plenitude and progress – these same images are captured by the slogan “the breadbasket of the world”. These classic images, found in postcards, calendars, textbooks and promotional materials, have dominated popular perceptions in Saskatchewan. Yet, side by side with these images of abundance, and in stark contrast to the prevalent imagery of prairie fecundity, there also exist images of the desolation of daily farm



44. Inglis Sheldon-Williams (1870-1940) *Two Horses* n.d.

life, the hard physical labour, the debilitating isolation and the unpredictable nature of the weather.

Europeans who arrived on the prairies brought with them two established traditions of depicting the working landscape drawn from the fine arts and the folk arts. Formally trained landscape artists, along with a commitment to working directly from nature *en plein air*, would be familiar with what was sometimes known as the Georgic, which celebrated farming and rural work, and was derived from the Roman poet Virgil's *Georgics*. As a highly developed pastoral genre, it could be seen in paintings, graphics, illustrations, and ceramics and was exemplified in the work of the English artist John Constable (1776-1837) and earlier in the Italianate landscape painting of Claude Lorraine (1600-1682).¹

Georgic painting was generally celebratory, bucolic, envisioning a social and natural harmony between all the creatures of God's creation. The major theme, the productive role of the countryside, was shown in two ways – either by illustrating the magnificence of the estate or the splendour of the animals on it. These paintings, usually commissioned by the owner/landlord, rarely concentrated on the actual physical work of agriculture; but rather on the beauty and ownership of the land. This served to validate the importance of farming for the general wealth of society.

In contrast, settlers from Northern and Eastern Europe brought a knowledge of "folk art".² Working outside the historical fine art tradition, these self-taught artists depicted and recorded local rural life and the work of the peasants. As peasants did not own the land they worked, their art was generally about working the land and its abundance, rather than its natural beauty.

As many of the artists who settled on the prairies originally homesteaded or worked as hired men, they experienced the reality of working the land. Within the diverse range of images of agriculture created by these artists, a number of ongoing themes start to appear – the realism of the hard physical work, the capriciousness of the weather, and the grid, which, superimposed on the natural landscape produced an all-encompassing measured and marked definition of the lands. Embedded within these themes is a narrative that questions the suitability of the prairie for farming and ranching.

The volatile and extreme nature of the weather is the defining factor in the continuing precarious existence of agriculture on the prairies and could be polarized in the phrase "the garden and/or the desert". The debate goes back to the earliest agricultural appraisals of the area by the Palliser and the Hind expeditions in the late 1850s, and to John Macoun's writings in the 1870s and early 1880s. Much of the landscape painting of the prairies, although not explicitly about agriculture, shows fascination with the sky, clouds, and the sun as "signs" of what is to come, and thus is implicitly about the weather. For it was the weather, the rain, sun, snow, and wind, which defined farming and ranching in Saskatchewan. As success was dependent on the "million-dollar rain", every crop was just one step away from a drought or a bumper harvest.

Woven into the narrative of the "garden and the desert" is faith in the machine, which it was hoped would resolve the debate. The machine – the industry of agriculture – was exemplified by the reaper, the binder, the steam engine and later the self-propelled combine. It stood for progress, science, technology, international transportation and the export economy of agricultural production. The machine enabled a young territory, later a province, to develop a highly evolved agricultural industry,



exporting on an international scale, based on the labour of the family farm.

The grid – the sectional survey system of land division – affected the way in which land was perceived and conceived in physical and visual terms. Physically, the sectional survey and the railway determined how land came under private ownership, how settlement occurred and how farms were configured and valued. Conceptually, the grid allowed European settlers to take control of the landscape without dealing with the specificity of the local geography or the natural vegetation. Farms and towns were developed in a manner that ignored traditional settlement

patterns and trading and transportation routes, thus erasing the centuries old understanding and use of the land by native people, who were in the process of being confined to reserves. Similarly, groups like the Doukhobors, who wished to work and own their land communally, were legislated into independent land holdings defined by the grid or forced off the land.

The conflicting and contradictory manner in which the local terrain was understood can be seen in Charles Mair's paradoxical comment "Man is a grasshopper here, making his way between the enormous discs of heaven and earth. And yet man is master of all this".³

185. John Howard (1877- c. 1960s)
Gas tractors, Howard farm,
St. Luke District c. 1910

THE
LATE 19TH
CENTURY:
INVENTING THE
IDEA OF
AGRICULTURE
IN THE
NORTH WEST
TERRITORIES

The prairies underwent a major transition between 1870, when the Hudson Bay Company gave up rights to the North West, and 1900, forcibly shifting from a mixed hunting and trading economy to a permanent agricultural settlement.⁴ The major question of the time centered around whether the prairies were suitable for agricultural settlement. This debate was carried on by surveyors and politicians, and in journals and newspapers, although rarely represented in images. Writing in the late 1850s, John Palliser and H. Y. Hind had independently judged the southern treeless plain to be arid and unsuitable for settlement.⁵ However, John Macoun, travelling in the 1870s, had declared the same area to be of unsurpassed fertility, and that the prairies were “lands which are probably more favourable for the growth of wheat in greater abundance and perfection than those of any other country in the world.”⁶ The region was enthusiastically envisioned by eastern Canadian and British interests as an area suitable for cash-based agricultural economy, where farmers would grow crops, buy goods and sell primary food-stuffs to be processed, packaged and sold elsewhere.

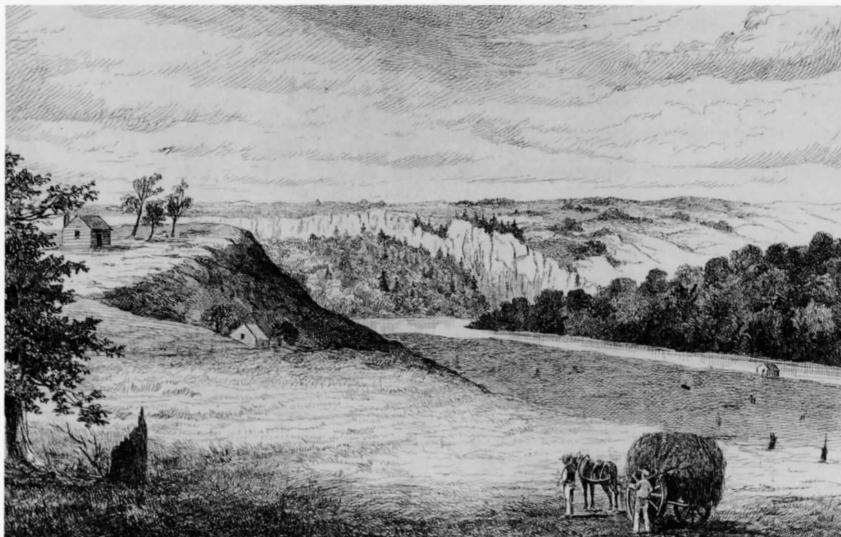
The notion of the treeless plain – the prairie – as a desert was not an image held by the people who lived there. As

Warkentin observes, “People living in the plains ... Indians, Métis, fur traders, Red River colonists, and missionaries – gave no indication that they thought that any part of the area in which they lived was a desert.”⁷ The debate about the prairies’ agricultural potential and plans for its settlement were developed without any discussion with the various Indian tribes of the area. Despite this omission, Indians were aware by the 1870s that, with the decimation of the buffalo, they needed to develop stronger farming activities, which they had previously undertaken only in specific circumstances and on a limited scale.⁸

One of the earliest known images of agriculture was published in the illustrated magazine *L'Opinion Publique* on August 19, 1875, and was entitled *The Farm of Horace Belanger at the Forks of the Saskatchewan* (cat. 169). M. Belanger and the Métis who had settled along the banks of the Saskatchewan River were the first permanent farmers in the area, although they also continued to work as traders and guides. The woodcut reproduction illustrates how the farms along the Saskatchewan River were surveyed and divided before the grid sectional system was implemented by the federal government. Based on the traditional Quebec river lot system, the lots were 660 feet wide by approximately 2 1/2 miles deep. This system gave all lots access to the river or main road and provided a range of soil types.

After the 1885 Métis uprising, paper scrip was issued by the federal government as a form of compensation to “half-breeds”, entitling the bearer to an allotment of land or money.⁹ It gave the owner of the scrip (not necessarily the person named on the certificate) legal title to a certain amount of land or money, although no land location was specified. The majority of the Métis who received scrip were fraudulently convinced to sell and in many cases, scrip was stolen outright by land speculators, lawyers,

169. Anonymous
*The farm of Horace Belanger at
the forks of the Saskatchewan*
c. 1875





196. Trueman & Caple Photo, Vancouver *Sheep belonging to the Canadian Agricultural Coal and Colonization Company, Maple Creek, N.W.T. Sept. 3, 1889*

bankers and syndicates. Very few Métis actually settled on land promised through this system.

In Ottawa, the Canadian government legally adopted the grid survey system and *The Homestead Act* in 1871. The survey system, adapted from a model used in the western United States, was undertaken in the 1870s and virtually completed by the mid-1880s. Starting at the International Boundary, the survey divided the land into townships of 36 sections, which were then subdivided into quarter sections of 160 acres each. Within a given township, the 18 even-numbered sections were offered for homestead exemption, two were set aside for school lands, up to two sections for the Hudson Bay Company, and the rest were allocated to the railways or offered for sale.¹⁰

The Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) in particular acquired an enormous amount of land as it was granted 16 of every 36 sections surveyed within 24 miles of the main line, in partial payment for building the railway.¹¹ Clearly, the CPR had a strong interest in changing the prevalent image of the

North West as an interior desert, to something more appealing to settlers and potential farmers.

With the completion of the railway to the West Coast in 1885, the CPR offered Canadian and British artists and writers free passes to cross Canada by train.¹² Edward Roper (1857-1891), a British writer and traveller, was one of those who made the trip across Canada in 1887 and subsequently published *By Track and Trail: A Journey Through Canada* which included his own sketches.¹³

One of the sketches Roper did while staying in the Broadview area, *Breaking Prairie in July, N.W.T. Canada*, (cat. 39), is one of the earliest original drawings of farming in the North West in existence. In the foreground, the farmer ploughs a small field with oxen; in the background stands a small log shack. Roper's sketch of the scene is completely unmannered, his minimal training is apparent, and the tentativeness of the figure somehow suggests the tenuous nature of the farming experience.

Roper also visited the Bell Farm near Indian Head, which was known as "the largest farm on earth". It was a showpiece illustrating the vast scale of farming in the North West and was written about and photographed extensively, with its large stone house, circular stone barn (still standing), animals and huge number of farm labourers. The Marquis of Lorne reported in 1883, "There are twenty-six self-binder reaping-machines on the farm, and it is a sight worth beholding, all these machines marching by, as if in battle array, attacking the standing grain, laying it without a single mishap or failure".¹⁴ The early photographs of the Bell Farm are a classic example of what became a stock prairie farming image.

The failure of the Bell Farm in 1886, a farm which had shown such promise, raised a number of questions which would continue to haunt farmers in the North West for the next 100 years. As Roper noted, although



80. *Canada: Free Farms for the Million* c. 1890-95 Issued by Dominion Line Royal Steamships

39. Edward Roper (1832- c. 1904) *Breaking Prairie in July, N.W.T., Canada* 1887 (Below)



the Bell Farm had been “worked scientifically, economically, and in a most business-like way [yet if it] will not pay, how can the usual way of proceeding ever become profitable?”¹⁵

By the 1890s, the CPR, along with the government, desperately wanted to attract settlers and investors to the North West and, therefore, developed an advertising campaign to promote the area as highly suitable for farming. This coincided with technological advances in the craft of colour lithographic printing, which made it possible to print vast numbers of colour images cheaply.¹⁶

It is within the early advertising image of the North West Territories, in brochures, journals and posters, that the image of the “Garden of Eden” evolved. These images were shaped by an interlocking group of interests that included the railways, land companies, the government and some private individuals. Produced and distributed to promote settlement, they promised a land of abundance, sunshine, prosperity and equal opportunity for all. Much of this advertising implied that an agrarian society already existed, by portraying idyllic mixed farms with animals, orchards, fields and farm buildings, into which the settler only had to insert himself and his family. The pamphlets, brochures and posters soon flooded the United States, the British Isles and Europe. Attracted by these beautiful colour images and vague promises of “free land” and often nothing more, the settlers eventually came.

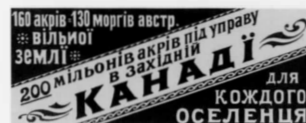
The poster *Canada: Free Farms for the Million* [sic] (cat. 80), which extolled the North West’s climate as “the healthiest in the world,” was produced by Dominion Line Royal Steamships in the 1890s. It’s Victorian design features rather awkward, flowery promotional text and a series of picturesque windows showing generic farming

scenes. Incorporated was a view of the new 680-acre Experimental Farm at Indian Head, where Angus McKay had experimented with techniques of dryland farming, particularly summer fallowing.¹⁷

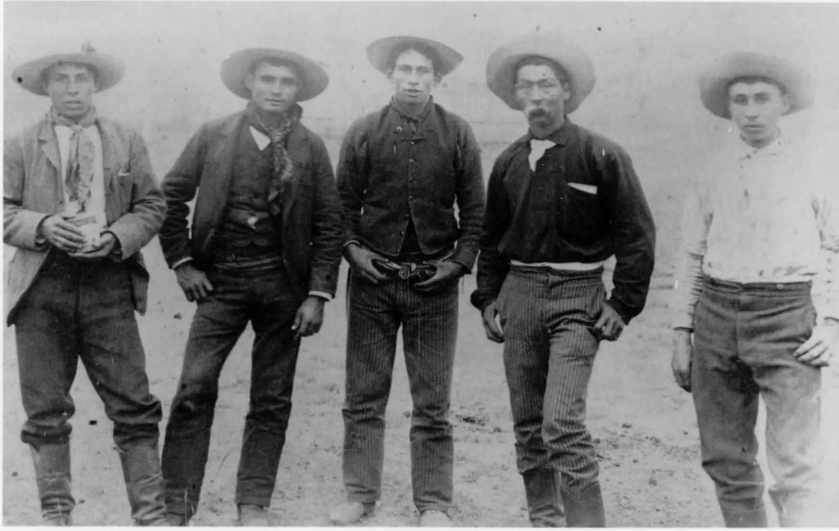
Other promotional campaigns utilized one-colour hand-bills issued in a multitude of languages, proclaiming *200 Million Acres of Cultivable Land in Western Canada* (cat. 81). They were printed in Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Hungarian, Norwegian, Polish, Slovak, Swedish and Ukrainian.

Local fairs and exhibitions were an integral element in the promotion of settlement and the development of an early market economy. In October 1890, Saskatoon celebrated its fifth exhibition.¹⁸ The poster designed for the occasion featured engravings of horses, cows and chickens, plus a series of prizes. In 1895, Regina held its first agricultural exhibition in an attempt to promote settlement and development. Activities included prizes for cattle and grain, displays, and the usual “machinery row” that was one of the dominant features at most fairs and exhibitions.¹⁹

Some of the earliest agricultural settlements were horse, cattle and sheep ranches in the short grass prairie of the southwest, around the Cypress Hills. Unrestrained by the residency regulations of *The Homestead Act* and the grid survey, settlers developed ranching early on. Ranch houses were sited to take advantage of gullies and creeks, while the herds of sheep and cattle were moved over vast areas. This was shown in the early colour postcard *Horse Ranch in Canadian West* (cat. 108, see p. 55). By 1881 leases for up to 100,000 acres could be obtained for one cent an acre for 21 years. By the mid-1880s, 23 cattle companies were operating on three quarters of a million acres in the Assiniboia District, around the Cypress



81. *200 Million acres of Cultivable Land in Western Canada (Ukrainian version) n.d.*
Also issued in multi-language versions: Polish, Norwegian, Hungarian, Swedish, Slovak, Dutch, French, Finnish, German and Czechoslovakian.



197. Anonymous
Group of Métis Cowboys at
Maple Creek, Saskatchewan
c. 1900

Hills. With this huge scale of operation, based on the large Eastern markets for beef, leather, lard and bone, land companies were able to attract venture capital from Montreal, Toronto, and England.

The Canadian Agricultural, Coal and Colonization Company (CACC), one of the largest land companies with British investment capital, had ten farms and ranches along the CPR line. In 1889, the directors of the company reorganized its holdings, selling off much of the company's farm land to concentrate on sheep and cattle ranching. Posters were distributed in Britain offering to place farmers on completely equipped and stocked farms of 160 acres each and to supply them with a £500 loan, if they invested £100.²⁰

The CACC, known locally as the "76 Ranch" continued its large-scale sheep ranching operations in the southwest. "Exports from Swift Current in 1898 totalled 67,840 pounds of wool and 1,434 sheep, making Swift Current the sheep capital of Canada."²¹ The photograph by Trueman and Caple of the *Sheep Belonging to the Canadian Agricultural Coal and Colonization Company, Maple Creek, N.W.T.*, (cat. 196) indicated the huge number of sheep ready for shipment, plus the flocks grazing in the distance. (The piles of

buffalo bones shown in the foreground of the photograph were collected for export as fertilizer to the East. Buffalo bones were one of the prairies first cash crops.)

Over the long run, these large ranches did not fare well. In 1890, on the "76 Ranch" alone, a bad winter killed huge numbers of cattle, and a prairie fire near Gull Lake killed 2,200 sheep. In 1901, an anthrax infestation killed 16,000 sheep, virtually wiping out sheep ranching in the entire southwest. And in the winter of 1906-07, the worst in living memory, the "76 Ranch" lost two-thirds of its cattle.²² In 1909 the "76" land was sold off and the company disbanded, as did most of the large corporate farms and ranches.

In spite of the hard realities of the work, ranching attracted many young men from eastern Canada and Europe, who were drawn by stories of the rustic romantic life of the cowboy. Large ranches required many hands to move the cattle and sheep to water and fresh grass, and to brand and ship the animals. However, like the *Group of Métis Cowboys at Maple Creek, Saskatchewan* (cat. 197) the best ranch hands were generally locals, who were adept at riding and working with animals, familiar with the local terrain and had worked through a prairie winter.

It is difficult to identify the producers of many of the earliest photographs of ranching in the Cypress Hills region. The earliest photographer was George Anderson (1848-1913) who had a studio in Fort Walsh around 1880. He photographed many of the local Indians and is probably best known for his photos of Sitting Bull.²³ Later, Geraldine Moodie (née Fitzgibbon, 1854-1945) had a commercial photography studio in Maple Creek and Medicine Hat from 1896 to 1899, while her husband was stationed at Maple Creek with the RCMP. She later returned to this area with her family and operated a ranch in the Cypress Hills area from 1917 to 1933.²⁴ Moodie photographed



many of the local ranchers, some of whom had originally come to the area with the RCMP and stayed on to ranch. She may have taken the unusual series of panoramas documenting round-up, sheep shearing, branding and shipping in the Old Timer's Museum in Maple Creek. In photographs like *Branding Colts* (cat. 199), the unusual placement of the camera almost "within" the corral at a low angle, viscerally captures the noise, the dirt and the high-strung tension of branding.

After the signing of six major treaties, the Indians of the North West were moved to reserves, where some intermittently received minimal financial assistance to start farming and rudimentary instruction in farming methods. Although there were many obstacles and problems to farming on the reserves, some Indians did manage to break land and produce crops.

However, by the late 1880s, after the appointment of Hayter Reed as Indian Commissioner and complaints from local white farmers about unfair competition by successful Native farmers, that assistance changed. Reed established a policy based on the idea that it was necessary for Indians to pass through a peasant phase of agricultural development.²⁵ Accordingly, they were instructed to harvest with scythes, bind the

grain by hand and thresh it with flails, before they could use machinery. Reed forbade the purchase and use of machinery on reserves, saying that Indian families were to live off "two acres and a cow." Reserves were subdivided into forty-acre plots. Although some of the most retrograde policies had been reversed by the early 1900s, their cumulative effect was to stultify Indian farming on reserves. It never recovered on any significant scale.

One place where the standard Indian Affairs policy was not applied was the File Hills Indian Colony in the Balcarres area, which was founded in 1901 by Indian Agent William M. Graham. Graduates of industrial and residential schools were selected with the goal of turning Indians into "thrifty and industrious" farmers. Members were under constant supervision and were governed by rigid rules and regulations. The use of Indian languages was strictly forbidden.

A number of Native families at File Hills were fairly successful farmers, most notably the Fred Deiter family, which built a large house and barn, two granaries and had a full complement of machinery, as well as employing a white man as a farm labourer.²⁶ A rather unusual photo album of the File Hills Red Cross Society documents many of the activities of the Colony and includes photographs of *Fred Deiter and his Barn and Horses* (cat. 123).



123. Anonymous
Detail of *Fred Deiter and his Barn and Horses* c. 1915

199. Anonymous
Branding colts n.d. (Above)

THE 1990S TO
THE 1920S:
EVOLVING
AN IMAGERY
OF THE
LANDSCAPE

The North West promised settlers “free land”, but what the government actually offered them was *The Homestead Act*. The Act stated that those having the required \$10 could file a claim and after three years – having fulfilled certain conditions about buildings, cultivation and residency – could get legal title to a quarter section and sometimes exemption rights on an adjoining quarter. However, only men over 18 years and widows who were the sole head of a family could file. Single women, widows without children, and farmer’s daughters were ineligible.²⁷

The early posters and pamphlets that spread the message were issued by the federal Department of the Interior (also known as the Department of Immigration and Colonization) and were available, free for the asking, in Eastern Canada, the United States, Britain and Europe. Pamphlets such as *Prosperity follows Settlement in Western Canada* (cat. 74) published by the Department, reproduced letters from satisfied farmers and ranchers describing the quality of the land, and their rapid establishment and success. The cover image of the angel “Prosperity” with its flowing cornucopia of gold and wheat floating over the fields, mythologically re-enforced the theme of the letters.

Similarly, the government magazine *Canada West* has remarkable, picturesque colour lithography covers. The 1920 front cover of *Canada West* (cat. 93), illustrated by Mark Young, shows a farm wife bringing lunch out to the field, ready to picnic under a tree top with a white table cloth, etc. Although this image and others like it had little to do with the reality of eating lunch in the fields in the midst of swathing, the image evokes ownership, security and prosperity symbolizing a Georgic ideal – notions immigration officials assumed would appeal to likely new immigrants.

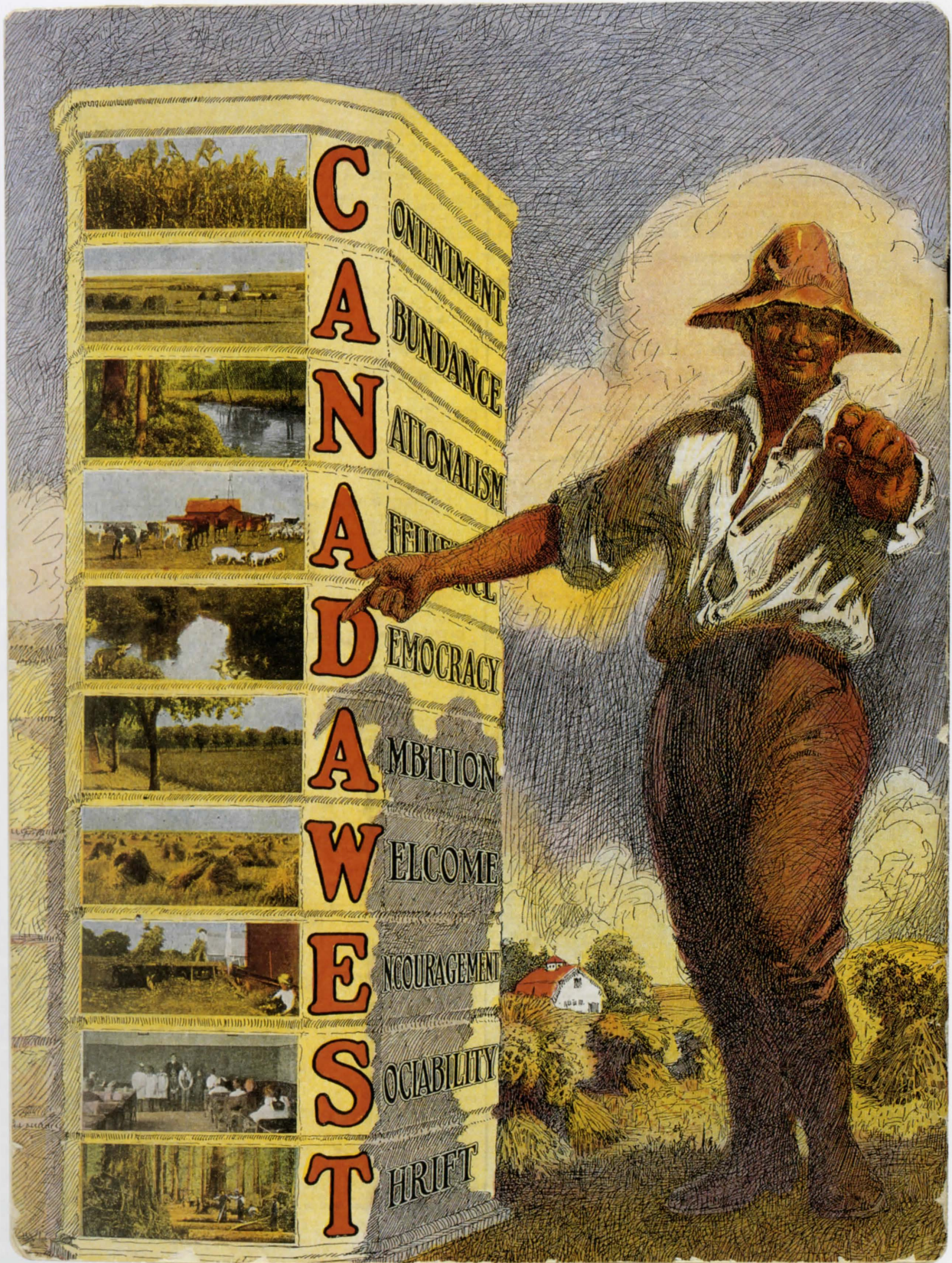
The back cover of the same issue is intriguing and more explicit in its promises. A robust, healthy farmer points to a wall on which the letters of the words CANADA WEST appear. Each letter is then interpreted as a word – Contentment, Abundance, Nationalism, Affluence, Democracy, and so on – and accompanied by small pictures illustrating the word. Each image, familiar and appealing to the eye, pronounced that western Canada was a land of prosperity and opportunity, the “Garden of Eden”.

The early posters, pamphlets and brochures, distributed by the government to encourage settlement, depicted a fertile land and the promise of independence. Independence was seen as the right to own land, a right many had been denied either by regulation, religion or economics in their country of origin. The North West also offered the possibility of escaping the toil and uncertainty of waged industrial labour in the city, or the meager existence of a British farm labourer or a Ruthenian (Ukrainian) peasant. The joy of being one’s own boss was enhanced by the popularly held view that a rural life was healthier and more honest and therefore superior to urban industrial life. The imagery, although picturesque and often totally unauthentic, represented a generally egalitarian attitude and avoided traditional representations of hierarchy or class.

These images were about the land. Land in the West was not only free, but, was also presented as the key to personal freedom as a member of a new, egalitarian and just society. In the process of organizing itself, this new society would leave behind old class structures and antagonisms. To survive in the early homesteading days, settlers co-operated and helped their neighbours as a matter of course, especially in times of crisis.



74. *Prosperity follows Settlement in Western Canada* c. 1905
Front cover of brochure, issued by Hon. Frank Oliver, Ministry of the Interior, post-1905.



93. Mark Young, *Canada West* 1920 front and back cover of magazine, issued by Hon. J.A. Calder, Minister of Immigration and Colonization

This co-operation led to a remarkable tolerance, as the many settlement groups that were attracted to Saskatchewan believed that there was enough space for different religions and political positions to co-exist. The Doukhobors, the Mennonites, the Jews, the Barr Colonists, and a small group of Black settlers, all sought a better life in the North West. And for a brief period, because most settlers were farmers, they *shared* an almost classless rural society.

However, racism was actively present, even within farming policy, as systematic discrimination against Treaty

Indians, the Métis people and Blacks. As well, the Chinese, Blacks, and at various times, Eastern Europeans, bore the brunt of active and virulent anti-immigrant sentiment.

The early commercial colour postcards, like the advertising posters, focused on the bountiful harvest and the flatness of the landscape. Colour lithographic postcards were made from original black and white photographs, but functioned more as promotional images than as documentary photographs. A common and appealing image was of a group of people standing up to their shoulders in the midst of a field of wheat (cat. 107). Other standard postcard images featured scenes of reaper-binders, steam engines, threshing machines and dinner in the fields. All of the images equated the productivity of the land with the personal contentment and fulfillment that comes from a life as a farmer.

In comparison, the black and white photographs on postcards, produced by local commercial photographers, are clearly documentary. They offer a grittier view of life on the farm that contrasts the idealized virtues and picturesque quality of commercial colour postcards. Yet, crude as they often were, these postcards were statements of individual ownership and progress, whether they picture the farmer standing in the middle of a dusty field with oxen and dogs or the farmyard with dugout, cattle and mud (cat. 112, see p. 49).

The commonly held idea of farming and ranching in the North West was of a minimal and raw frontier experience. It emphasized breaking the soil and growing the first crop. Yet the images that exist reflect, seemingly in contradiction, both this image of the frontier experience and the reality of a highly sophisticated





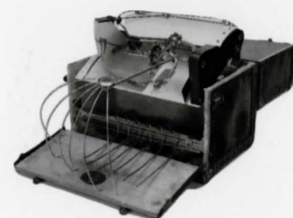
industrial process of food production. The settlement of the North West was integral to a complex international wheat market, which as early as 1900 was intimately connected into a world system of monocultural agricultural production. Early agriculture in Saskatchewan has to be seen within the context of the industrialized world, as farmers produced a single crop for export to the metropolitan centres of the British Isles and Europe. The prairie farm economy was linked to these markets by the railways and steamships crossing the Atlantic. This link was especially important during both world wars because Britain depended on Canadian wheat as the basic food staple.

Wheat, “the food of civilized nations”, symbolized Canada and, by extension, the British Empire abroad, and was displayed at trade fairs and expositions around the world by the Department of Agriculture.²⁸ As the source of much of Canada’s wheat, the prairies were called the “granary of the

continent”. Wheat was featured heavily in displays such as *Canada’s Red Grain Hopper, Franco-British Exhibition, London* (cat. 105). The mammoth sculptural structure – shaped into four inverted cornucopias – stood almost four stories high and was built of straw and wheat. It included samples of different grains, explanatory texts, plus a large coloured portrait of King Edward VII. Wheat, as Doug Owrain observes, “assumed racial, historical and almost mystical overtones as a source of both individual and national strength”.²⁹

The widespread use of black and white photography, more than any other factor, was responsible for documentation of the reality of settling and farming in the North West. Photographs were used commercially to record work and progress, and by settlers as family mementos and personal records of threshing, bumper crops, new farm buildings and family events.³⁰ The inherent tension in many of these images stems from the technical inability of photography to capture the spatial sensation and visual atmosphere of prairie light.

Machinery was a common subject and much photography indicates the growing presence of agricultural machinery in rural society – reaper-binders, threshing machines, steam engines, as well as the ubiquitous automobile. As the machine on the prairies was a symbol of man’s power to impose his will on nature, it was therefore a basic tool in the conquest of the “last frontier”.³¹ Following the European doctrine of utility and civilization, which asserted man’s role on earth was to impose a system to control nature, the machine became integral to the agricultural settlement of Saskatchewan. As early as 1873, an anonymous writer commented, “Nowhere

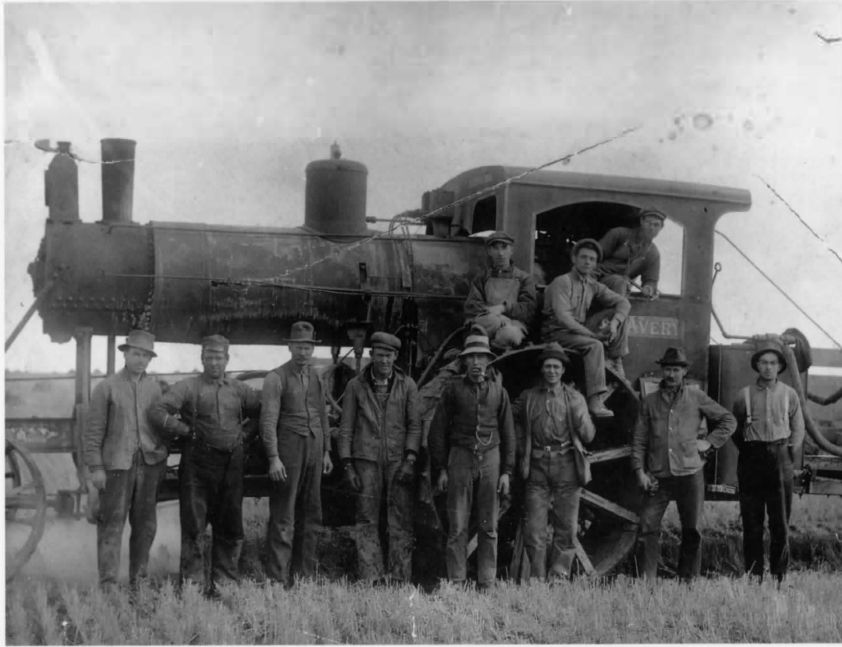


61. Paul Gerlach (died 1924)
Sheaf Carrying Attachment (Patent Model) 1921 (Above)

103. Published by B. P. Skewis,
photographer, Nutana
Thresher as Working at Saskatoon Sask (sic) n.d.
(Opposite centre)

107. Published by Valentine &
Sons, Montreal/Toronto
Canadian Harvesting Scene, Showing Immense Yield of Wheat n.d. (Opposite below)

105. Published by Valentine &
Sons, Montreal/Toronto
Canada’s Red Grain Hopper, Franco-British Exhibition, London 1908 (Opposite above)



180. Anonymous
Everts Outfit October 1915 (Above)

165. W. M. Tegart, Indian Head
Mr. Enos Beach Setting up his
Binder 1902 (Opposite centre)

167. Hillyard Photo, Saskatoon
John Deere Binder n.d.
(Opposite above)

127. Anonymous
John Sonmore of Laverne
Breaking Land with a Gang
Plough May 2, 1917
(Opposite below)

on this continent can steam ploughs, sowing machines, reapers and threshers, be employed with so much profit and ease".³² The rapid development of farm machinery in the 19th century meant that a project as large as transforming 80 million acres of prairie into permanent agricultural land could actually be conceived of and virtually accomplished by 1930.³³ The speed with which the prairies were settled, and the scarcity of farm labourers, intensified the demand for agricultural machines, which were often adapted and re-invented to suit local conditions, as depicted in Paul Gerlach's *Sheaf Carrying Attachment* (cat. 61).

The steam tractor, such as the *Model Case Tractor* (cat. 62) (fig. 2, see pages 4 – 5) exemplified the power and scale of the new farm machinery in an era obsessed with gigantism.³⁴ There are thousands of photographs of steam engines such as *Everts Outfit* (cat. 180) and numerous panoramic photographs of threshing outfits in action taken by professional photographers such as Gibson Studios and William James.³⁵ These photographs also celebrate the importance of

threshing as the culmination of the year's work – "the fruits of harvest". Yet, the steam engine's dominance was short-lived. In 1908, in Saskatchewan alone, there were 3,468 threshing outfits servicing 65,945 farms, but by the 1930s travelling threshing crews were almost a thing of the past.³⁶ Steam power became obsolete as farmers switched to gasoline engines and purchased reaper/thresher combines.

Photographs were often taken of new machines on the farm. Images like *John Sonmore of Laverne Breaking Land With a Gang Plough* (cat. 127) or *Mr. Enos Beach Setting up His Binder* (cat. 165) are common and indicative of the prevalence of farm machinery in the earliest days of settlement. Occasionally, there are particularly curious images, such as the black and white postcard *Thresher as Working at Saskatoon, Sask.* [sic] (cat. 103) – one of the earliest images of a self-propelled combine. The woman driving wears her "good clothes", probably to underline the ease with which one could operate the combine ("Even a woman can do it").

An unusual photograph *Gas Tractors, Howard Farm, St. Luke District, c. 1910* (cat. 185) is striking because it shows the cogs and wheels of the disassembled tractor in such detail. John Howard, a highly skilled amateur photographer working with glass negatives, graphically demonstrates his fascination with machinery, while commenting on the need for farmers to develop advanced mechanical skills to service and repair machinery.

By the First World War, the growth in the number of agricultural implement dealers was phenomenal. These dealers were supplied with catalogues, photographs and calendars by the various manufacturing companies to promote their new machines. The c. 1910 photo-



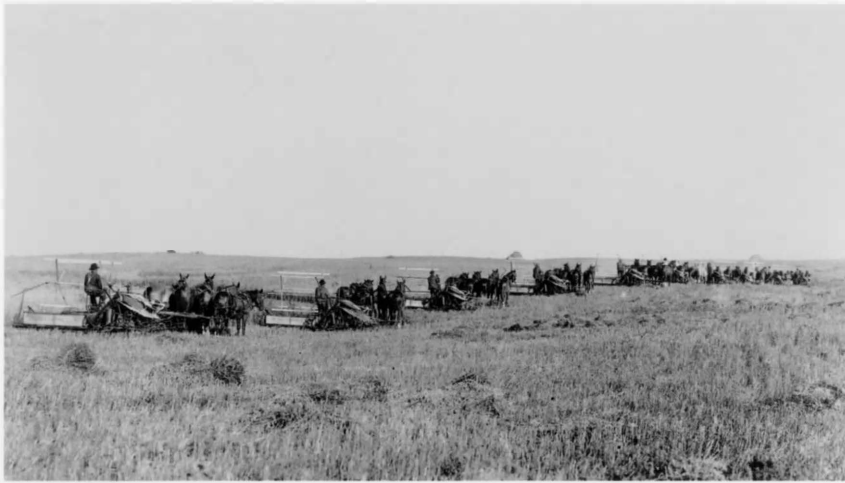
graph *Shellbrook Cockshutt Implement Dealer* (cat. 190) gives a view of the scale of operation of one implement dealer.

Commercial photographs like the Hillyard photograph of a *John Deere Binder* (cat. 167) and *Seven Four-Horse Teams Pulling McCormick Binders* (cat. 166) were standard stock shots, repeated over and over again in promotional material. The image of multiple teams of horse-drawn reaper-binders working at an oblique angle in an endless field of grain was particularly common.

The automobile, although not seen as a farm machine, was one of the most publicly prized machines and often appears in family photographs. The introduction of the car drastically changed the pace of rural life as distances appeared to decrease and the primary means of transport – the horse – ceased to be essential.³⁷ Images, such as the photograph of *C. A. Partridge and Family* (cat. 220) or the unconsciously simple photograph of *Ukrainian Family Outside Their House With Neighbours* (cat. 153) evoke the pride in ownership and up-to-dateness which quickly established the automobile as the new emblem of prosperity in rural communities.

The railroad, particularly the Canadian Pacific Railroad (CPR), was integral to the opening up and settlement of the North West. Its power was based on the amount of land it owned and its monopoly role in grain transportation.





190. Anonymous
*Shellbrook Cockshutt Implement
 Dealer c. 1910*

166. Anonymous
*Seven Four Horse Teams Pulling
 McCormick Binders 1919 (Above)*

Brightly coloured, well-designed posters advertised its travel and express services. A stock image was of a muscle-bound farmer standing in a field. This image first appeared in a patriotic World War I era poster (cat. 88) and later in an art deco treatment on a poster produced during the 1930s (cat. 89). The other stock image was of a train steaming through fields of stoked wheat. Images of the railroad – smoke, speed and steel – were intertwined with symbols of the agricultural prosperity of the West.³⁸

Yet, simultaneously the CPR also came to symbolize the East, the metropolis, and its abuse of the hinterland, the struggling West. “God damn the CPR!” was a popular sentiment that was often emphatically stated. Under the rubric of the CPR was also included Ontario, eastern manufacturers, the banks and politicians in general.³⁹

The Saskatchewan farm was based on the family unit. Its successful operation required a farmer, a farm wife and a number of children. A wife was essential to the farming operation. She was responsible for cooking, cleaning, washing, sewing, preserving, canning, as well as feeding the chickens, milking the cows, working in the vegetable garden, and raising the children. Women often provided the only year round cash income by selling eggs, milk and chickens. However, photographs like *Scandinavian-American Farm Wife, Marchwell* (cat. 135) and *The Howard Family House with Mrs. Howard Working in the Garden* (cat. 134) that document women’s work, especially inside the farm house, are rare.

The 1907 photograph *Bachelor Camp* (cat. 132) gives a rather humorous indication of how essential women were to early homesteading. Cherwinski notes:

For several reasons marriage offered the most desirable solution to homesteader’s labour problems. It presented the potential for growth of the labour force within the family, it created the possibility of diversification into poultry and livestock, it promised an improved standard of living which went with a more pleasant environment, and it solved the problem of isolation.⁴⁰

One of the few photographs of women working in the fields is the well-

known image of *Doukhobor Women Pulling Plough, near Swan River, Saskatchewan* (cat. 160) taken at the time of the Doukhobors' arrival in Saskatchewan in 1899. The photograph and others like it were generally interpreted by the media as a sign of the backwardness of the Doukhobors, who made women do physical work in the fields. As their knowledge and understanding of the Doukhobor religion was limited and somewhat xenophobic, Canadians were not aware that within Doukhobor communities women were generally treated as equals and participated in all work, and in social and political decisions.⁴¹

The shortage of farm labourers was always a major problem, especially for the large corporate farms which needed large numbers of men as in *Farm Workers* (cat. 218) to keep the operation going. In some cases British orphans, such as the Bernardo Children, were "adopted" and brought to Canada to work on farms. It was just as difficult for small farmers to hire men. Those men who were available were often young and lacking experience. Particularly, since the first settlement phase, conditions under which farm help lived were frequently difficult and paternalistic. Farm labourers usually worked long hours and shared meals, evenings and sometimes a room with the family employing them.⁴² The pay was poor and social life was limited, especially in isolated areas.

Many young men worked only long enough to obtain enough money to stake out a homestead of their own, and to learn the basics of dryland farming. Farmers often employed temporary help from the local group settlements, such as the Mennonites or Doukhobor colonies, or local Indians and Métis. Indians were hired for menial work as illustrated in the photograph *Indian Stone Pickers*,



220. Anonymous

C. A. Partridge and Family n.d.

153. Anonymous

Ukrainian family Outside Their House with Neighbours n.d.

(Above)



Davidson, Saskatchewan (cat. 214). They were also hired at harvest time. The photograph *Harvest Workers on the Comegy's Farm, near Wakaw* (cat. 179) shows families from the One Arrow Reserve, near Batoche, working on the yearly harvest. Indian girls and women, especially those who had attended residential schools, frequently worked as domestic help on local farms. However, servants' work was rarely documented.⁴³

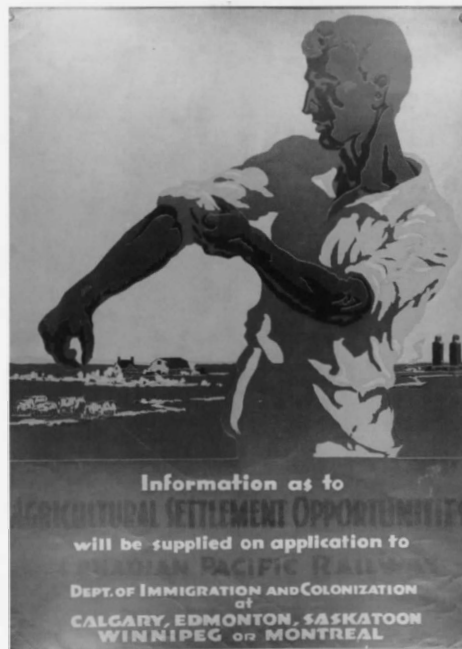
Harvest crews, who travelled from farm to farm with threshing outfits, worked long hours, and there are many photographs to attest to their hard work and often hard living. They saw their time on the threshing crews as an adventure, as an opportunity for camaraderie and as a chance to make good money in a short time. The image *Jim Doyle's Threshing Crew* (cat. 182) reflects the popular belief that threshermen were "a dirty, motley and cosmopolitan bunch of humanity".⁴⁴ However most threshermen were actually



farmers or farmers' sons who were fascinated by technology and steam power and had a mechanical aptitude.

During harvest, farm women were essential as they were responsible for cooking, baking, and washing for large crews of men and children. As the crews commonly worked eighteen-hour days and meals had to be taken to the fields, the women often worked even longer hours than the men. Sometimes large threshing outfits travelled with a cook car and had their own cook, as in *Cook Car, Threshing Outfit near Estlin, Saskatchewan* (cat. 178).

In the early homesteading period, the response of the first generation of formally trained artists to the working landscape, even if mannered in a particularly British Georgic tradition, showed a grasp of reality of farming. Somewhat daunted by the dramatic light and space of the prairies, these early artists became preoccupied with the omnipresence of the horizon line. Like



160. Anonymous
Doukhobour Women Pulling Plough, Near Swan River, Saskatchewan c. 1899
(Opposite above)

134. John Howard (1877 - c. 1960s) *The Howard Family House with Mrs. Howard Working in the garden n.d.*
(Opposite centre)

214. Anonymous
Indian Stone Pickers, Davidson, Saskatchewan 1920
(Opposite below)

135. Anonymous
Scandinavian-American Farm Wife, Marchwell 1906
(Opposite right)

132. Anonymous
Bachelor Camp 1907 (Above left)

182. Anonymous
Jim Doyle's Threshing Crew 1906 (Below left)

88. *Canada c. 1920*
Issued by the Bureau of Canadian Information Department of Colonization and Development and Canadian Pacific Railway (Above right)

89. *Information as to Agricultural Settlement Opportunities c. 1933*
Issued by Canadian Pacific Railway and Department of Immigration and Colonization
(Below right)



218. Anonymous
Farm workers c. 1920

178. Anonymous
Cook car, Threshing Outfit near
Estlin, Saskatchewan 1927 (Right)



179. Anonymous
Harvest Workers on the
Comegy's Farm, near Wakaw
Summer 1923 (Right below)



advertising and photography, the paintings tend to focus on the heroic nature of homesteading. And, it is often the incidental aspects of the paintings, as in the work of Inglis Sheldon-Williams (1870-1940), that particularly evoke the period and prairie space.

Inglis Sheldon-Williams brought to the prairie landscape an understanding of colour that infused his painting with a brilliant prairie light. Although he origi-

nally immigrated to Camington Manor in 1887, he never settled there permanently. He returned to England a number of times and lived there from 1922 until his death. However, a considerable amount of his later work was based on sketches done on the prairies. Influenced by Turner and the British Romantic tradition, Sheldon-Williams' ability to paint horses, their gaze, their strength and their movement, was honed by his experiences as a teacher at the School of Animal Painting in London.⁴⁵

Many of Sheldon-Williams' paintings focus on the heroic homesteader. He wrote about the the farmer, "... hard and perpetual toil, unendurable, unless you love it".⁴⁶ Yet, he was infatuated with the landscape: "I lived ... in the atmosphere of Virgil's *Georgics* ... I rejoiced in the open life, the beauty of the great expanses under the always changing conditions, the storm clouds, the sunset, the importunate stillness of night".⁴⁷ His fascination with prairie light can be seen in the sketch *Two Horses* (cat. 44, see page 7) in which the simplicity of a monochromatic palette combines with spatial openness, to create an enchanting vignette of the lethargy of a summer day.

The 1923 oil *The Fireguard*, also know as *Prairie Fire* (cat. 46), contrasts with most of his earlier sketches. It is tautly melodramatic, in its browns and blacks, as the farmer furiously ploughs a fire break around the house and a woman beats down the flames that jump the break. The dense smoke blocks out the sun. The horses' terror is expressed in their frantic movement and straining at the bit. The painting explicitly portrays the constant fear settlers had of the uncontrollable fires that regularly swept the grasslands. Sheldon-Williams' use of light and colour and his draughtsmanship create powerful, emotionally evocative images of the working landscape, while



46. Inglis Sheldon-Williams (1870-1940) *The Fireguard or Prairie Fire* 1923



23. Sybil Jacobson (1881-1953)
Early Morning c. 1912

recording scenes and events that were rarely found within the narrower realism of photography.

In contrast, Sybil Jacobson's (née Atkinson, 1881-1964) painting *Early Morning* (cat. 23) passively depicts stooks of hand-cut grain in the early morning sunlight. Although Jacobson's view shows the influence of standard Georgic landscape traditions, it is very much a prairie grassland scene with its small stand of poplar trees, muted early sunlight and the distant horizon.

When Augustus Kenderdine (1870-1947) immigrated to Saskatchewan in 1908, he already had an established career as a painter in Blackpool, England, working in the Barbizon style.⁴⁸ His personal commitment to painting directly from nature *en plein air* led him to paint his local environment. However, he was never comfortable with the open space of the prairie, preferring the valleys and the northern forests. He did produce a number of paintings narratively depicting the struggle of the early homesteaders, yet his "eye", like that of many of the early immigrant artists, retreated from the space of the prairies.

Cyrus Cuneo (1878-1916), an American artist, travelled through Western Canada in 1908 for the *Illustrated London News* and as a guest of the CPR. Cuneo's heroic work scene *An Early Scottish Settler on His Self-Binder* (cat. 6) was reproduced as a colour frontispiece in the book *The Scots in Canada*.⁴⁹ The enormous size of the painting and Cuneo's use of hot yellows and oranges captures the brilliance of prairie light, while reinforcing the standard image of multiple horse-drawn teams of reaper-binders working in a vast field. The painting, which hung for many years in the lobby of Regina's Hotel Saskatchewan, was a familiar and popular view of "the early days".

This first generation of artists played an important role in the development of an early image of agriculture. Their commitment to paint directly from nature led them to record their new environment and laid the foundation for the development of a local vision of the working landscape.



6. Cyrus Cuneo (1878-1916) *An Early Scottish Settler on His Self Binder* post 1908

THE 1920S
AND 1930S:
DEVELOPING A
VISION OF
THE WORKING
LANDSCAPE

By the 1920s, most of the land in Saskatchewan had been settled, farming and ranching were well established and bumper crops had been harvested. Because the province was no longer a frontier society, Saskatchewan-based magazines, educational institutions, marketing and political organizations flourished, while artists came together informally to support and learn from each other.

As there was no longer a need to recruit new settlers, the type of picturesque government advertising that had dominated the early phase of settlement diminished. It was replaced by images that were specific and authentic representations of prairie agriculture, often produced with the newly popular panoramic camera – a perfect tool for depicting the linear prairie horizon line. Photographs like William James' *Unidentified Farm* (cat. 186, see page 3) or *Bird's-eye View, A Portion of Wheat-Crop on E. F. R. Zoellner Farm, Buckland, Sask.* (cat. 122, see page 32) were striking documentary records of bumper crops and prosperous farmsteads.

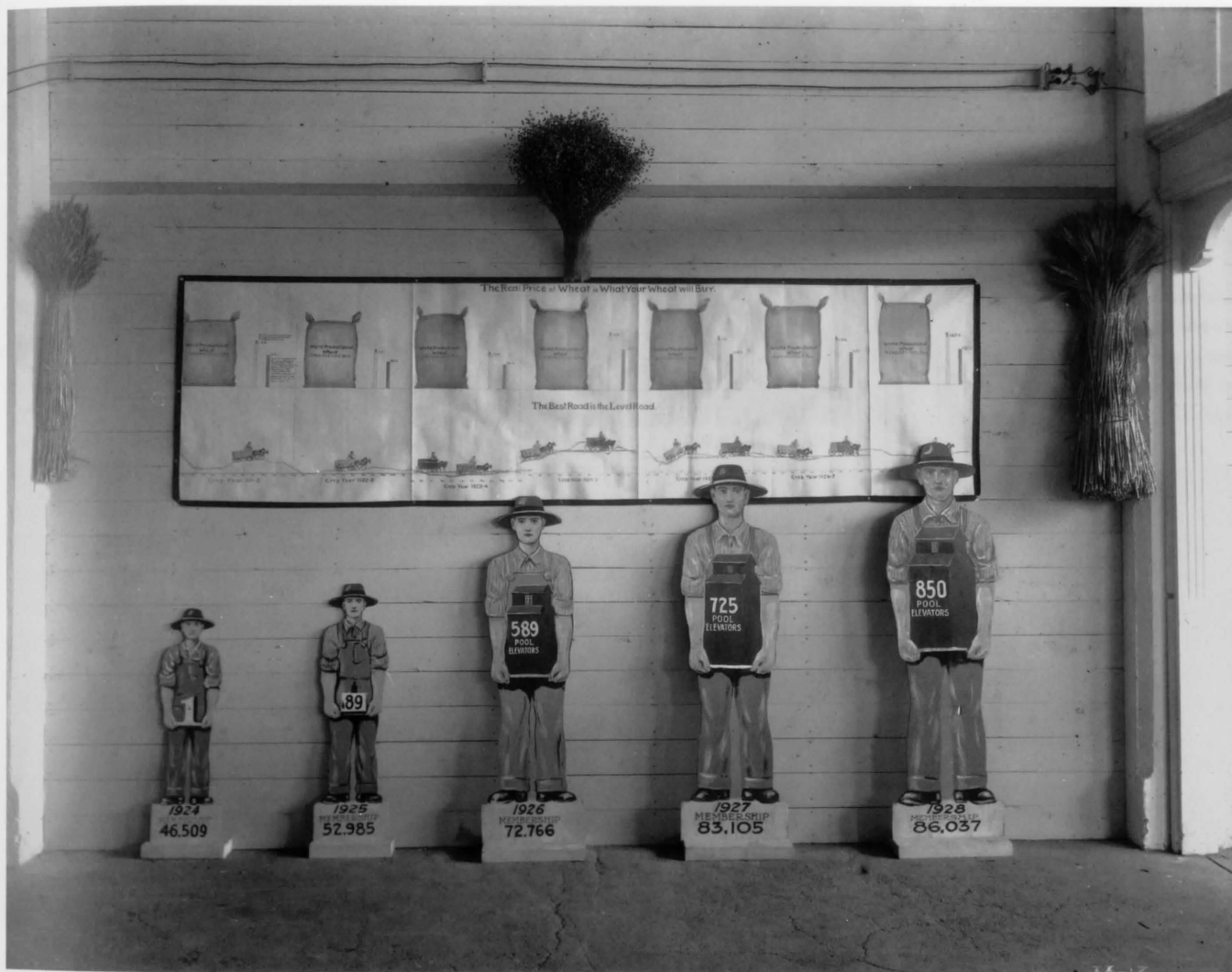
Nevertheless, the hard reality of homesteading had made it abundantly clear that the "Garden of Eden" implicitly promised to settlers was an unobtainable fantasy. This, plus the sharp fluctuations in the price they received for their crops, the problems of storage and transportation of grain, made it clear to farmers that without group action they would never achieve a fair price for their crops. They began to join together to form organizations that would allow them some input into the price of grain and some control over the storage and destination of their produce.

Education was recognized as essential to the well-being of the province, particularly for the promotion and development of scientific agriculture and the improvement of dryland farming techniques. The University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon was founded "... to serve the province in the things that abide, it should provide both the schools of science where mastery

over nature is taught and the schools of humanities where men learn the purpose of life and the art of living".⁵⁰ The College of Agriculture and the large Extension Department provided expertise and information to farmers on animal husbandry, farming techniques and machinery. Courses for women, such as the one depicted in the *First Farm Women's University Week* (cat. 136) by Gibson Studios of Saskatoon, were organized on campus in Saskatoon.

Magazines like the *Grain Growers' Guide* published in Winnipeg and *The Western Woman and Rural Home* (1923 to 1927) published in Govan, whose editorial policies were wide ranging and informative, carried articles on topics including pickling vegetables, tree planting, prohibition, law reforms, seed testing and livestock marketing. Fiction was also featured in both these publications which kept the farm family supplied with news, organizational policies and gossip. Their visual elements, however, were weak, tending towards standard advertisements and poorly reproduced photographs.

Since the European experience of settling Saskatchewan took place in what was seen as a social vacuum, without established political institutions or ingrained class distinctions, farmers were able to create their own organizations. The development of local farm-based political movements in Saskatchewan evolved from the traditions and accumulated experiences that were brought from other places. British settlers brought the knowledge of the English cooperative movements, while from Ontario, Quebec and the mid-west United States came former members of the Patrons of Husbandry, better known as The Grange. These traditions, combined with the collective experience of the various ethnic settlements, provided farmers with models for organizing their own institutions.



146. Anonymous Display of Membership Growth of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool from 1924 to 1928 n.d. Saskatchewan Wheat Pool photograph

145. Anonymous
 Executive of the Women's
 Section, Saskatchewan Grain
 Grower's Association, Moose
 Jaw 1923 (Right)



144. Anonymous
 Director and Officers of the
 Grain Growers' Grain Co. Ltd
 1908-1909 (Right below)



136. Gibson Studios, Saskatoon
 First Farm Women's University
 Week June 12-14, 1928 (Opposite)

122. James Photo, Prince Albert
 Bird's Eye View, a Portion of
 Wheat-Crop on E.F.R. Zoellner
 Farm, Buckland, Sask. 1926

(Bottom)

In Saskatchewan the notion of "co-operation" was formalized into a series of producer and marketing organizations that dominated life in the province until recent years. The first formally organized co-operative movement was the Territorial Grain Growers' Grain Association organized in 1902, under the leadership of W. R. Motherwell. Later, the Grain Growers' Grain Company emerged with a provincially elected executive led by E. A. Partridge. The executive is shown in the photograph *Director and Officers of the Grain Growers'*

Grain Co. Ltd. (cat. 144). In 1913, a women's section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association was organized. A photograph of its executive appears in *Executive of the Women's Section, Saskatchewan Grain Grower's Association, Moose Jaw* (cat. 145). This organization was an important influence in women's fight for the vote. It also conducted educational programs for farm women and did pioneering work in the field of hospitals and health care which laid some of the basis for the introduction of medicare in the 1960s.

Growth of the co-operative movement in Saskatchewan was dramatic, as can be seen in the c. 1927 photographs of the *Co-Operative Doorway, Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Headquarters* (cat. 148) on Albert Street in Regina, which lists the offices of various co-operative organizations in the building. Co-operative organizations included the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, Saskatchewan Pool Elevators (later the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool), the Saskatchewan Co-operative Wholesale Society (later Saskatchewan Federated Co-operatives), the Saskatchewan Co-operative Abbatoirs (later Inter-continental Packers), and a vast number of produce and marketing co-operatives: seed-potato and forage-crop growers, hog, poultry, dairy, honey producers, horse and livestock producers, seed-grain growers, stock and poultry breeders.⁵¹ The most politically active orga-



nization was the United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section), which was formed in 1927 with the amalgamation of the Farmer's Union and the Grain Growers' Association. (It was reorganized as the Saskatchewan Farmers' Union in 1949.)

The public's support and faith in these farmer-based organizations can be seen in the displays and booths erected for local fairs and conferences. Photographs like *Wheat Pool Rest Tent, Weyburn Fair* (cat. 147), record the presence and the service orientation of the co-operative movement. Perhaps the most engaging image is *Display of Membership Growth of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool from 1924 to 1928* (cat. 146), which uses scaled cutouts of farmers holding grain elevators to illustrate the almost 100

per cent increase in Wheat Pool membership. Although didactically simple, the treatment of the figures, the drawings of the horses and wagons, and the clear use of text, "The real price of wheat is what your wheat will buy" and "The best road is the level road", clearly enunciate policy directions and exemplify the vitality of the Pool.

This is also illustrated in the panels *Farmer A Markets Grain Direct* and *Farmer B Markets Grain as Eggs* (cat. 27), produced by Ernest Lindner for the Farm Management Department of the College of Agriculture for use as teaching tools. Espousing the virtues of mixed farming the panels urge farmers to diversify from the single cash crop of wheat. Yet, the parable of Farmer "A" and Farmer "B" inadver-



147. Anonymous
*Wheat Pool Rest Tent, Weyburn
 Fair 1927 Saskatchewan Wheat
 Pool photograph (Right)*



148. Anonymous
*Co-Operative Doorway,
 Saskatchewan Wheat Pool
 Headquarters c. 1927
 Saskatchewan Wheat Pool
 photograph (Below)*

27. Ernest Lindner
 (1897-1988) *Detail of Farmer A
 Markets Grain Direct c.1930
 Farmer B Markets Grain as Eggs
 c. 1930 (Below)*



tently omits the reality that mixed farming requires much more work, on a year round basis, than pure grain farming.

Lindner's simple and effective use of a "V" angle in both panels skews the grid and establishes a feeling of deep space. His technical drawing skills in the treatment of the horses are superb, yet Farmer "B's" house looks more like an Austrian cottage than a Saskatchewan farm yard (which is surprising as Lindner worked as a farm hand in his first years in Saskatchewan).

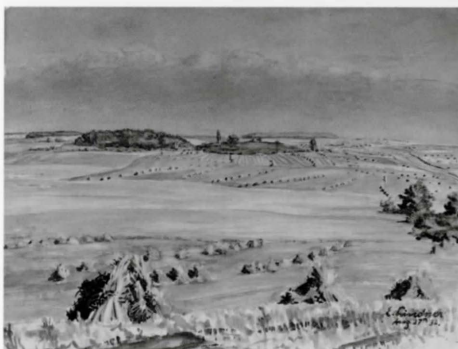
In the 1930s the younger generation of visual artists like Illingworth Kerr, and the newer immigrants like Ernest Lindner, Stanley Brunst, Robert Hurley and Frederick Steiger, started to develop an interest in the local working landscape. Many of them had homesteaded or worked on farms when they first arrived in the West. Ernest Lindner (1897-1988), who

arrived in Saskatchewan in 1926 from Austria, was primarily a self-taught artist, although he had received some drawing training in Vienna.⁵² He started painting and drawing seriously in the late 1920s, and along with Robert Hurley and Stanley Brunst would go sketching along a stretch of the South Saskatchewan River which they called the Golden Mile. Lindner, through these sketching trips and his regular Saturday night get-togethers, helped establish the first informal arts community in Saskatoon, providing a place where artists could start talking about their work.

Although Ernest Lindner would eventually concentrate on images of northern Saskatchewan, he did produce a number of paintings of the rural area around Saskatoon on the Golden Mile. Landscapes such as the watercolour *Untitled (Prairie Field with Stooks)* (fig. 2), dated August 1932 is a classic prairie scene celebrating the bounty of the harvest. Looking down from a high point of land, Lindner uses the rows of stooks to develop depth and distance. Lindner's painting, although highly accomplished, is a fairly stereotypical view of the harvest, similar to images seen over and over again in painting, photography, advertising and film.

Stanley Brunst (1894-1962), who started sketching with Lindner in the early 1930s, rapidly developed a more individual style. His fascination with the common elements of urban daily life and machinery and his notion of spontaneous art eventually led him to evolve his own style of abstraction and to be given the local title of "radical painter".⁵³

Brunst's intriguing watercolour sketch *Untitled (Mowing with Horse Teams)* (cat. 3), from a sketchbook of the 1930s appears to be from a local sketching trip outside Saskatoon. Brunst's unusual perspective establishes a sense of standing "within" the swath, with the smell and sensation of the hay almost caressing one's body. Although the receding figure and horses have an awkward simplicity, their movement away from the viewer draws the eye



3. Stanley Brunst (1894-1962) *Untitled (Mowing with Horse Teams)* 1930s

Figure 2. Ernest Lindner (1897-1988) *Untitled (Prairie Field with Stooks)* 1932 (Left)

into the image. The evocative immediacy of watercolours like Brunst's rarely occurs in photography or advertising.

Also a self-taught landscape painter, Robert Hurley (1894-1980) was one of the first prairie painters to play with the horizon line directly in his images. His watercolours, such as *Untitled* (cat. 22) rely on the grid – generally the road grid – as a tool of perspective. This, enhanced by his version of modernism, gave his work a simplicity and directness that was highly dramatic and popular in its time. In later years, Hurley often used these techniques mechanically in his images of rows of grain elevators, stooks of wheat, converging railway tracks. These paintings – little more than "prairie postcards" – showed none of Hurley's earlier vitality.



227. Anonymous
The Power of Agriculture in World Affairs n.d.



173. Anonymous
Soil Drifting 1930s
 Saskatchewan Wheat Pool
 photograph (Right)

One of the first artists born in Saskatchewan, Illingworth Kerr (1905-1989) had studied with members of the Group of Seven. Their influence can be seen in his use of colour and movement in his paintings. In the brilliantly coloured *Straw Stacks, March Thaw* (cat. 25), Kerr's extraordinary sunset is reflected in the pools of melting snow. This evocative image of spring signifies the importance of weather and the changing of the season, deriving its visual impact from the pinks, oranges, purples and yellows of the sunset reflected in the clouds.

Fairs and expositions continued to be important throughout the 1920s and 1930s for farmers and their families – providing them with information about agricultural

economics, educational programs, produce and livestock competitions, displays from the agricultural implement industry, and a lot of fun. The largest and grandest exposition ever held was the World Grain Exposition in Regina in 1933 (originally scheduled for 1932, but postponed because of the drought). The exposition, with its parade and lectures, was a major event, attracting farmers and agricultural experts from around the world. An intriguing image is provided by the photograph of a float in the parade during the exposition, *The Power of Agriculture in World Affairs* (cat. 227). Its portrayal of work horses in harness actually refers to a traditional agricultural image of an earlier historical period. Work horses had gradually disappeared in the 1920s as they were replaced by tractors and trucks. However, they were brought back into use in the 1930s when farmers couldn't afford gasoline.

Exhibition halls were expressly built for the exposition to display produce, new products, farm machinery, plus a series of large murals which illustrated Saskatchewan's geography and livelihood and included images of mining, trapping, market gardening, dairy farming, ranching and open-pit mining. The directors had commissioned German emigré artist, Fritz Brandtner (1896-1969), to design the murals.⁵⁴ Brandtner, after touring the province, painted the murals in ten weeks. R. M. Watt, the designer and contractor for the exposition, was pleased with Brandtner's murals describing them as "colourful posterized presentation of Saskatchewan scenery ... most pleasing and reminds one of some British Scenic [sic] posters ... they have aroused much favorable comment".⁵⁵

One of the sections of the mural *Untitled (Horses in the Cypress Hills)* (cat. 2) (fig. 3) depicts thoroughbred and work horses with their attendant cowboys. Quickly created, using theatrical-set painting techniques, the horses and landscape are drawn in silhouette with a strong blue outline. The simplicity of the design and the elongated

mural format demonstrate Brandtner's technical competency and experience. This format is well suited to the mural's primarily decorative function at the exposition.

Internationally, fairs, expositions, advertising and films continued to play a major role in the federal government's promotion of wheat for export. However, by the late 1930s, the image of Canada shown abroad shifted away from the established symbolism of wheat as "nature", to the more up-to-date symbol of wheat as an industrial export commodity, represented by the terminal grain elevator. The Canadian Pavilion at the Paris Exposition in 1937, designed as a terminal grain elevator, was prominently located at the base of the Eiffel Tower.⁵⁶

In contrast, the advertising campaign "Canadian Wheat: From Your Kinsmen on the Canadian Prairies", mounted by the newly appointed Canadian Wheat Board (1936), relied on stock images of rows of stooks in a field.⁵⁷ The Campaign ads were placed in magazines and trade journals and were aimed at British bakers, with different ads being used in Ireland, Scotland, and England. The flyers and the ads were accompanied by a 36 minute long, 16mm film, *Beyond the Sunset*, which extravagantly claimed that "Canadian wheat easily justifies its world-wide preference on account of the extra nourishment it gives to bread."

Not until the Depression was there any shift away from the almost hackneyed representations of abundance and prosperity that dominated prairie agricultural imagery. For it was the experience of the Depression – of economic crisis and the drought of the Dirty Thirties – that would define and mark Saskatchewan agriculture irrevocably.⁵⁸

Surprisingly, there are few photographs that actually document the windstorms and drought of the 1930s. Occasional photographs like *Soil Drifting* (cat. 173) depict

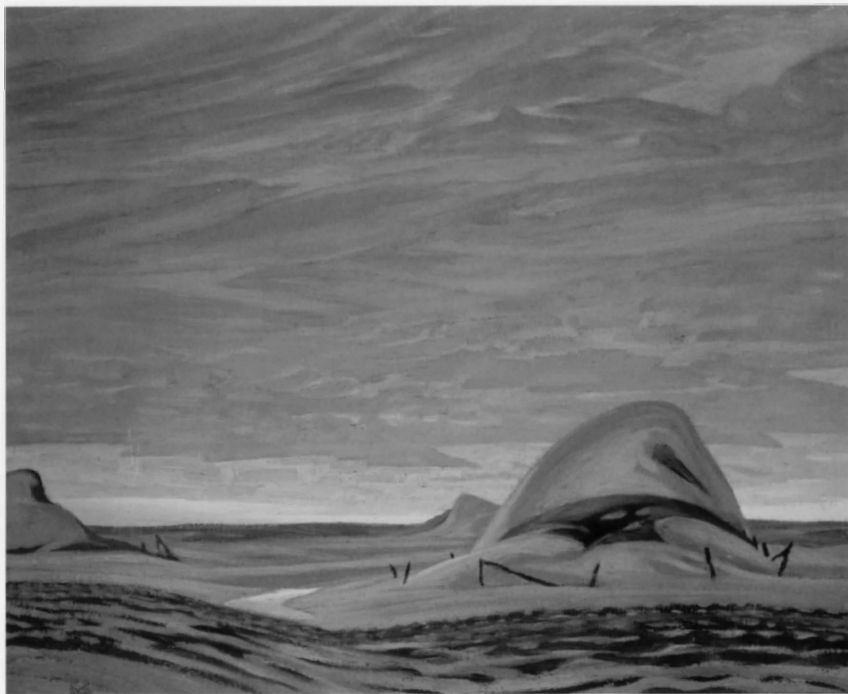


172. McDermid Studios, Edmonton *The Fehr Family in Edmonton, Returning to Saskatoon From the Peace River Area June 28, 1934*



48. Frederic Steiger (1899-1990) *Drought 1937 (Left)*

the horror with which people lived for years, particularly in the southern areas of Saskatchewan. Thousands of people left farms in Saskatchewan for the West coast, or went north – as in the heart-wrenching photograph of *The Fehr Family in Edmonton, Returning to Saskatoon from the Peace River Area* (cat. 172). There are a few images of Bennett buggies – automobiles drawn by horses because the owners could

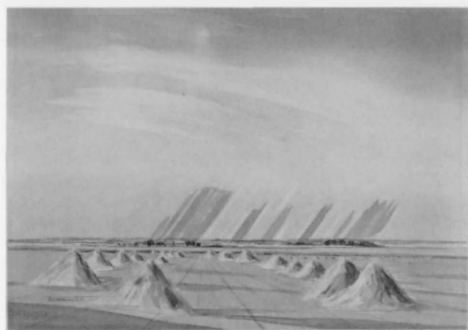


25. Illingworth Kerr (1905-1989)
Straw Stacks, March Thaw 1935

175. Anonymous
*Depression Era Cart, Radville,
Saskatchewan 1937*
Saskatchewan Wheat Pool
photograph (Below)



22. Robert Hurley (1894-1980)
Untitled n.d. (Right)



not afford gas, oil or licence. This uniquely prairie mode of transportation was sarcastically named in honour of Prime Minister Bennett. Typical of these images is *Depression Era Cart, Radville, Saskatchewan* (cat. 175).

By the late 1930s the situation in the southern prairies was desperate. The tragedy and humiliation of the Dirty Thirties was captured by Saskatoon painter, Frederick Steiger (1899-1990), in his 1937 portrait *Drought* (cat. 48). A highly dramatic portrait of a farmer sunburnt, weather-beaten and helpless, the figure looks out pensively, a dismayed and hurt expression in his eyes. Described as “virile realism” by the critics, Steiger’s painting relied heavily on the emotive techniques of popular magazine illustration. However, it struck a strong chord in the press when it was exhibited at the Ontario Society of Artists in Toronto in 1937, as it was one of the few paintings of the period that documented and acknowledged the drought and its effect on people. Articles by Nellie McClung in the *Vancouver Province* and A. H. Walls in *Saturday Night* discussed the painting and drew attention to the plight of the prairie farmers after seven years of drought.⁵⁹

Although less sentimental than Steiger’s melodramatic portrait, the portrait bust *A Prairie Mother* (cat. 56) by Madeleine Barnett (née Jordan, 1887-1961) received virtually no attention in the press when it was awarded the first prize for sculpture at the 1937 Royal Canadian Academy in Toronto. Barnett’s plaster of an anonymous woman, who looks out with a firm, emotionally intense gaze, symbolizes the strength and tenacity of the women who settled the prairies and endured the Depression.

The Dirty Thirties fostered the development of various provincial and national organizations, the most significant of which was the 1933 amalgamation of various labour groups and the United Farmers to form the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation – the CCF.⁶⁰



171. Butcher and Runnalls, Regina
*Delegates to the First National
Conference of Toiling Farmers of
Canada, Regina July 4-6, 1934*

56. Madeleine Lorimer Jordan
Barnett (1887-1961) *A Prairie
Mother* c. 1935 (Centre)

73. Anonymous *Co-operation
Will Make Things Better* n.d.
Issued by the Saskatchewan
Wheat Pool (Bottom)

Another organization that gained considerable public support during the Depression was the Communist Party. Although of limited significance in overall farm politics, the Communist-dominated Farmers' Unity League organized a delegation, portrayed in the photograph *Delegates to the First National Conference of Toiling Farmers of Canada, Regina July 4-6* (cat. 171) in 1934. It is interesting to contrast this photograph to the many apparently similar, but in fact quite different, group photographs – the people in the photograph differ in clothing, gaze and attitude from the more established Grain Growers' or Wheat Pool members.

What united people and the various disparate organizations throughout the Depression was the genuine belief in and practice of co-operation. This enabled the people of Saskatchewan to survive the Dirty Thirties, and in the ensuing years, to organize the CCF and the possibility of the "Garden of Social Democracy" – agrarian socialism. Co-operativeness was visually signified in the handsome *Co-operation Will Make Things Better* (cat. 73) sticker, a red oval with a wreath of golden maple leaves.

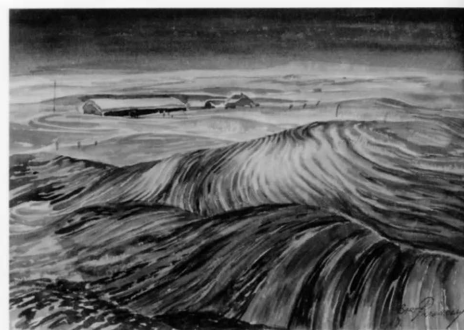


THE
1940S
AND
1950S:
VISUALIZING
THE
MODERN
GRID

By the 1950s, Saskatchewan and the prairies in general had recovered from the drought of the 1930s. However, the mass emigration in the Dirty Thirties and the subsequent war meant that where there had been 136,472 farms in 1931, by 1951 there were only 112,018 farms. New scientific agricultural procedures, particularly those associated with tillage, were introduced. Those factors, along with the extension of electricity to rural areas and the introduction of the self-propelled combine, changed the nature of farming in Saskatchewan. Rhythmic rows of stooks in a field were replaced by rows of loose straw (although stooks remained the preferred icon of the harvest). Work horses disappeared with the complete mechanization of farming, although they continued to be essential in ranching.

After the war, the newly elected CCF government established a number of new agricultural settlements. Some were large, co-operative farms for war veterans, such as the Matador Farm near Kyle and the Sturgis Co-op. In an attempt to deal with the problem of landless Métis people, the government chose Green Lake in northern Saskatchewan as a site for the establishment of a permanent community. The Métis were often called “the road allowance people”, as some lived on narrow strips of land along the grid road allowances. Two community training farms were established but were unsuccessful owing to extreme cold in winter and mosquito infestations in summer.⁶¹

Locally born artists like Bart Pragnell (1907-1966) and Ruth Pawson (born 1908), acquired a knowledge of contemporary Canadian painting through their art studies, which they applied to their native environment.



Bart Pragnell's intriguing view *Untitled (Winter Landscape)* (cat. 38) shows rolling hills in a winter landscape, where the winds have blown the snow off, leaving the field uncovered. The hills are modulated forms, as the almost naked lines of the furrows establish a rhythmic movement, depth and starkness. The grey snow clouds hovering over a farm in the distance evoke the feelings of desolation and loneliness typical of the farm in winter.

The painting *Late Harvest* by Regina artist Ruth Pawson was selected in 1952 by the National Gallery to be reproduced (cat. 35) in the silkscreen series, “Sixty Canadian Landscapes”.⁶² In a similar painting, *Fulfillment* (cat. 34), Pawson's fascination with the rhythm of the undulating hills, the wobbly road and the ubiquitous telephone pole is apparent. Like the early work of Ernest Lindner and many others, Pawson's painting is a standard prairie representation. Pawson, like Pragnell, uses furrows and machine tracks to define the formal structure of

38. Bart Pragnell (1907-1966)
Untitled (Winter Landscape) n.d.
(Centre above)

34. Ruth Pawson (born 1908)
Fulfillment 1952 (Centre below)



7. Wesley C. Dennis (1899-1981) *Pioneer* 1976

13. Charles Frederick Highfield
(1877–1946) *Building Bee* n.d.



her painting, implicitly noting the manner in which machinery marks and draws on the actual landscape, making it productive.

Stylistic conventions associated with farm photography since the early 1900s had changed by the 1950s, reflecting the rapid mechanization of farming. However, stock images were still present. Photographs of waving wheat ready to be harvested, self-propelled combines moving across a field at an angle or people pitching bales into a truck were commonplace. As agribusiness emerged in the local farm economy, its owners became the major sponsors of professional photography and advertising. Postcards did not differ radically from earlier versions, although they were glossier (as a result of improvements in colour printing) and less likely to feature specific locations. Popular postcard images tended to be dominated by pictures of grain elevators along a railway track, similar to those in Robert Hurley's watercolours. The elevator became an icon of prairie agriculture.

The view of the prairie farm – house, barn, sheds, the car and the family – which had dominated earlier panoramic photographs, was replaced, for amateurs, by the snapshot and, for professionals, the commercial aerial farm photograph. Aerial photographers often flew over the entire township and took photographs on speculation, later taking sample photographs

around to the farms to sell prints. These photographs proved very popular. As representations of prairie reality they are particularly interesting because visually they depict and highlight the grid sectional survey. While conceptually they testify to ownership of the land, they flatten all local landmarks and lack a human scale.

There are some unusual images from the period, such as Yousuf Karsh's (b. 1908) 1953 photographs of *Herman Sattler, Saskatchewan Wheat Farmer* (cat. 76). Karsh was on assignment for Maclean's and his interest in portraiture is apparent in his idiosyncratic view of a farmer shovelling grain while standing in a grain truck. However, most professional photographs of the period followed a standard format, subject matter and style of representation, as the separation between art photography and commercial photography became more pronounced.

In the 1950s there emerged a number of local self-taught artists, generally farmers who took up painting and carving after retiring. As seniors retired from their active work life they first got involved in art-making as a form of recreation. These artists, as David Thauberger has commented, were working from their "garden of memory" and were "painting their memoirs rather than writing them".⁶³

Similar to European folk or peasant painters, these self-taught artists were closely bound to intimate, stable communities. Their imagery was derived from their own history and experience of work, prairie beauty, and specific events. The paintings, sculptures and assemblages of these artists are embossed with their individual versions of contemporary popular cultural idioms, although they are generally profoundly nostalgic for a former time, when life appeared simpler.



31. W.C. McCargar (1906-1980)
Sol n.d.

54. Jan Wyers (1888-1973)
These Good Old Threshing Days
1955 (Left)

One of the earliest self-taught artists, Charles Highfield (1877-1946), produced a large number of paintings in the 1930s and 1940s, including an entire series of paintings of early homesteading. (However he does not appear to have exhibited his paintings at the time and they have only come to light in the last few years.) In his work *Building Bee* (cat. 13), painted while living in Regina between 1932 and 1937, he combines a number of scenes of erecting a log house, with the neighbours and children helping out.⁶⁴ Highfield's rather eccentric paintings read as if collaged from nineteenth century story book illustrations, and coloured with greeting card colours. Yet, the story-line in most of Highfield's paintings is autobiographical, which gives them a rather charming, gritty sentimentality. Highfield was obviously heavily influenced by popular illustration, greeting cards and magazine imagery of the period.

The phenomenal attraction of steam threshing outfits continued long past their demise as an active machine in prairie

farming in the 1920s, as is demonstrated by their frequent occurrence in the paintings and carvings of folk artists. Steam tractors symbolized progress, had impressive power and size, and a striking presence in the landscape. They had achieved prominence in popular memory and consequently appear in the work of artists like W. C. McCargar (1906-1980), Jan Wyers (1888-1973), Frank Cicansky (1900-1982), Cornilus Van Ieperen (b. 1908) and Harvey McInnes (b. 1904). Interestingly, the self-propelled combine, which was fairly common by the late 1940s, appears to have had little appeal for visual artists and rarely occurs in painting. Ernest Luthi's *Saskatchewan Development: Wheat Combining near Fort Qu'Appelle* (cat. 29, see page 65) is an unusual example and was commissioned as part of a larger government series to document Saskatchewan's development in the 1950s.

Jan Wyers was one of the first Saskatchewan folk artists to be recognized and his painting *These Good Old Threshing*

Days (cat. 54) became well known. Wyers, with his idiosyncratic viewpoint, sets his scenes in flattened space, using a bird's-eye perspective. His paintings, drawn from his own experience of farming, depict ceaseless noise and movement, a visual cacophony of horses, dogs, children, threshers and swathers. These almost cascade out of the painting, as he captures the excitement and importance of threshing in the old days, implicitly contrasting it with the mechanical tidiness of a self-propelled combine going around a field.

Wyer's chaotic farm life is an interesting contrast to Henry Vicario's painting *Untitled (Team of 24 Oxen)* (cat. 52), with its geometric centering on the oxen team and its tightly controlled one-point perspective taken from an original photograph. Vicario's painting comments on the importance of oxen, essential work animals in the early phase of settlement, showing how a good set of animals was worth a lot of money and something to be proud of.

W. C. McCargar was a self-taught artist who worked on the railroad for years and, like many others, started painting after retirement. Most of his paintings are of the railroad in the landscape. In his painting *So!* (cat. 31), McCargar's satirical sense is evident in his identification with the bull as the artificial insemination (A.I.) technician arrives in the cow pasture. The painting comments on the trend towards scientific cattle breeding techniques and away from "natural" methods.

Wesley C. Dennis (1899-1981) felt that his mission as an artist was to record

pioneer days on the farm. "When I was a kid ... I used to get bawled out for standing and looking out over the country, when I was supposed to be working and wasn't ... A lot of the effects and stuff that was in the pictures, I picked up when I was actually out in the field".⁶⁵ Dennis' highly controlled images are like gems of memory, carefully and meticulously designed, somewhat gauzy with the nostalgia of times past. In *Fall Smoke Haze* (cat. 8) the atmospheric quality of the air, the pattern of the stooks of wheat and the layout of the grid in the soft smoke haze evoke the warmth and stillness of autumn.⁶⁶

A similar effect is produced by the painting entitled *Pioneer* (cat. 7), portraying the big-boned woman in a pink dress and cowboy hat standing with her cow. Dennis commented on the painting, "My mother always used to have one special cow, and that's why I had to paint it."⁶⁷ The humour and warmth are caught in the gaze of the woman and the cow, their forthrightness and mutual solidarity evident. Dennis's paintings were often about the experience of living on the prairie, as part of the working landscape, rather than about primeval nature.

Like most self-taught artists, Cornelius Van Ieperen (b. 1899) and Hugh Alexander (b. 1913) based their painting on their own history. Alexander has commented, "I found the things I was closest to, whether past or present, I could paint the best".⁶⁸ Yet, their ambivalent feelings about the past are sometimes evident. As Van Ieperen said: "I don't know if they were the good old days; some of it was good and some it was bad".⁶⁹ Van Ieperen's paintings reflect his complicated memories; for example, his remarkable work, *Exhaustion* (cat. 50), which portrays the physical and emotional exhaustion of a settler leading his horse across the open prairie through drifting, blowing snow. Extraordinary sundogs appear ominously in the sky above.

52. Henry Vicario
Untitled (Team of 24 Oxen) n.d.





Another unusual presentation of prairie history is Hugh Alexander's painting *Dirty Thirties* (cat. 1), which captures the experience of the 1930s when the dust blew for literally years. The winds and swirling grey clouds of a dust storm move through town, while, above, the sky is blue and clear. His painting suggests the sensation of being enveloped by the weather, both physically and psychologically – a theme characteristic of much prairie folk art. He, like many folk artists, directly grapples with the weather. His fascination was shared by everyone on the prairies, since the significance of weather to farming can never be overestimated. A farmer's ability to understand weather patterns and predict the weather was an important skill in the day-to-day operation of a farm.

Allen Sapp (b. 1928) works in a more traditional realist style, painting from memories of his own life and the community he grew up in on the Red Pheasant Reserve. His painting *Picking Roots* (cat. 41) is a scene of women engaged in the back-breaking work of picking roots, probably seneca roots.⁷⁰ The roots were used by Native people for medicinal purposes and were sold commercially for use in patent medicines. Although there is a similarity to Jean-François Millet's widely reproduced painting *The Gleaners* (1857) in the stooped figure of the older women, Sapp's painting is different in form and lacks the patterned placement of Millet's figures. However, the two paintings share a similar theme in their representation of rural poverty and the centrality of women's work to rural survival. Sapp, unlike many prairie painters, favours

41. Allen Sapp (born 1928)
Picking Roots 1973



winter scenes and heavy, low, grey clouds, eschewing the traditional abstract beauty of the blue sky and the horizon.

When Gertrude Stein, the American poet and writer, commented in 1934 that to

understand modern painting you had to fly over the plains of the Midwest, she announced one of the aspects of visual form that dominated the development of abstract painting in the twentieth-century.⁷¹ This understanding was something artists on the prairies evolved in their own work, through the abstractness of their own local environment and from the larger international influence of modernism. In the 1940s and 1950s, artists like Wynona Mulcaster (b. 1915), McGregor Hone (b. 1920), James Geddes (b. 1932) and William Pehudoff (b. 1919) explored the formal visual quality of the local landscape. Less focused on the reality of the working landscape, they sought out new subject matter, from grasshoppers, to pigs, to industrial food processing.

Wynona Mulcaster's watercolour of pigs, *Bacon for Britain* (cat. 33), humourously alludes to the importance of Canadian farming to Britain during World War II. Her attention to the formal elements of the scene – the pigs' roundness, the shift from foreground to background, and the subtlety of the colours – foreshadows Mulcaster's interest in space and form, which would continue in her later, more abstract, landscape painting.

McGregor Hone was of the same generation as Mulcaster and both were members of the Prospectors Group which exhibited together in 1949.⁷² In the watercolour painting *The Reaper* (cat. 14), Hone uses the grasshopper and the threat of a infestation as an almost surreal symbol of death and destruction. The framing of the image and the neon colours simultaneously remind the viewer of science fiction melodrama and of the sinister reality of the grasshoppers' devastation of the crops. The related black and white linocut, *The Grasshopper* (cat. 15), is slightly less dramatic but it, too, encapsulates the fear of farmers and their vulnerability to the insect.⁷³

William Pehudoff in the early 1950s painted a series of murals for the cafeteria

of the Inter-Continental Meat Packing plant. The plant, which had formerly been the Saskatchewan Co-Operative Abattoirs, was owned by Fred Mendel, who had emigrated to Saskatoon in the late 1930s, and was an international art collector and local art patron.⁷⁴

The four murals, done on masonite sheets, indicate Perehudoff's interest in Cubism and his studies with the Mexican muralists, as well as the contemporary fascination with industrial subject matter. He uses the ceiling tracks and the assembly line as a formal unifying device to integrate the various work activities. His volumes, colours and repetition of elements give an almost rhythmic quality, even mechanical rhythm, to the painting *Untitled (meat packing plant)* (cat. 36). Yet Perehudoff's paintings, although abstracted and somewhat stylized, are realistic in their depictions of the activities that take place in a meat-packing plant – the slaughtering, packaging and shipping of the animals raised on the farms and ranches of Saskatchewan.

The painting *Wheat Field* (cat. 11) by James Geddes (b. 1932) is a fascinating example of the visual confluence of modernism and the working landscape. The field is seen from a bird's-eye view tilted into an almost flat surface, a subtle layering of golds, oranges and browns against the blue sky. Unfortunately it is not known what direction Geddes' work took subsequently, as he does not appear to have exhibited since the mid 1950s.

Mulcaster's, Perehudoff's and Geddes' work of this period, and their growing interest in an abstract treatment, foreshadows what was to be the major influence of New York based Abstract Expressionism on the Emma Lake Workshops in the late 1950s and 1960s. For it was at Emma Lake where the expressiveness of abstraction and the visual experience of the flatness of the prairie environment connected in the work of many local artists.⁷⁵ Working with abstract pat-



14. McGregor Hone (born 1920)
The Reaper 1951

50. Cornelius Van Ieperen
(born 1899) *Exhaustion* 1969
(Opposite above)

1. Hugh Alexander (born 1913)
Dirty Thirties 1975 (Opposite below)

terns, forms and planes, they moved beyond the limits of three-dimensional representations of nature and the landscape towards "pure" painting as a two-dimensional coloured plane. There was a direct move away from the representation of the working landscape, to formal concerns with the landscape as an object of beauty.

In some cases, such as in the work of Perehudoff and the Regina Five (Ron Bloore, Ted Godwin, Kenneth Lochhead, Arthur McKay and Douglas Morton) this would lead to a pure non-objective colour field painting. Many of the locally born and trained artists like Wynona Mulcaster, Reta Cowley, Mina Forsyth, Dorothy Knowles and Otto Rogers, were influenced by



36. William Perehudoff
Untitled [murals depicting a
 meat factory] 1953

33. Wynona Mulcaster
 (born 1915)
Bacon for Britain c. 1944 (Right)

abstraction. Their investigations with abstraction informed and propelled their development of a landscape idiom particular to the prairies. In contrast, Ernest Lindner, somewhat differently, developed a highly detailed realist style, focusing on regeneration and growth in nature.

It was not until the 1970s, that the working landscape would reappear in the work of the next generation of artists: Victor Cicansky, Joe Fafard, David Thauberger and Russ Yuristy. These artists were influenced by funk and pop art. (One could also postulate that the abstract metal sculpture of Doug Bentham references the ubiquitous farm implements, rusting and disintegrating

on the prairie.) New attitudes and visual approaches to a locally-based imagery of farming, ranching and rural life were emerging. By the 1980s, this work established a critical base and style that was profoundly prairie in sentiment and rooted in local culture, politics and the environment.⁷⁶

Work, Weather and the Grid:

Agriculture in Saskatchewan illustrates a vital and complex tradition of depicting the “working landscape” of Saskatchewan. The exhibition, a construction of images, paintings, photographs, and advertisements, was densely hung in four bands around the room, establishing horizontal and vertical interactions. These interactions raised a series of questions about agriculture in general, how people make images of their local environment, and what their labour represents. The format of the installation was modelled on local agricultural fairs with their displays of flowers, preserves, baking, produce, and of course, the arts and crafts – the place where many Saskatchewan artists got their first public recognition.

Similarly, *Work, Weather and the Grid: Agriculture in Saskatchewan* can be read as an inventory of the diverse historical traditions that informed images of the “working landscape”: the high art of the Georgic, the folk art of European popular culture and early twentieth cen-



tury magazine illustration. Yet these images, no matter what their source, more than anything, represent individual inventiveness and active creativity.

The installation was conceptualized to cut through the prevailing nostalgic mythology of the past, and to challenge the simplistic linear version of all history as progress. As a multi-layered panorama of agriculture and work, the exhibition laid out complex, and at times, contradictory views, of local collective history and popular memory.

112. Anonymous
Untitled (Man in field with two whippets) n.d.

1. See: Demelza Spargo and the Royal Agricultural Society of England, *This Land is our Land: Aspects of English Art* (London, England: Mall Galleries, 1989).
2. The term "folk artist" has been questioned as an appropriate description artists who have generally not had a formal technical training. The term "self-taught" has been substituted. However, after much thought I feel that "folk artist" is the more suited term, as it gives an historical context, beyond the individual artists investigations, although "self-taught" does allow a more specific reading which is informative. The terms "naive" or "primitive" obscure the complexity of visual history and popular memory and tend toward the pejorative.
3. Charles Mair, a letter in the *Globe* 28, May 1869, cited in Doug Owram, *Promise of Eden* (Toronto: University Press, 1980), p. 73.
4. See: Irene Spry, "Early Visitors to the Canadian Prairies" *Images of the Plains: The Role of Human Nature in Settlement* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975).
5. See: H. Y. Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857 and of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition of 1858* (London: 1860, reprinted Edmonton: 1971), John Palliser *The Papers of the Palliser Expedition 1857-1860*, editor Irene Spry (Toronto: 1968) and John Macoun *Manitoba and the Great North West* (Guelph: 1882).
6. *Annual Report of the Department of Agriculture*, 1872, p. 8 cited in Owram, pp. 111-112.
7. John Warkentin, "The Desert Goes North", *Images of the Plains: The Role of Human Nature in Settlement* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), p. 152.
8. See: Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* (Montreal: McGill/Queen's University Press, 1990), pp. 22, 36. Most of the information in this essay on the history of Native people and agriculture in the North West is derived from Carter's recent ground-breaking study, which revises the standard historical interpretation of Native people and prairie farming.
9. See: *Department of the Interior/Scrip for 240 acres* issued to Baptiste Waniyande, June 6, 1898 and *Department of the Interior/Scrip for \$140.00* issued to Jean Baptiste Forcier, June 23, 1894. Glenbow Archives, Calgary (#NA - 2839 - 4/NA 2839 - 5).
10. J. H. Richards and K. I. Fung, *Atlas of Saskatchewan* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 1969), p. 192.
11. R. B. McKercher, *Understanding Western Canada's Land Survey System* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan Extension Service, 1978), p. 13.
12. See: Dennis Reid, *Our Own Country Canada* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1979).
13. See: Edward Roper, *By Track and Trail: A Journey through Canada* (London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1891).
14. Marquis of Lorne, *Canada 100 Years Ago: The Beauty of Old Canada Illustrated* (London: The Religious Tract Society, 1885, reprinted London: Bracken Books, 1985), p. 183.
15. Roper, *By Track and Trail*, p. 113.
16. Jim Burant, "The Visual World in the Victorian Age", *Archavaria* 19, Winter 1984-85, pp. 101-121.
17. John A. Archer, *Saskatchewan: A History* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), pp. 102, 121.
18. The poster *Saskatoon in the Temperance Colony*, c. 1890, is in the collection of the Saskatchewan Archives, Regina.
19. Archer, *Saskatchewan: A History*, p. 117.
20. A copy of the poster of the Canadian Agricultural, Coal and Colonization Company, Balgonie is in the Glenbow Archives, Calgary (# M3214 CC 1.773).
21. Don McGowan, "Grassland Settlers: The Swift Current Region During the Era of the Ranching Frontier", *Canadian Plains Studies* 4, 1975, p. 721.
22. Wallace Stegner, "Carrion Spring", in *Wolf Willow: A History, A Story, and a Memory of the Lost Plains Frontier* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980).

23. Brock N. Silversides, "The Face Puller", *The Beaver*, vol. 71:5, Oct-Nov 1991, p. 23.
24. See: Brock N. Silversides, "Moodie: Through a Woman's Eye", *Epic*, March 1991, pp. 27-31.
25. Sarah Carter, "Two Acres and a Cow: 'Peasant' Farming for the Indians of the Northwest, 1889-1897", *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. LXX no. 1, March 1989, pp. 27-52.
26. Carter, *Lost Harvests*, p. 242.
27. In 1913 two petitions were signed by the citizens of Strasbourg, one for women and one for men, and were submitted to the Governor General. The petitions argued that "all women of British birth who have resided in Canada for one year" should be given homestead rights. The fight for women's homestead rights became part of the larger suffragette struggle. Saskatchewan women won the vote in 1916. See: Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina #5, *Homesteads for Women*.
28. Doug Oram, *Promise of Eden* (Toronto: University Press, 1980), p. 112.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
30. See: Keith Bell, "Representing the Prairies: Private and Commercial Photography in Western Canada, 1880-1980", in *Thirteen Essays on Photography* (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, 1990), pp. 13-32.
31. Contrary to the idea put forward in *From Regionalism to Abstraction: Masha Teitelbaum and Saskatchewan Art in the 1940s* (Saskatoon: Mendel Art Gallery, 1991) the "juxtaposition of an idyllic vision of nature and culture with the contemporary world of the machine is the key to the dominant position this imagery occupies in Saskatchewan art", p. 13. The image of the machine was not foreign to the visual imagery of Saskatchewan as it was an integral element within the local landscape since the first white settlement.
32. *A Plea for the Development of our Resources* (Winnipeg 1873) p. 4, cited in Oram, *Promise of Eden*, p. 111.
33. Richard and Fung, *Atlas of Saskatchewan*, p. 17.
34. Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1934), p. 244.
35. The huge number of panoramic photographs of threshing crews taken by professional photographers from 1900 to 1925, would seem to indicate that there was a *specific* reason professional photographers were hired to take photographs, perhaps as a requirement for government licensing or labour regulations.
36. Ernest B. Ingles, "The Custom Threshermen in Western Canada: 1890-1925", *Building Beyond the Homestead: Rural History on the Prairies* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1985), pp. 137, 152.
37. Archer, *Saskatchewan: A History*, p. 202.
38. See: Rosemary Donegan, *Industrial Images/Images Industrielles* (Hamilton: Art Gallery of Hamilton, 1988).
39. Oram, *Promise of Eden*, p. 183.
40. W. J. C. Cherwinski, "In Search of Jake Trumper: The Farm Hand and the Prairie Farm Family", *Building Beyond the Homestead: Rural History on the Prairies* (Calgary: University Press, 1985), p. 117.
41. See: George Woodcock and Ivan Avakumovic, *The Doukhobors* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977). Before their arrival in Canada, Lukeria Kalmikova was the respected leader of the Doukhobors in Russia from 1864 to 1886, when she was succeeded by Peter V. Verigin, who brought the community to Saskatchewan in 1899. When the Doukhobors first arrived in Saskatchewan, many of the men worked on the railway for cash to buy supplies and livestock, while the women remained and worked on the collective farms.
42. See: Cherwinski, "In Search of Jake Trumper", pp. 111-134.
43. Carter, *Lost Harvests*, p. 240.
44. Ingles, "The Custom Threshermen", pp. 135-164.
45. Patricia Ainslie, *Inglis Sheldon-Williams* (Calgary: Glenbow Museum, 1982), p. 21.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 17, Footnote 8.
47. As quoted in Ronald Rees *Land of Earth and Sky: Landscape Painting of Western Canada* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1984), p. 30.

48. See: Maeve Spain, *Augustus Kenderdine* (Calgary: Glenbow Museum, 1986).
49. The watercolour sketch for the painting was in the CPR Archives, Montreal, until sometime in the mid 1970s. It appears to have been lost. John Murray Gibbon's book, *The Scots in Canada* (Toronto: Musson Book Co., 1911), includes illustrations by Cyrus Cuneo and C. M. Sheldon.
50. As quoted in Archer, *Saskatchewan: A History*, p. 146.
51. See: Gary C. Carlson, *Farm Voices: A Brief History and Reference Guide of Prairie Farm Organizations and Their Leaders 1870-1980*, a pamphlet produced by the Saskatchewan Federation of Agriculture, Regina, February 1981.
52. Heath, *Uprooted: the Life and Art of Ernest Lindner*, p. 59.
53. Terrence Heath, *Stanley E. Brunst: Radical Artist* (Saskatoon: Mendel Art Gallery, 1982), p. 5.
54. Ernest Lindner and Augustus Kenderdine had also competed for the mural contract, but were unsuccessful. Augustus Kenderdine apparently undertook some paintings for the exposition, one of which, a 21 x 3-foot mural of the Qu'Appelle Valley, is presently in the Saskatchewan Archives, Regina. However, it is not clear where they were installed at the exposition. See: Saskatchewan Archives Board, letter dated Oct. 2, 1981, Ian Wilson to Frances K. Smith, Agnes Etherington Art Centre and Terrence Heath, *Uprooted: The Life and Art of Ernest Lindner*, (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1983).
55. Letter June 23, 1933, from R. M. Watt, Designer of the World Grain Exposition, to T. Eaton Co. Ltd., Winnipeg, recommending Mr. Brandtner for work, Saskatchewan Archives, Regina.
56. Donegan, *Industrial Images/Images Industrielles*, p. 80. Emile Brunet, a Montreal architect and sculptor, adapted the government's original modernist design for the pavilion to a terminal grain elevator structure.
57. Created by the Canadian Wheat Board, the 1937 advertising campaign *From your Kinsmen on the Canadian Prairie* included *Beyond the Sunset*, a 16mm, 36-minute film. See: the Canadian Wheat Board Library, Winnipeg #H D 9049.W3/#11D 9049.W3 S44.
58. See: Barry Broadfoot, *Ten Lost Years, 1929-1939* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1973) and James H. Gray, *The Winter Years: The Depression on the Prairies* (Toronto: MacMillan of Canada, 1966).
59. A. H. Walls, "Drought Victim", *Saturday Night*, vol. 52, October 2, 1937, p. 3.
60. Archer, *Saskatchewan: A History*, p. 224.
61. Julia D. Harrison, *Métis: People between Two Worlds* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre/Glenbow-Alberta Institute), p. 110.
62. See: Gary Essar, *Tisdale '51* (Regina: Dunlop Art Gallery, 1980).
63. David Thauberger *Grassroots Saskatchewan* (Regina: Norman MacKenzie Art Gallery 1976), unpaginated. Many folk artists were encouraged and supported by local artists and curators, such as Ken Lochhead, Lea Collins, David Thauberger, and Joe Fafard, who fostered growth and encouraged new work by many of the self-taught artists of Saskatchewan.
64. Highfield's paintings, which have come to us through his daughters, have documentation attached to them which indicates quite clearly that, one daughter "did a little fixing to the little girl's face while Dad slept and mother and I got our heads together on how to help Dad."
65. From the CBC television program *From the Heart: Canadian Folk Artists*, produced and directed by Donnalu Wigmore, Spectrum Films, 1979.
66. Wesley Dennis's *Fall Smoke Haze* (1976) in the Saskatchewan Arts Board Collection (#70.21) is a classic example of his technical ability and control.
67. Quoted from the television program *From the Heart: Canadian Folk Artists*.
68. As quoted in *Grassroots Saskatchewan* (Regina: Norman MacKenzie Art Gallery, 1976).
69. From the television program *From the Heart: Canadian Folk Artists*.
70. Seneca snake root (*Polygala seneca* L.), is an erect plant with greenish white flowers, tipped

with purple, whose thick roots are used for medicine. Native people, Doukhobours and many early settlers dug, washed, and dried the roots and sold them as a cash crop.

71. James R. Mellow *Charmed Circle: Gertrude Stein and Company* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), p. 387.
72. The Prospectors' first self-juried exhibition was held at the Saskatoon Art Centre in February 1949, and included Antonia Eastman, McGregor Hone, Ernest Lindner, Wynona Mulcaster, Bart Pragnell, Les Saunders, George Swinton, Bill Perehudoff and Reta Summers Cowley. The group exhibited in Western Canada and saw "their purpose being mutual stimulation, encouragement, and experimentation in creative work".
73. An interesting representation of the grasshopper appears in the 1919 poster *Deep Fall Plough to Destroy Grasshoppers* (Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina Posters II.5) issued by the Saskatchewan Department of Agriculture. It was accompanied by a 16mm instructional film entitled *Saskatchewan's War on Grasshoppers* with instructions on how to mix molasses, lemons, bran, arsenic and water to make poison bait for spreading on the fields. (The film was included in the exhibition.)
74. As a local art patron, Mendel had a policy of hiring young artists to work in the meat packing plant. Perehudoff was one of those artists. While laid-off, he was paid union wages to paint the murals. In the 1960s Fred Mendel donated money to the City of Saskatoon to assist in building the gallery which was subsequently named the Mendel Art Gallery.
75. See: John O'Brian *The Flat Side of the Landscape: The Emma Lake Artists' Workshop* (Saskatoon: Mendel Art Gallery, 1989).
76. Unfortunately a fuller discussion of these artists of the 1970s and 1980s is beyond the scope of this project. For more information see: *The Farm Show: A Documentary* (Saskatoon: AKAGallery, 1987).

Dimensions are in centimetres. Height precedes width precedes depth.

1. **Hugh Alexander (born 1913)**
Dirty Thirties 1975
acrylic on canvas board
55.8 x 71.0
Collection of Donnalu Wigmore, Toronto
2. **Fritz Brandtner (1896-1969)**
Untitled (Horses in the Cypress Hills) 1933
distemper paint on canvas
112.5 x 1205.0
Regina Exhibition Association, Regina
(shown at Dunlop Art Gallery only)
3. **Stanley Brunst (1894-1962)**
Untitled (Mowing with Horse Teams) 1930s
pencil, watercolour on paper in a sketchbook
37.4 x 27.1 x .8
Mendel Art Gallery #87.13.1.9, Gift of Dr.
and Mrs. C. G. Morrison 1987, Saskatoon
4. **Frank Cicansky (1900-1982)**
Threshing 1980
mixed media on masonite
48.0 x 63.5
Collection of Neil Richards, Saskatoon
5. **Reta Cowley (born 1910)**
Farmstead with Cattle 1965
oil on masonite
58.3 x 72.0
Saskatchewan Arts Board #67.3, Regina
6. **Cyrus Cuneo (1878-1916)**
An Early Scottish Settler on his Self Binder
post-1908
oil on canvas
267.0 x 237.0
Hotel Saskatchewan, Regina
7. **Wesley C. Dennis (1899-1981)**
Pioneer 1976
oil on cotton over panel
50.8 x 91.4
Saskatchewan Arts Board #76.19
8. **Wesley C. Dennis (1899-1981)**
Fall Smoke Haze 1976
oil on canvas board
50.8 x 91.4
Saskatchewan Arts Board #70. 21
9. **Jerry Didur (born 1951)**
Custom Combining 1985
acrylic on canvas
71.3 x 91.6
Saskatchewan Arts Board # 85-86.12
10. **Rose Duch (born 1916)**
Farm Activities 1987
oil on canvas
52.0 x 67.0
Private Collection, Regina
11. **James W. Geddes (born 1932)**
Wheat Field c. 1955
oil on canvas
76.1 x 76.1
Saskatchewan Arts Board #55.6
12. **Ann Harbuz (born 1908)**
Old Time Kitchen 1981
acrylic and graphite on canvas
46.5 x 64.0
Collection of D. Parker and D. Anderson,
Regina
13. **Charles Frederick Highfield (1877-1946)**
Building Bee n.d.
oil on canvas
63.25 x 93.5
Saskatchewan Western Development
Museum, Saskatoon #81-5-230
14. **McGregor Hone (born 1920)**
The Reaper 1951
watercolour on paper
55.8 x 46.1
Courtesy of the Artist, Lumsden
15. **McGregor Hone (born 1920)**
The Grasshopper 1953
linocut on paper
39.0 x 54.0
Mendel Art Gallery # 67.1.44, Gift of Ernest
F. Lindner, 1967
16. **McGregor Hone (born 1920)**
Milking 1957
linocut on paper
62.0 x 52.0
Saskatchewan Arts Board #57.3
17. **McGregor Hone (born 1920)**
Chicken Pinner 1948
watercolour on paper
76.5 x 53.5
Mendel Art Gallery
(shown at Mendel Art Gallery only)
18. **McGregor Hone (born 1920)**
Picking Chokecherries 1948
watercolour on paper
75.6 x 54.0
Mendel Art Gallery
(shown at Mendel Art Gallery only)
19. **G.A. Howell (birthdate unknown)**
Seedtime 1988
oil on masonite
61.25 x 81.25
Estevan National Exhibition Centre, Estevan
20. **Isadore Hrytzak (born 1907)**
Topping Off 1975
oil on canvas over masonite
50.8 x 60.8
Saskatchewan Arts Board #75.24
21. **Robert Hurley (1894-1980)**
Study of Stooks 1947
watercolour on paper
11.4 x 21.5
Mendel Art Gallery #87.14.2
22. **Robert Hurley (1894-1980)**
Untitled n.d.
watercolour on paper
43.0 x 51.0
Estevan National Exhibition Centre



108. Anonymous *Horse Ranch in Canadian West* n.d.

23. **Sybil Jacobson (1881-1953)**
Early Morning c. 1912
oil on canvas
53.25 x 81.25
Saskatoon Board of Education Collection,
Nutana Collegiate, Saskatoon
24. **Augustus Kenderdine (1870-1947)**
Homewards 1923
oil on card
40.0 x 48.0
Mackenzie Art Gallery #53-69, Gift of
Norman Mackenzie, Regina
25. **Illingworth Kerr (1905-1989)**
Straw Stacks, March Thaw 1935
oil on canvas
75.0 x 90.5
Collection of Glenbow Museum
Calgary, Alberta
26. **Laura Lamont (1880-1970)**
Cows in the Pasture n.d.
oil on cardboard
25.5 x 35.5
Saskatchewan Arts Board #70.26
27. **Ernest Lindner (1897-1988)**
Farmer A Markets Grain Direct c. 1930
Farmer B Markets Grain as Eggs c. 1930
pen on canvas
Two panels: 83.5 x 232.0
University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon
#74-114 A & B
28. **Ernest Lindner (1897-1988)**
Steam Roller of Progress c. 1927
charcoal on paper
48.3 x 63.4
Mendel Art Gallery, Gift of the estate of Mrs.
John McNaughton, 1968
29. **Ernest Luthi (1906-1983)**
*Saskatchewan Development: Wheat
Combining near Fort Qu'Appelle* n.d.
watercolour and graphite on illustration board
45.7 x 60.9
Saskatchewan Arts Board #55.8D
30. **W.C. McCargar (1906-1980)**
Old Threshers n.d.
tempera, pastel, enamel and ink on paper
28.8 x 43.0
Saskatchewan Arts Board #75.16
31. **W.C. McCargar (1906-1980)**
So! n.d.
oil, pastel and glitter on masonite
30.0 x 40.6
Mackenzie Art Gallery #85-9, Gift of Dr.
Maija Bismanis
32. **Harvey McInnes (born 1904)**
The Home Place 1979
pastel and pencil on paper
31.5 x 51.0
Regina Public Library, Regina
33. **Wynona Mulcaster (born 1915)**
Bacon for Britain c. 1944
watercolour on paper
33.3 x 48.7
Courtesy of the Artist, Saskatoon
34. **Ruth Pawson (born 1908)**
Fulfillment 1952
oil on canvas board
50.0 x 60.7
Saskatchewan Arts Board 52.4
35. **Ruth Pawson (born 1908)**
Late Harvest 1952
silkscreen on cardboard
50.5 x 68.75
Regina Public Library
36. **William Pehudoff (born 1919)**
Untitled (meat packing plant) 1953
tempera on beaverboard (number 2 of 4)
121.9 x 365.8 (4 murals)
Collection of Johanna Mitchell
(shown at Mendel Art Gallery only)
37. **Bart Pragnell (1907-1966)**
River Bottom Farm 1946
watercolour on paper
31.1 x 47.2
Moose Jaw Art Museum and National
Exhibition Centre #9.78.16.1, Moose Jaw
38. **Bart Pragnell (1907-1966)**
Untitled (Winter Landscape) n.d.
watercolour on paper
40.5 x 50.5
Moose Jaw Art Museum and National
Exhibition Centre #9.86.20.1
39. **Edward Roper (1832-c. 1904)**
*Breaking Prairie in July, N.W.T.,
Canada* 1887
watercolour and pencil on paper
31.6 x 51.7
National Archives of Canada C-13884,
Ottawa
40. **Arnold Russell (1900-1976)**
Prairie Harvest n.d.
oil on cotton over masonite
30.8 x 63.4
Saskatchewan Arts Board #76.10
41. **Allen Sapp (born 1928)**
Picking Roots 1973
acrylic on canvas
81.5 x 112.0
Allen Sapp Gallery – The Gonor Collection,
North Battleford
42. **Allen Sapp (born 1928)**
He Is Going Home 1971
acrylic on canvas
79.0 x 109.5
Allen Sapp Gallery – The Gonor Collection
43. **Inglis Sheldon-Williams (1870-1940)**
Man Ploughing with Two Horses n.d.
oil on canvas
26.6 x 30.9
Collection of Glenbow Museum #65.58.154
Calgary, Alberta

44. **Inglis Sheldon-Williams (1870-1940)**
Two Horses n.d.
oil on canvas
26.8 x 31.9
Collection of Glenbow Museum, #65.58.153
Calgary, Alberta
45. **Inglis Sheldon-Williams (1870-1940)**
Sundogs and Sleighbells 1928
oil on canvas
63.2 x 88.0
Regina Public Library
46. **Inglis Sheldon-Williams (1870-1940)**
The Fireguard or Prairie Fire 1923
oil on canvas
66.0 x 88.9
Mackenzie Art Gallery #24-1, Gift of Norman Mackenzie
47. **Inglis Sheldon-Williams (1870-1940)**
The Haystack n.d.
oil on canvas
25.3 x 20.0
Regina Public Library
48. **Frederic Steiger (1899-1990)**
Drought 1937
oil on canvas
96.5 x 78.5
Collection of James R. Bates, Lethbridge
49. **David Thauberger (born 1948)**
Icon 36/50 1981
screenprint and flocking on paper
53.5 x 86.4
Saskatchewan Arts Board 81-82.32
50. **Cornilus Van Ieperen (born 1899)**
Exhaustion 1969
oil on canvas board
30.5 x 40.25
Collection of Donnalu Wigmore, Toronto
51. **Cornilus Van Ieperen (born 1899)**
Siesta n.d.
oil on canvas board
20.3 x 25.4
Saskatchewan Arts Board #76.14
52. **Henry Vicario (birthdate unknown)**
Untitled (Team of 24 Oxen) n.d.
oil on wood
49.6 x 124.5
Saskatchewan Western Development Museum, Saskatoon #73-NB-866
53. **Jan Wyers (1888-1973)**
Untitled (Harvesting Scene) 1961
oil on masonite
81.2 x 122.0
Collection of Dr. and Mrs. Fergus Eaglesham, Weyburn
54. **Jan Wyers (1888-1973)**
These Good Old Threshing Days 1955
oil on fabric
71.1 x 99.1
Mackenzie Art Gallery #59-7

55. **Russell Yuristy (born 1936)**
Haying at Gida's (Pheasant Creek) 1985
charcoal and oil pastel on canvas
137.0 x 167.0
Saskatchewan Arts Board #85-86.10

THREE DIMENSIONAL WORK

56. **Madeleine Lorimer Jordan Barnett (1887-1961)**
A Prairie Mother c. 1935 plaster
58.1 x 47.0 x 28.9
Mendel Art Gallery 70.17a,b.
57. **H. M. Chappell (birthdate unknown)**
Model Massey-Harris Tractor 1948
wood, sewing machine parts, ash trays, jar rings, etc.
20.5 x 29.0 x 20.0
Saskatchewan Western Development Museum, Saskatoon 73-S-147-08
58. **Victor Cicansky (born 1935)**
Potato Truck Garden n.d.
ceramic on wood
85.0 diameter
City of Regina Art Collection, Regina
59. **Joe Fafard (born 1942)**
Doug 1987
bronze
52.9 x 31.4 x 17.9
Regina Public Library
60. **Joe Fafard (born 1942)**
Eleanor n.d.
bronze
50.0 x 138.0 x 51.0
Susan Whitney Gallery, Regina
61. **Paul Gerlach (died 1924)**
Sheaf Carrying Attachment 1921
Patent Model: wood, tin, nicked metal, fabric, burlap
41.0 x 24.0 x 39.0
Saskatchewan Western Development Museum, Saskatoon 73-S-2680
62. **Cliff Humes (birthdate unknown)**
Model Case Tractor c. 1975
mixed media
52.0 x 46.0 x 103.0
Saskatchewan Western Development Museum, Saskatoon 75-S-4.4
63. **Fred Moulding (born 1894)**
Cowboy on Horse, Chasing Cow n.d.
painted wood, metal, yarn
17.5 x 26.5 x 7.5
Mackenzie Art Gallery 85-24, Gift of Mr. John Norris
64. **Fred Moulding (born 1894)**
Farmer about to Mount Horse with Dogs Watching n.d.
painted wood, metal, fabric, string
16.0 x 19.0 x 16.75
Mackenzie Art Gallery 85-30, Gift of Mr. John Norris

65. **Fred Moulding (born 1894)**
Wagon Grain Tank n.d.
wood, cardboard, paint, metal
73.7 x 17.5 x 22.5
Regina Public Library
66. **Fred Moulding (born 1894)**
Hand-Feed Thresher 1978
painted wood, metal, cloth and cardboard
19.2 x 61.0 x 18.3
Saskatchewan Arts Board #S79.1B
- P R O M O T I O N A L M A T E R I A L*
67. *Life Member, Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association*
Issued to John Evans of Nutana, 1917
certificate
55.0 x 42.5
John Evans Collection, Special Collections
University of Saskatchewan Libraries,
Saskatoon
68. *Canadian Wheat Board Participation Receipt*
Issued to Moses Jzack, Bender,
Saskatchewan, 1920
copy of printed scrip
14.0 x 26.0
Canadian Wheat Board Library, Winnipeg
69. *Department of the Interior/Scrip for 240 Acres*
Issued to Baptiste Waniyande, June 6, 1898
Department of the Interior/Scrip for \$240.00
Issued to Jean Baptiste Forcier, June 23,
1894
copy of printed scrip
Glenbow Archives NA-2839-4/NA 2839-5
Calgary, Alberta
70. *Interim Homestead Receipt*
Issued to Douglas M. Woodhams of Fillmore,
Saskatchewan, by the Department of
Dominion Lands, Aug. 7, 1906
printed certificate
19.1 x 18.7
Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina
71. *Homesteads for Women* n.d.
printed and signed petition
19.1 x 18.7
Saskatchewan Archives Board
72. *Canadian Wheat* 1937
From Your Kinsmen on the Canadian Prairies
n.d.
copy of sample advertisements
6.7 x 46.2, 35.3 x 21.3
Canadian Wheat Board Library, Winnipeg
#HD 9049.W3 S44/#HD 9049.W3 S44
73. *Co-operation Will Make Things Better* n.d.
Issued by the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool
sticker
7.5 x 12.0
Saskatchewan Archives Board, Wheat Pool
Collection #RA 15,298
74. *Prosperity Follows Settlement in Western Canada* c. 1905
booklet
18.0 x 11.5
Adam Shortt Library of Canadiana, Special
Collections, University of Saskatchewan
Libraries
75. *The Settler's Guide to Homesteads in the Canadian Northwest*
Issued by Saskatchewan Land & Homestead
Co. Ltd Toronto, 1884
booklet
18.8 x 10.6
Saskatchewan Archives Board
76. **Yousuf Karsh**
Herman Sattler, Saskatchewan Wheat Farmer
In *MacLeans*, February 1953
black and white photograph
35.0 x 27.0
Regina Public Library Periodicals Collection
77. *Colonization* 1887/88
Issued by the Canadian Agricultural Coal and
Colonization Company, Balgonie
copy of black and white poster
44.0 x 28.5
Glenbow Archives, #M3214 CC L773
Calgary, Alberta
78. *Perennial Sow Thistle/Our Worst Weed* 1924
Issued by the Saskatchewan Department of
Agriculture
poster
70.5 x 53.0
Saskatchewan Archives Board, Posters II.14
79. *Harvest Labour* c. 1930s
Issued by the Public Employment Office
poster
63.0 x 48.0
Saskatchewan Archives Board, Posters II.28
80. *Canada: Free Farms for the Million*
c. 1890-95
Issued by Dominion Line Royal Steamships
colour poster
74.3 x 55.0
National Archives of Canada #C 63482
81. *200 Million Acres of Cultivable Land in Western Canada (Ukrainian version)* n.d.
poster
27.0 x 38.0
National Archives of Canada
82. *Danger Handle with Care*
Issued by Saskatchewan Department of
Public Health, June 1956
poster
55.8 x 43.0
Saskatchewan Archives Board, Posters II.12
83. *Deep Fall Plough to Destroy Grasshoppers*
Issued by Saskatchewan Department of
Agriculture, September 1919
poster
63.0 x 35.4
Saskatchewan Archives Board, Posters II.5

84. **C.W. Jefferys (1869-1951)**
Their New Home: a Family of English Immigrants Arriving at a Western Town c. 1913
colour photo-lithographic reproduction
30.0 x 23.0
Collection of Jefferys Estate, Toronto
85. **C.W. Jefferys (1869-1951)**
Untitled/Western Town: Grain Elevators and Wagons n.d.
colour photo-lithographic reproduction
21.0 x 21.5
Collection of Jefferys Estate
86. **C.W. Jefferys (1869-1951)**
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Collection of M. W. Stacey, Willowdale, Ontario
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88. *Canada* c. 1920
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93. *Canada West* 1920
Back cover by Mark Young
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magazine
27.5 x 20.6
Adam Shortt Library of Canadiana, Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan Libraries, FC 3204.3 .C21C21
94. *Canada West* 1919
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magazine
27.5 x 20.6
Adam Shortt Library of Canadiana, Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan Libraries, FC 3204.3 .C21C21
95. *Canada West* 1917
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colour photocopies reproduced with permission from J.H. Richards and K.I. Fung, *Atlas of Saskatchewan* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 1969) p. 13, 14 and 15.

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103. **Anonymous**
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Published by Valentine & Sons,
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Collection of Neil Richards
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The list of acknowledgements for an exhibition of this nature is vast at every stage of research and production. There are many people and institutions who contributed time and effort to bring this exhibition and catalogue to completion. I would like to acknowledge and thank all of them for their work and support.

The exhibition *Work, Weather and the Grid: Agriculture in Saskatchewan* grew out of the initial concept to organize *The Regina Work Project*. The idea for this particular exhibition originated with artist Jack Anderson, who was one of the original members of *The Regina Work Project* committee. Peter White and Helen Marzolf, who as Directors of the Dunlop Art Gallery over three years of the exhibition's organization contributed much to the exhibition. Peter White was responsible for the fundraising effort for the exhibition and for *The Regina Work Project*. Helen Marzolf oversaw the logistical side of this exhibition: phone calls, details of coordinated and generous personal support through all stages and facets of the exhibition. The original preparation and the installation of the exhibition was the work of the Dunlop Art Gallery staff, without whom the exhibition would not have happened. I would particularly thank Joyce Clark for her ongoing work on the exhibition, Bev Antal and Deborah Boren, and James Sather, for his design and production of the final installation.

An exhibition of this scale involved a large number of lenders who generously loaned work from their collections. Allan Sapp Gallery, The Honor Collection, City of North Battleford; James R. Bate, Lethbridge; Ruth Reedman, Canadian Wheat Board; Canadian Pacific Archives, Montreal; Rose Duch, Hudson Bay, Saskatchewan; Glenn Gordon, the City of Regina; Dr. and Mrs. Fergus Eaglesham, Weyburn; Helen Berscheid,

Estevan National Exhibition Centre; George Howell, Dr. Robert Janes, Daryl Betenia, Chris Jackson, Andrea Garnier, Glenbow Museum; McGregor Hone, Lumsden; Hotel Saskatchewan, Regina; Robert Stacey, the Jefferys Estate Archive, Toronto; Bea McDonald, Old Timers Association, Maple Creek; MacKenzie Art Gallery; Mendel Art Gallery; Ina Mae Neuberger, Saskatoon; Norma Lang, Moose Jaw Art Museum; Wynona Mulcaster, Saskatoon; Elizabeth Krug and Jim Burant, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa; D. Parker and D. Anderson, Regina; Ruth Pawson, Regina; Gord Staseson, Regina Exhibition Association; Neil Richards, Saskatoon; Mary Smith, Saltcoats Museum; Donald Richan and Tim Novak, Saskatchewan Archives Board; Jane Turnbull Evans, Saskatchewan Arts Board; Dr. David Richeson, Warren Clubb and Ruth Bitner, Saskatchewan Western Development Museum; Brian Hartsook, Saskatoon Board of Education and Nutana Collegiate; Ruth Millar, Saskatoon Public Library, Local History Room; Susan Whitney Gallery; Shirley Martin, Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan Libraries, Saskatoon; Donna Volden, University of Saskatchewan Art Collection, Saskatoon; Donnalu Wigmore, Toronto.

During the research phase of the exhibition many people offered their assistance, ideas, information and personal support: Patricia Ainsley; Ron Bourgeault; Professors Chakravarti and Kai Fung, Department of Geography, University of Saskatchewan; Judith Coburn; The Gabriel Dumont Institute Resource Centre; Stan Denniston, Murray Dobbin, Johann Faulk, John Foster, Joe Galbo, Fred Gudmundsen, Larry Hineman, Annette Hurtig, Ross Irwin, Don Lee, Jan Levis, Peter MacCallum, Jim McCrorie, Ormond

McKague, Bruce McFadden, Al McKimmon, Peter Millard, Jim Miller, Ken Morrison, Heather Musgrove, Andrew Oko, Terry Pugh, Rene Roy, Barry Sampson, Dick Spafford, Irene Spry, Greg Spurgeon, Peter Steven, Shelley Sweeney, Georgie Taylor, David Thauberger, Ivan Thue, Jon Tupper, Murray Waddington, Jack Warnock, Nettie Wiebe and Alexander Wilson. The catalogue has involved a number of people, particularly Lorraine Thompson, Barbara Taylor and Dinah Forbes (editors), Catherine Bradbury (designer), and Patricia Holdsworth (photographer).

The production and installation of the exhibition at the Dunlop Art Gallery involved many individuals: Ken Aiken, Anne Campbell, Kate Kokotailo, Fred Wright, and Martin Miller assisted as did many of the staff of the Regina Public Library. In the major undertaking of transporting the 40 foot Brandtner mural from the Queensbury Centre, Regina Exhibition Grounds involved many: Gord Staseson and Jimmy Unique in co-ordinating the move, Jack Shaw, Bill Perry, Craig Kimbriel and the crew of Danny Leader, Rainer Bahr, Gary Soucy, Cain Quam, Dean Colbow, Bob Cyrenne, Brian Berner, Peter O'Connor, Fred Fink, Tim Brooks, Ron Smith, George Chriest, Bill McKay, Wallace McKay, Dennis Clapson, Hal Richardson, and Darren Chmelowski. In transporting and installing the mural, Tom Atkinson and Jack's Moving, Frank Warren and the crew at Steeplejack Services Canada Ltd. (scaffolding), Jack Kertz and Dean Bauche, Assiniboia Gallery; Rudy Mihalicz, Accent on Art; Stan Denniston and the Isaacs Gallery, Toronto; all assisted in the framing and transport of the works of art. Appreciation is extended to Don Hall, for his expert photographic copy work and printing and Rob Underwood for building the shelving

units. The physical installation of the exhibition was expertly co-ordinated by the Dunlop Art Gallery staff with the assistance of Jamie Slingerland, Ron McLellan, Ryan Arnott, Lorne Beug.

The preparation of installation of the exhibition at the Mendel Art Gallery involved a number of staff: Gary Boehm, Bruce Grenville, Cheryl Meszaros, Dan Ring, Sylvia Tritthardt, Joan Steel (Librarian), Les Hannah. The physical installation was well co-ordinated by Perry Opheim, who was assisted by Garth Cantrill and Les Potter.

I would also like to personally acknowledge and thank, Louis Walter, whose support and enthusiasm as a teacher and a friend, many years ago was so influential. And finally, I would like to thank my parents, Eileen and Teddy Donegan, who supported my work and taught me to respect farmers and the pioneer history of Saskatchewan.

Thank you all.

Rosemary Donegan

Guest Curator

Work, Weather and the Grid: Agriculture in
Saskatchewan

May 21 to June 26, 1991

This exhibition has been organized by the Dunlop Art Gallery, a department of the Regina Public Library. Funding has been provided by The Canada Council, Saskatchewan Arts Board, Saskatchewan Family Foundation, Communications Canada, Sask Trust for Sport, Culture and Recreation, Petro Canada, City of Regina Arts Commission, Regina Public Library, Great Western Brewing Company and Sask Tel.

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ISBN: 0-920085-40-7

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P.O. Box 2311
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(306) 777-6040
FAX 352-5550

Design: Catharine Bradbury, Bradbury Design, Regina

Production and Printing: Paperworks Press Limited,
Calgary

Photography: Catalogue #46, Bridgens Photography, Regina; #88, 89, Canada Pacific Corporate Archives, Montreal; #172, 197, 136, Glenbow Archives, Calgary, Alberta; #25, 44, Glenbow Museum, Calgary, Alberta; #31, 54 and printing for Saskatchewan Archives Board photographs, Don Hall, Regina; #3, 23, 33, 36, 61, 74, 112, and Figure # (E. Lindner *Untitled*- to be added), Grant Kernan, Saskatoon; #190, Manitoba Archives, Shellbrook 1 Collection; #56, Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon; #39, 80, 81, 123, 169, 196, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa C-63482, C-6196, C-67099, C-108129, C-108129, PA-25071; #1, 6, 7, 13, 14, 22, 27, 38, 41, 48, 50, 52, 73, 93, 103, 107, 108, Figure # (installation shot to be added) and Figure # (Model township to be added), Patricia Holdsworth Photography, Regina; #160, Provincial Archives of Alberta, Pollard Collection, P. 452; #220, Saltcoats Museum, Saltcoats; #122, 134, 135, 145, 153, 171, 178, 185, 186, 214, Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina, R-D 1167, R-A6154, R-A4809, S-9S-88, R-A6857, S-B5921, RA-15103, RD-1192, S-B2010; #29, Saskatchewan Arts Board, Regina 56-126-04; #11, Saskatchewan Government Photograph; #34, Saskatchewan Visual Education Photograph; #144, 146, 147, 148, 173, 175, 227, Saskatchewan Wheat Pool Collection, Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-B7456, RB-7582(1), R-A15029(1), R-A15020, R-A15077(2), R-A15072(1), R-A15033(1); #132, 166, 167, 179 Saskatoon Public Library - Local History Room, Saskatoon; #165, Soo Line Museum, Weyburn; #127, 180, 218, Western Development Museum, Saskatoon, 1-D(b)-40, 1-C(b)-12, 1-A-13; #182, Western Development Museum, Yorkton.

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data

Donegan, Rosemary
Work, Weather and the Grid

Catalogue of an exhibition held at the Dunlop Art Gallery, May 1 - June 28, 1991 and the Mendel Art Gallery, July 26 - September 8, 1991.

Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN: 0-920085-40-7

1. Agriculture - Saskatchewan - Exhibitions.
 2. Saskatchewan in art - Exhibitions.
 3. Art, Canadian - Saskatchewan - Exhibitions.
 4. Art, Modern - 20th Century - Saskatchewan - Exhibitions.
- I. Dunlop Art Gallery.
 - II. Mendel Art Gallery.
 - III. Title

N6546.S3D65 1991
709.71247074712445 C91-090485-5

