

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Great Plains Quarterly

Great Plains Studies, Center for

1992

Saskatchewan Bound: Migration to a New Canadian Frontier

Randy William Widds
University of Regina

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly>



Part of the [Other International and Area Studies Commons](#)

Widds, Randy William, "Saskatchewan Bound: Migration to a New Canadian Frontier" (1992). *Great Plains Quarterly*. 649.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsquarterly/649>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Quarterly by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

SASKATCHEWAN BOUND

MIGRATION TO A NEW CANADIAN FRONTIER

RANDY WILLIAM WIDDIS

Almost forty years ago, Roland Berthoff used the published census to construct a map of English Canadian settlement in the United States for the year 1900 (Map 1).¹ Migration among this group was generally short distance in nature, yet a closer examination of Berthoff's map reveals that considerable numbers of migrants gravitated toward more distant agricultural and urban frontiers and a reading of the historical literature on internal migration within North America emphasizes the fact that a significant number of Canadians living in the United States returned home to Canada during the period 1896-1914.²

Returning Canadians were joined in their trek northward by thousands of Americans and

Europeans resident in the United States. Yet despite these numbers, there has been little detailed examination of this and other intracontinental movements, as scholars have been frustrated by their inability to operate beyond the narrowly defined geographical and temporal boundaries determined by sources such as the published and manuscript censuses. As a result, scholars interested in the settlement of the Prairie Provinces have concentrated primarily on the more visible European migration, ignoring the migration of eastern Canadians and American residents to the Canadian West.

This paper discusses three sources that may be used to reconstruct and analyze patterns of migration from elsewhere in Canada and the United States to Saskatchewan during the pioneer period of settlement. The sources and the methodology are part of my longitudinal research strategy tracing migration paths and life histories.³ I will particularly focus on the problem of tracing the "invisible" groups, Canadians and Americans, in Saskatchewan, because they had an impact on western Canadian settlement that is "completely out of proportion to the documentation of their movement and settlement on the prairies".⁴

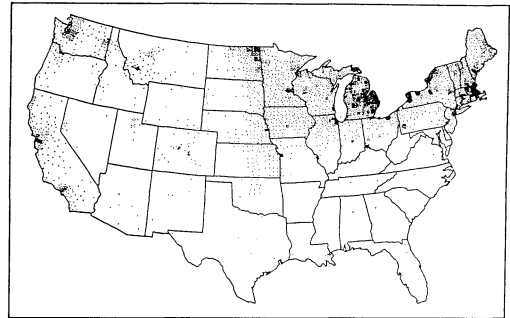
Professor of geography at the University of Regina, Randy Widdis is the author of twenty-one publications, most on migration of settlers between the United States and Canada in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

[GPQ 12 (Fall 1992): 254-268]

THE CONTEXT OF MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT

Most Canadian school children know that prairie settlement was shaped and directed by the combination of tariff, railway, land, and immigration policies developed in the post-Confederation period by the Conservative government of Sir John A. Macdonald and the Liberal government of Sir Wilfred Laurier. The success of these policies has long been the subject of historical debate with discussion centering on the relative roles of Canadian government policies and external forces—such as falling transport costs for wheat exports, the resumption of international capital and labor flows, rising wheat prices as a result of industrialization in Europe and the United States, and the end of the American frontier—in bringing about prairie settlement.⁵ Although I will not interpret neo-classical economic theories of western development I wish to refer to some of these internal policies and external forces to establish the context of immigration and settlement in western Canada.

Immigration Policy. As minister of the interior from 1896 to 1905, Clifford Sifton established the basic framework for immigration and settlement. He aimed his aggressive promotion of western settlement toward farmers in the United States and Europe. He deemed the United States the greatest source of “first class” settlers because American immigrants had capital, goods, and experience in prairie farming and because Ottawa considered them “ethnically desirable.”⁶ The Interior department especially wanted to “tap the pool of discontented tenant farmers, ambitious established farmers and ex-Canadians, all of whom might be receptive to the promises of free homestead land in western Canada.”⁷ Sifton expanded the number of immigration offices in the United States and began an intensive program of promotion through newspaper advertisements and displays at public exhibitions in those areas where experienced farmers lived.



MAP 1. English Canadian Settlement in the United States, 1900.

The second most important source of immigration was Great Britain, a natural choice given Anglo-Canada's heritage and the commitment of the federal government to maintaining a steady flow of British stock into the West.⁸ The department employed many of the same publicity techniques in Great Britain as in the United States, advertising in newspapers, presenting exhibits at agricultural shows, and sponsoring tours of the West. Largely because restrictive laws made it difficult to promote emigration through government agents, the department did not emphasize recruitment in continental Europe, but Sifton awarded bonuses to steamship agents who sent immigrants to Canada. Eventually these agents organized the North Atlantic Trading Company to attract immigrants for Canada. Emigrants who were agriculturalists received high bonuses if they possessed at least \$100 upon arrival.⁹

While Sifton was selective in his aggressive recruiting, he appears to have adhered to an Open Door policy with one exception—Asian immigration. Sifton supported the existing head tax on Chinese immigrants, but he continued to believe that all immigrant groups could be assimilated, thus justifying group settlement. His successor, Frank Oliver, on the other hand, amended the Immigration Act to make entry

much more difficult for certain groups, especially Asians. Virtually no assistance was awarded to intending settlers from central and eastern Canada. The federal government could not afford to encourage interprovincial migration given the significant rural depopulation of Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritimes and the widespread concern over this loss of human resources.¹⁰

The End of the American Land Frontier. Although western Canada's first Homestead Act was passed in 1872, the region failed to attract the hundreds of thousands of Europeans and North Americans moving westward. Between 1870 and 1896 adjacent American lands were filling up while the Canadian prairies remained largely empty of white settlement. Canadians comprised a major portion of settlement of the upper Midwest and Great Plains states, with more than 120,000 migrating to the American prairies between 1870 and 1890. Kenneth Norrie contends that the lack of rail connections to export points constrained the development of the region before 1879, but the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1886 and the extension of its subsidiary, the Soo Line, to the Canadian border removed this barrier.¹¹

Yet high wheat prices in the early 1880s touched off the "Dakota Boom" and western Canada continued to be a "terra incognita" for most westward-moving migrants. The report of the Palliser Expedition of 1857-60 did much to dissuade those who were entertaining thoughts of settling in the Canadian West, for Palliser described much of southern Saskatchewan and southeastern Alberta, the "Palliser Triangle," as an extension of the Great American Desert and unsuited for cultivation. Even James Macoun's well publicized and favorable report on agricultural production in the region in the early 1880s did not trigger any significant move to the West.¹² Only by 1896, when lands to the south had largely filled and the worldwide depression of the 1890s was ending, did settlers begin to flow into the region.¹³

The northward shift in migration after 1896 in large part resulted from the economic distress

of American farmers. The major forces Karl Bicha identifies as driving North Dakota farmers from the land at this time apply to the American prairie region in general. They include increases in land prices and tenancy and mortgage rates as well as unfavorable climate conditions. Land in the Red River Valley that had sold for \$5 to \$10 an acre in the mid-1890s increased to \$20 to \$40 an acre by 1900, the result of a growing demand for land among an expanded population. The rate of tenancy quadrupled between 1890 and 1920 and by 1910 more than half of the owner-operator farms in the state were mortgaged. The period 1900 to 1906 saw an abnormal rainfall with excessive precipitation in both spring and summer during four of these years, delaying harvesting and planting, and drought in 1900 and 1903.¹⁴

Land Policy. While the free homestead was the staple of western land policy, other devices played a major role in settlement. The awarding of alternate sections of land to the railway companies ensured that the Canadian Pacific Railway (C.P.R.) was to become the largest single land holder in the West. Alternate sections were also set aside outside the railway belts until 1908.

The Conservative government passed regulations to provide for the creation of colonization companies on 23 December 1881. This legislation made provision for sale of odd-numbered sections situated twenty-four miles south of the C.P.R. line at \$2 an acre to any business satisfying the government of its capability and interests in promoting settlement. Companies were to receive \$160 for every newly established bona fide settler, but few colonization companies successfully placed settlers on the land. The twenty-six colonization companies that finished their five-year contract in 1886 and 1887 had sponsored only 1080 settlers. Crop failure in 1883, the outbreak of the Northwest Rebellion in 1885, competition to the south, and negative newspaper coverage of the railway monopoly, climate, and soil all contributed to the companies' lack of success.¹⁵

Land companies sprang up again after 1902 in response to the increasing influx of immi-

grants, particularly Americans. Although some seriously promoted settlement, most were simply speculators. They aggressively bought land from individual settlers and from railroad companies and recruited immigrants coming into Canada by train. Smaller railway companies, more interested in quick profits than in incurring expenses associated with promotional advertising, were willing to sell to land companies that also provided advertising and real estate expertise for the larger companies like the C.P.R. and Canadian National Railway (C.N.R.) in return for land.¹⁶ Most companies, however, were not very successful in either settling the land or reaping profits.

Free homesteads normally comprised just less than half the acreage of a township, the remainder being government, railway, and Hudson's Bay Company land. The homesteads were usually scattered throughout the township on the even numbered sections. Homestead regulations were modified over time but generally settlers were required to follow a number of steps. The homesteader, any male eighteen or over or a widow with dependents, had to pay a \$10 registration fee, \$5 for homesteads of eighty acres or less. The settler was to appear at the Dominion Lands Agency for the district, declare his intention to become a British subject if not one already, pay the fee, and secure entry for the land he had selected.

Settlers could also appoint someone to act for them and make entries on their behalf and were then allowed six months from the date of entry to take personal possession of their land. Failure subjected the entry to cancellation.

Homesteaders were required to live six months of the year on their claims, construct a habitable house, and bring at least fifteen acres under cultivation within three years. Raising twenty head of cattle and providing buildings for their shelter could substitute for cultivation. Settlers could reside with their parents or upon a previous homestead instead of on their homesteads provided that they stayed in the same or an adjoining township.

At the end of three years, homesteaders ap-

peared with witnesses before the homestead inspector or before the local agent of the Dominion Lands Office and applied for the patent, submitting evidence that the duties had been performed. Up until 1890, homestead entrants were entitled to take up an adjacent quarter section as a preemption by paying a fee of \$10 and, after obtaining the patent, purchasing it at the price prevailing at the time of entry. Preemptions were abandoned but then reinstituted in 1908 with new requirements, three years of additional residence and cultivation of fifty acres, both of which might be applied to the original homestead or the preemption quarter, provided the acreage was in addition to that performed in earning the homestead. After fulfilling these conditions a settler could patent the preemption for \$3 per acre.

The Department of the Interior did not usually sell government lands to farmers desiring to enlarge their homesteads, but settlers could purchase homesteads on land that had been reserved for but never taken up by the railways and on property sold by the latter to land companies. When the government discontinued the Railway Land Grant in the late 1890s, thousands of acres intended for the railways lay idle until the Dominion Lands Act of 1908 freed up the sections once reserved for the railways and allowed settlers within traveling distance to preempt this land or purchase it as a homestead. Land grants to soldiers came out of these sections.

The Settlement Process. Indigenous policies and external events stimulated a flood of immigration into western Canada after 1896. In Saskatchewan alone, the preferred destination at the turn of the century, the population increased 1124.77% between 1891 and 1911 (Table 1). By homestead and purchase, the land was quickly settled. For the year ending 30 June 1906, two-thirds of all Canadian homestead entries were in this province.¹⁷

The resulting settlement pattern was influenced by several factors including soil quality, ethnic congregation, kinship and kith affiliation, land availability, and access to markets

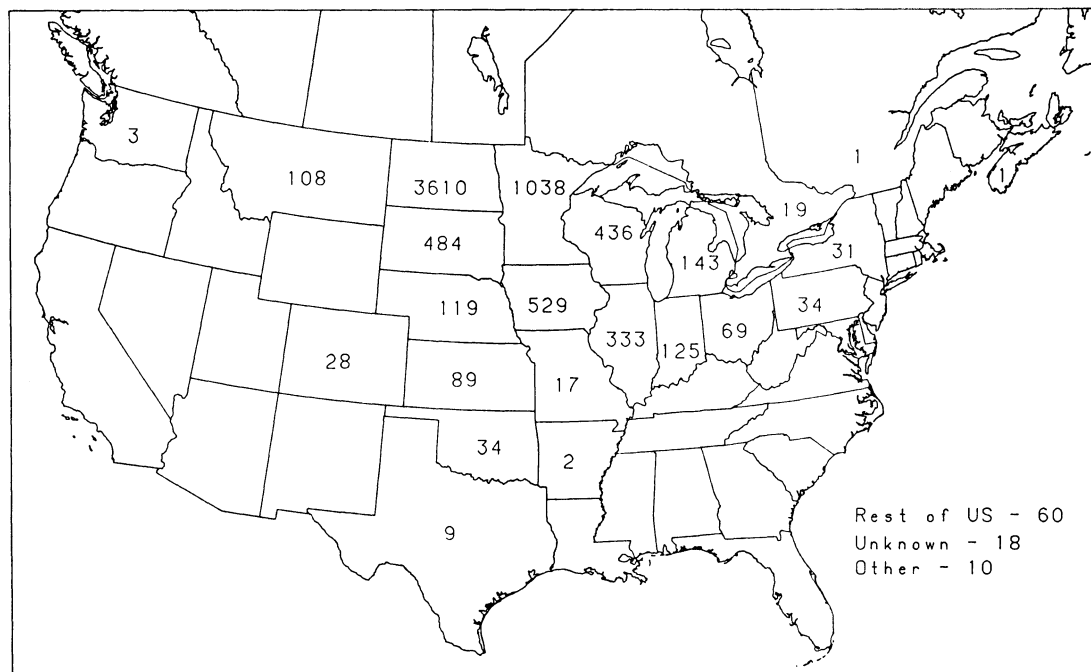
TABLE 1
POPULATION GROWTH IN SASKATCHEWAN,
1881-1931

Year ¹	Population	% Growth
1881	19,114	—
1885	32,097	67.92
1891	40,206	25.26
1901	91,279	127.03
1906	257,763	182.39
1911	492,432	91.04
1916	647,835	31.56
1921	757,510	16.93
1926	820,738	8.35
1931	921,785	12.31

¹ no census was taken for 1896

and railroads. Settlers actively petitioned provincial governments to support the construction of branch lines in their respective areas.¹⁸ The result, as shown in the case of Saskatchewan (Map 2), was the creation of a fairly extensive railway system within a relatively short period of time.

For large numbers of Europeans and migrants from ethnic settlements in the United States who began to establish ethno-religious bloc settlements across the prairies, settlement was shaped more by ethnicity than by distance to the market. Anderson outlines the three main processes by which these settlements came into being: 1) organized group settlements founded by organized groups of political or religious ref-



MAP 2. Last place of residence (state or province) of Saskatchewan bound migrants, 1 December 1909 - 1 January 1911.

ugees (e.g. Mennonites, Hutterites, Doukhobors); 2) chain settlements that developed slowly as a result of chain migration whereby one or two pioneers established links with friends or family back home (e.g. French); and 3) gravitational group settlements formed when migrants who had migrated independently were drawn together into groups by forces of mutual attraction such as a common language and a common religion (e.g. Scandinavians).¹⁹ All three processes influenced the settlement of certain groups such as the German Catholics, Ukrainians, and Poles.

McQuillan has demonstrated the importance of ethnicity in explaining the success of homesteaders in the fertile parkland belt of Saskatchewan between Prince Albert and Saskatoon.²⁰ This and other works, including Wonders's study of Scandinavian homesteaders in central Alberta, Fox's examination of Jewish agricultural colonies in Saskatchewan, Shepard's thesis on Black migration to western Canada, Szalasnyj's study of Doukhobors, Thomas's investigation of the Welsh in Saskatchewan, and Lewry's study of a Hebridean Scottish crofters' settlement south of Wapella demonstrate the importance of ethnicity in explaining the settlement of western Canada.²¹

A survey of the literature reveals that the overwhelming majority of historical studies of immigration and settlement of Saskatchewan focus on one or more of the ethno-religious groups that settled the province. While these group settlements were very important in the development of western Canadian society and deserve intensive investigation, the two most influential groups in terms of numbers, economic power, and cultural influence were native born Canadians and Americans.

Table 2 shows immigration and homestead figures for the 1900-1910 decade.²² The table indicates that the British were the largest immigrant group during the period although the numbers of Americans and, to a lesser extent, continental Europeans increased dramatically at the end of the decade. While many of the British were attracted to the developing industrial

heartland of Ontario and Quebec, Americans and continental Europeans were more responsive to the opportunities presented by settlement in the West. Between 1897 and 1910, 32 percent of arrivals from continental Europe and 42 percent of arrivals from the United States made homestead entry in western Canada. By contrast, only 22 percent of the English, 22 percent of the Scots and 26 percent of the Irish filed for homesteads. In the last five years of the decade the Americans and the continental Europeans comprised 28.5 percent and 16.3 percent of the homestead entries respectively while the English, Scots, and Irish made up only 14.2 percent, 3.5 percent, and 1.3 percent of the total respectively.

Yet it was the Canadian-born that made the most homestead entries during this period, 35.6 percent of the total, although the statistics do not differentiate between Canadian internal migrants and returning Canadians. Based on an average number of 2.5 persons per entry, one can calculate that 254,125 Canadians and 209,370 Americans had homesteaded in western Canada by the year 1910. Together they comprised 65 percent of the total of 714,260 homesteaders. European migrants often emigrated in large groups and were directed to certain areas, but Americans and Canadians, for the most part, traveled alone or with friends or immediate family and were dealt with individually. While many Americans and returning Canadians did come to the West as clients of various land companies, the majority operated independently, making decisions as to where to settle entirely on their own. It is this individual nature of the migration process that makes the examination of American and Canadian settlement of western Canada difficult. The range of documentation is much greater for ethno-religious bloc and land company sponsored settlement than individual North American settlement.

In the remainder of this paper I will evaluate various records I have used to reconstruct and analyze the pre- and post-migration experiences of Canadians and Americans in Saskatchewan

TABLE 2
IMMIGRATION TO CANADA AND HOMESTEAD ENTRIES, 1900-1910

Immigration to Canada							
Year	British	Continental		U.S.	Totals		
1900-01	11810	19352		17987	49149		
1901-02	17259	23732		26388	67379		
1902-03	41792	37099		49473	128364		
1903-04	50374	34728		45229	133331		
1904-05	65359	37255		43652	146266		
1905-06	86796	44349		57919	189064		
1906-07	55791	34217		34659	124667		
1907-08	120182	83975		58312	262469		
1908-09	52901	34175		59832	146908		
1909-10	59790	45206		103798	208794		
Totals (#s)	562054	394088		497249	1456391		
Totals (%)	38.7	27.1		34.2	100		

Homestead Entries							
Year	English	Scots	Irish	U.S.	Continental Europe	Canada	Totals
1900-01	659	182	99	2026	1866	3335	8167
1901-02	1096	300	184	4761	2653	5679	14673
1902-03	2816	724	336	10942	7260	9305	13183
1903-04	3486	911	267	7730	4909	8770	26073
1904-05	4284	1225	421	8532	4999	11358	10819
1905-06	5897	1657	543	12485	5955	15332	41869
1906-07	3032	807	252	6059	2951	8546	21647
1907-08	4840	1026	339	7818	5373	11028	30424
1908-09	5649	1310	506	9829	7265	14522	39081
1909-10	5459	1326	546	13566	6896	13775	41568
Totals (#s)	37218	9468	3493	83748	50127	101650	285704
Totals (%)	13.0	3.3	1.2	29.3	17.5	35.7	100

¹fiscal year starting July 1

²fiscal period of 9 months

Source: Minister of the Interior, *Immigration Facts & Figures*, Ottawa, 1910.

during the pioneering period of settlement. I will emphasize Saskatchewan local histories not to present a substantive account of this migration but to discuss the research use of a linking strategy based on these sources.

MIGRATION SOURCES

Border Crossing Records. Karl Bicha estimated that close to one million American residents moved into western Canada between 1898 and 1914.²³ The two major border crossing points

were Emerson, Manitoba, and North Portal, Saskatchewan, with the Canadian National, Soo Line, and Burlington Northern railroads meeting at the former and the Soo Line and the Canadian Pacific meeting at the latter. Customs offices opened at both locations with the construction of these lines but officials were mainly concerned with collecting customs and only performed rudimentary immigration examinations as a favor to the Department of Immigration. The North West Mounted Police were responsible for catching border-jumpers and collecting customs duties at points where no customs office existed.

As the number of immigrants increased, the federal government turned over the responsibility of immigration and customs to the Department of the Interior in the fall of 1908. They assumed responsibility for collecting information on in-migrants and remained in that capacity until 1919 when their duties were handed over to the Department of Immigration and Colonization. The border crossing records of the Department of the Interior have recently been released by the National Archives and are now available in various provincial archives and libraries across Canada. The use of these records is discussed elsewhere,²⁴ but while they illustrate movement into western Canada, as demonstrated by Map 2, which shows destinations listed by 7,353 Saskatchewan-bound migrants crossing the border at North Portal between 1 December 1909 and 1 January 1911, they are of limited use because the destinations given to immigration officers were simply the places where migrants planned to disembark.

Homestead Files. The homestead files in the Saskatchewan Archives contain records of the Federal Department of the Interior and the Provincial Lands Branch, the bulk of the material created by the former. The Lands Branch of the former Department of the Interior was in charge of settlement on Dominion Lands from 1871 to 1930 when the Transfer of Resources Agreement turned over crown land to the Provincial Ministry of Natural Resources. Until land was patented in the name of the settler or corporate

body, the right to the land remained in the hands of the Dominion Government. Documents relating to the homesteading experience were forwarded to Ottawa by the local land agency where a number was assigned to the file and subsequent correspondence regarding the land was entered into the same file. When the patent was issued, land was registered at the local land title office in the name of the new owner and the homestead file was closed unless seed liens or other debts remained against the land. The files also contain records in connection with various type of land scrip issued by the federal government (e.g. militia grants, half breed land grants, etc.).²⁵

Most files contain the application for entry, the application for letters patent, and notification that the patent had been granted. Some also include other documents such as declarations of abandonment, certificates of naturalization, and claims for inspection. Unfortunately, many of the files only have the basic documents that had to be completed to meet the regulations. Archivists believe that the files were culled before they were returned to the Saskatchewan Archives in the 1950s. The index to the files and the originals are housed in the archives branch in Saskatoon while some microfilm copies are in Regina. The Mormons took on the huge task of microfilming the files but abandoned it a third of the way through, continuing to film only the three basic documents. Researchers interested in accounts of problems encountered not only by the homesteader after receiving the patent but others who preceded him or her must thus travel to Saskatoon to examine the original files.

Because the homestead files are so difficult to use, few scholars have analyzed them to help understand migration and settlement, some notable exceptions being McQuillan's, Wonders's, and Lewry's studies mentioned above, Dick's analysis of farm-making costs in Saskatchewan, and Boyd's investigation of German, Scandinavian, and Canadian-born settlement in southern Saskatchewan.²⁶ Yet homestead records will continue to be the rich-

est source of information about the specifics of pioneer life until the manuscript censuses for the period are released.

What can they offer to the student of migration? While place of birth and last place of residence information was called for in filing for a homestead, it was often omitted. The most detailed investigation of migration using the homestead records is Wonders's study of Scandinavian homesteaders in central Alberta.²⁷ Wonders was unable to identify the previous residence of 41 percent of the Scandinavian homesteaders who settled in sixty townships but he was successful in locating and mapping the birthplaces and previous residences in the United States of 1386 homesteaders in his study area. Wonders was also able to map the location of the Scandinavian homesteaders in each of the sixty townships and examine the agricultural activities of this group during the proving-up period. Yet he does not compare the Scandinavian homesteading experience with that of other groups in the area nor does he trace their persistence on the land over time.

Using Wonders's study as a guide, I explored the possibilities of using the homestead files as a basis for examining the migration and settlement experiences of the various migrant groups, including native-born Canadians, settling in the rural municipality of Weyburn, as shown in the 1917 Cummins Rural Directory Map. The Cummins Map Company of Winnipeg, founded by Oliver F. Coumins (who later changed his name to Cummins), was a private business producing directory maps for commercial use. Originally located in Regina, this company began producing land owner maps based on local assessment rolls for the three prairie provinces in 1917. Although no one is certain about the rationale behind their selection of rural areas to be mapped, the primary market for the maps seems to have been residents of regions shown, suggesting that Cummins mapped relatively heavily settled areas and avoided the sparsely populated southwestern part of Saskatchewan. The success of Cummins's 1917 series prompted

them to expand their efforts into Ontario and Prince Edward Island and to create maps for 1918, 1920, 1922, 1926, and 1930, after which the depression felled the company. The original map series for 1917, 1920, 1922, 1926, and 1930 are available in the archives in Regina along with a microfilm copy of the 1918 series.

I conducted a case study to evaluate the use of homestead files to examine migration and settlement. Selecting Township 7, Range 13 west of the second meridian in the rural municipality of Weyburn, I first consulted the Land Location Index to determine the file numbers for each homestead. I then examined each homestead file and collected information pertaining to migration, mobility, and agricultural practice. I mapped the year of entry of the first settler, the number of settlers before the homesteader receiving the patent, the year of entry of the homesteader, the date of patent, the national origin of the homesteader and his or her last state or province of residence (if applicable), kinship and last place of residence linkages among the homesteaders, and persistence of the homesteaders as determined through comparison of a 1908 map of landholders (published by George Atkinson of Weyburn) and the Cummins Rural Directory Maps for 1917, 1920, 1922, and 1926.

The analysis reveals a great deal about the timing of settlement, persistence (Table 3), and the importance of proximity to kith and kin. Table 3 clearly illustrates the tremendous transiency that characterized the homesteading period. The information available in the homestead files and other sources allowed me to explain variations in the time taken to patent a homestead and variations in homesteading practices such as the number of acres broken and the value of livestock and improvements on the farm in terms of a large number of variables, especially ethnicity, soil quality, distance to the nearest market or rail outlet, fluctuation in precipitation, and number of children and other relatives available to help the farmer.²⁸ A survey of individual property records will aid greatly in

TABLE 3
PERSISTENCE AMONG HOMESTEADERS RECEIVING PATENTS

Present until:	1908		1917		1920		1922		1926	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
First appear in:										
1908*	17	56.7	3	10.0	0	0	2	6.7	8	26.6
1917	—		4	28.6	2	14.3	1	7.1	7	50.0

*14 homesteaders who received patents had already left by 1908.

Sources: 1. *Soo Line Map*, Townships 7 to 9 of Ranges 13-15 2W, compiled from Special Surveys and Official records (Weyburn: George Atkinson, publisher, 1908).
2. *Cummin's Rural Directory Maps*, 1917, 1920, 1922, 1926.

an analysis of persistence and land-holding behavior but this information is available only for \$2 per search from the Lands Titles offices.

While the homestead records are the logical place to start when examining the experience of settlement, they, like the Border Crossing Records, are unsatisfactory sources of migration information. Only 13.7 percent of the birth-places and 45.1 percent of the last places of residence of the homesteaders receiving patent in 7-13 W2 are known. In addition, even those homestead files that include exact information on place of birth and last place of residence do not have information on the intermediate locations in which many migrants resided.

Local Histories. After I had exhausted the possibilities of reconstructing patterns of migration based on information contained in the Border Crossing Records and the Homestead Files, I decided to derive detailed migration histories from local histories. In several works John Hudson has used county histories published in the late nineteenth century because they often contain biographical sketches of the county's residents. While the migration patterns derived from these histories are illuminating, the limitations of these sources are significant, as Hudson himself admits.²⁹ Most county histories were paid

for by those whose biographical sketches were included, thus introducing a socioeconomic bias to the sample; and, many of these sketches omit mention of places of intermediate residence, thus making a full understanding of the migration process unachievable.

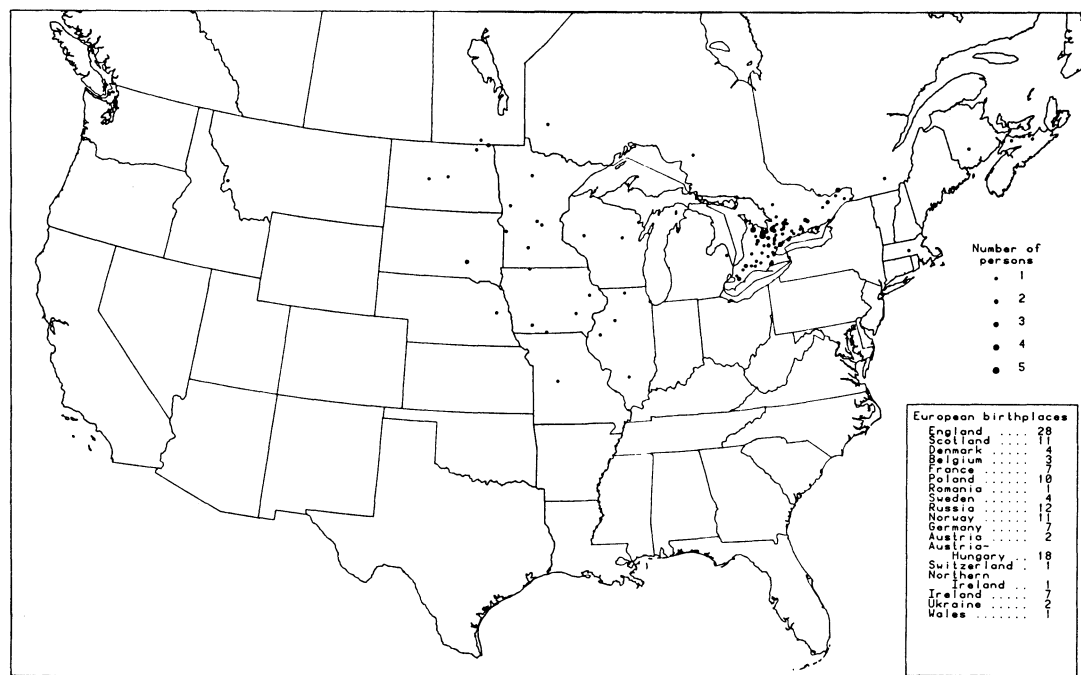
In Saskatchewan a combination of several factors—rural depopulation and community disintegration, the deaths of the original pioneers, and anniversary celebrations of Canada and the province—served to launch many local history studies at the end of the 1970s and throughout the 1980s. As Paul Voisey states, these efforts are distinguished by “the co-operative enterprise and community spirit” that characterize this province and its people.³⁰ Local history committees asked people living in rural municipalities as well as descendants of families who had left the area to write down the oral histories of their families. Many of the community-sponsored local histories were assisted by John Archer, former president of the University of Regina and a distinguished Saskatchewan historian. The typical Saskatchewan history contains three to five hundred family biographies, including important name and place information. Although historians studying western Canada have almost totally neglected this

source, Voisey believes that the community histories are valuable for quantitative research because they include "all sorts of random facts" about ordinary individuals. This "mass detail" when linked to traditional historical sources can provide the raw material for many kinds of scholarly analysis.

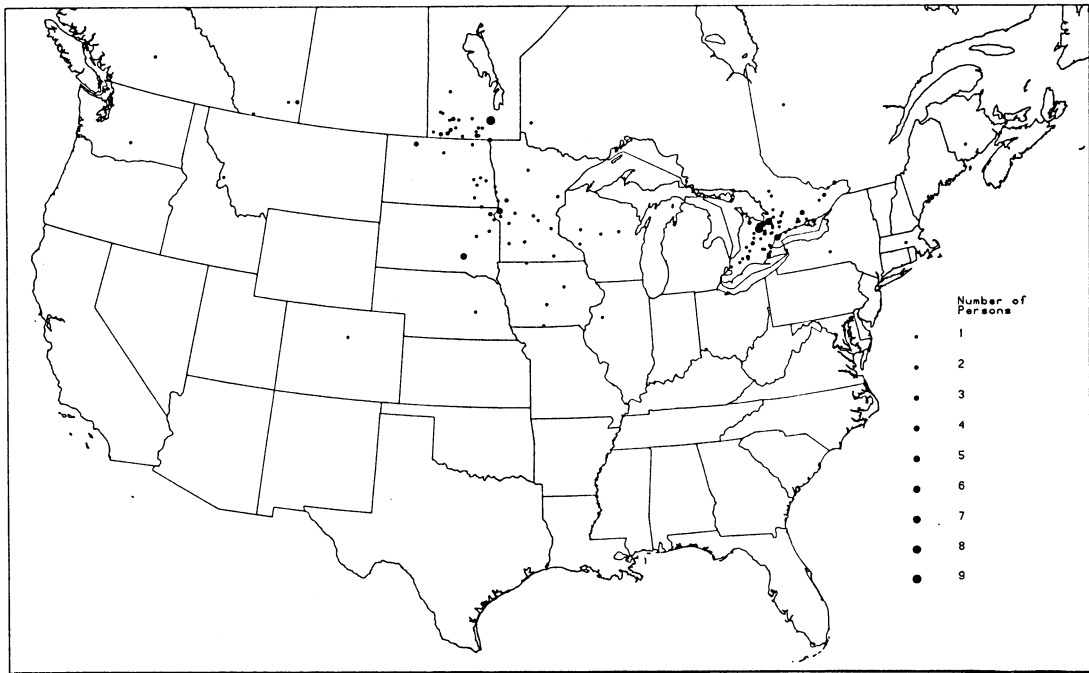
The more than five hundred Saskatchewan community histories located in the Prairie History Room of the Regina Public Library have several advantages over the local histories used by Hudson. They are not elitist: because no family had to pay to include their history in the monograph, the collections are representative. Second, because the settlement period was only two to three generations ago, memories of the time are still fairly accurate. Finally, while the quality of the histories varies, most contain de-

tailed information about the migration of settlers, homesteaders and purchasers of land alike.

The goal of the final part of my larger study of Canadian migration is to use the community histories to map the migration patterns of all immigrant groups locating in these rural municipalities. Birthplace and intermediate place data contained in the histories will comprise the basis for a backward linkage strategy, tracing the experiences of internal and returning Canadian-born migrants before they came to Saskatchewan. I will analyze the post-migration experiences of the Canadians and compare them to the other immigrant groups by linking the information present in the community histories with data contained in the homestead files, land titles records, the Cummins rural directories, and other sources discussed previously.



MAP 3. North American birthplace of Weyburn R.M. pioneers.

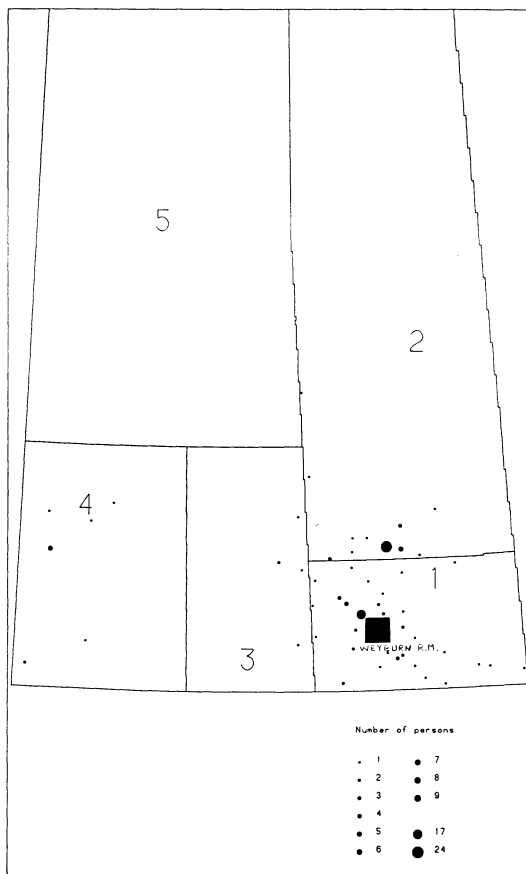


MAP 4. Last place of residence in North America of Weyburn R.M. pioneers before coming to Saskatchewan.

Maps 3, 4, and 5 demonstrate the type of information that can be gleaned from the community histories. I collected and mapped data on birthplace and last place of residence in North America (outside Saskatchewan) and in Saskatchewan from the Weyburn Rural Municipality community history.³² Ontario-born migrants comprised 41 percent ($N = 145$) of the 352 pioneers in the sample (original migrants born outside Saskatchewan settling in Weyburn R.M. before 1930). City or township of birth was derived for 75 percent of this group. American-born migrants comprised just over 18 percent ($N = 64$) of the total, and exact locations of birth were identified for 50 percent of this group, the other 50 percent listing only state or county. Thirteen settlers born elsewhere in Canada (Nova Scotia: 6, Quebec: 5, New Brunswick: 1, Manitoba: 1) constituted 3.7 per-

cent of the total, and exact locations were identified for all of this group except two migrants from Nova Scotia. Thirty-seven percent ($N = 130$) of the migrants were born in Europe and exact places of birth were given for over 60 percent of this group although they are not mapped in this paper.

Ontario-born migrants settling in Weyburn R.M. came from all over the province, although a disproportionate number came from the more recently settled Queen's Bush between Lake Huron and Georgian Bay and the Canadian Shield, an area where the forest still dominated in some parts, soils were less fertile than areas to the south, and settlement was sparse. Precise information on place of birth will allow me to locate these individuals in various Ontario records such as manuscript censuses, directories, and abstract index to deeds and to examine



MAP 5. Last place of residence in Saskatchewan before moving to Weyburn R.M.

their pre-migration occupations, land behavior, family position regarding inheritance, etc. American-born came from throughout the upper Midwest and the Great Plains states.

Map 4 shows the last place of residence in North America of all Weyburn R.M. pioneers, regardless of place of origin, before coming to Saskatchewan (N=205 or 58.2% of all migrants). Locations were imprecise (i.e. state or county only) for 82 of the migrants and 65 Europeans migrated directly to Weyburn R.M. While Ontario continued to be important as a source region, in this case for last residence before coming to Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Minnesota, and North Dakota also were important in this regard. Many of the Scandinavian, German, and other European groups

settling in Weyburn R.M. had previously resided in Minnesota, the Dakotas, and other states in the upper Midwest. The English, Irish, and Scots groups were split between Ontario, Manitoba, and the upper Midwest before coming to Saskatchewan. A considerable number of Ontario-born resided in Manitoba and the upper Midwest before Weyburn. This reflects the step-wise movement pattern that I have described elsewhere as a spreading of the genealogical rather than the nuclear family.³³ Certain centers took on added importance as jumping-off points for movement into Saskatchewan: Dundalk, Barrie, and Toronto, Ontario; Winnipeg, Manitoba; Wheaton, Minnesota; and White Lake, South Dakota. Kinship linkages played a major role in this pattern of chain migration.

Almost 36 percent (N=126) of the migrants, as indicated in Map 5, lived elsewhere in Saskatchewan before settling in Weyburn R.M. The earlier arrivals tended to homestead while the later arrivals were more likely to purchase property in the area. Most of this group lived in the southeastern part of the province before coming to Weyburn and were most likely familiar with the area. Twenty-four migrants previously resided in the Indian Head vicinity and a further seventeen were located in the Yellow Grass area, reflecting once again the importance of kinship factors in migration.

These three maps only capture three points in the migration histories of Saskatchewan-bound settlers. For some these maps reflect their entire migration story, but for most they only tell part of the tale. The community history reveals intermediate residence as well as place of birth and last place of residence. A multiple series of migration maps would show the complexity of the pattern, but would also produce a product so convoluted that it would be nearly impossible to read.

CONCLUSION

Migration is best appreciated by a strategy that traces migration paths and life histories. The most exciting work in the field attempts

to break beyond narrowly defined geographic and temporal boundaries. Scholars truly are slaves to our documents but the local histories will allow me to investigate Anglo-Canadian migration on a scale that has heretofore only been possible for European ethnic groups. Such research not only alters our understanding of ethnic settlement but also allows us to see the role of Anglo-Canadians as a distinct ethnic group in the settlement of the West. In the future I will continue to explore settlement experiences of returning Canadians and Americans settling in western Canada, linking information from the various records mentioned to examine social and geographical mobility, agricultural production, property behavior, family structure, social class, and social disintegration in this new frontier. Only a clearer understanding of this most numerous but most amorphous ethnic group will allow us to evaluate the whole settlement process of western Canada.

NOTES

1. Roland Berthoff, *British Immigrants in Industrial America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968).
2. See: Paul Coats, "Two Good Neighbours: A Study of Exchange of Populations," *Proceedings, Canadian-American Affairs Conference* (Kingston: Queen's University, 1937), pp. 116-17; Karl Bicha, "The North Dakota Farmer and the Canadian West, 1896-1914," *North Dakota History* 29 (1962): 297-302; Richard Vedder and Lawrence Gallaway, "Settlement Patterns of Canadian Emigrants to the United States, 1850-1960," *Canadian Journal of Economics* 3 (1970): 377-406.
3. See: Randy Widdis, "With Scarcely A Ripple: English Canadians in Northern New York at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century," *Journal of Historical Geography* 13 (1987): 169-92; "We Breathe the Same Air': Eastern Ontarian Migration to Watertown, New York in the Late Nineteenth Century," *New York History* 69 (1987): 261-80; "Scale and Context: Approaches to the Study of Canadian Migration Patterns in the Nineteenth Century," *Social Science History* 2 (1988): 269-303; "Tracing Eastern Ontarian Out-Migrants to New York State, 1880-1910," *Ontario History* 81 (1989): 201-33; "Generations, Mobility and Persistence: A View From Genealogies," *Histoire Sociale* 25, no. 49 (1992): 125-50.
4. Patricia McCormick, "A Historical Geography of the Districts of Saskatchewan and Assiniboia in 1904," (M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1977), p. 236.
5. John Dales, "Some Historical and Theoretical Comment on Canada's National Policies," *Queen's Quarterly* 7 (1964): 297-316.
6. David Hall, "Clifford Sifton: Immigration and Settlement Policy, 1896-1905," in Richard Francis and Howard Palmer, eds., *The Prairie West: Historical Readings* (Edmonton: Pica Pica Press, 1985), p. 289.
7. McCormick, "A Historical Geography" (note 4 above), p. 78.
8. Ibid., p. 81.
9. Hall, "Clifford Sifton" (note 6 above), pp. 290-91.
10. Ibid., pp. 292, 296-97.
11. Kenneth Norrie, "The Rate of Settlement of the Canadian West, 1870-1911," *Journal of Economic History* 33 (1975): 410, 426.
12. L. Thomas, "A History of Agriculture on the Prairies to 1914," in Francis and Palmer, eds. *Prairie West* (note 6 above), pp. 226-27.
13. Norrie, "The Rate of Settlement" (note 11 above), p. 427.
14. K. Bicha, "The North Dakota Farmer and the Canadian West, 1896-1914," *North Dakota History* 29 (1962): 297-302.
15. Andre Lalonde, "Colonization Companies in the 1880s," *Saskatchewan History* 24 (1971): 101, 108-9.
16. McCormick, "A Historical Geography" (note 4 above) pp. 105-6.
17. John Archer, *Saskatchewan: A History* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), p. 141.
18. Ibid., p. 140.
19. A. Anderson, "Ethnic Identity in Saskatchewan Bloc Settlements: A Sociological Appraisal," in Howard Palmer, ed. *The Settlement of the West* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1977), pp. 188, 190.
20. Aidan McQuillan, "The Importance of Ethnicity Among Homesteaders in Central Saskatchewan," *Proceedings of the Canadian Association of Geographers Annual Meeting* (1970): 225-32.
21. L. Thomas, "From the Pampas to the Prairies: The Welsh Migration of 1902," *Saskatchewan History* 24 (1971): 1-12; R. Shepard, "Black Migration as a Response to Repression: The Background Factors and Emigration of Oklahoma Negroes to Western Canada, 1905-1912, a Case Study," (M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1976); K. Szalasnyj, "The Doukhobor Homestead Crisis 1898-1907," (M.A. thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1977); Marilyn Fox, "Jewish Agricultural Colonies in Saskatchewan With Special Reference to the Colonies of Sonnenfeld and Edenbridge," (M.A. thesis, University of

Saskatchewan, 1979); William Wonders, "Scandinavian Homesteaders in Central Alberta," in Howard Palmer and David Smith, eds., *The New Provinces: Alberta and Saskatchewan, 1905-1980* (Vancouver: Tantalus Research Ltd.: 1980), pp.131-171; Marilyn Lewry, "A Study of the Locational Changes Among Hebridean Immigrants in Southeast Saskatchewan, 1883-1926," (M.A. thesis, University of Regina, 1986).

22. Minister of the Interior, *Immigration Facts and Figures* (Ottawa, 1910).

23. Bicha, "North Dakota Farmer" (note 14 above).

24. Randy Widdis, "An Evaluation of Canadian Border Crossing Records in the Study of American-Resident Migration to the Canadian West," *Proceedings, The Association of North Dakota Geographers* 39 (Grand Forks: University of North Dakota Department of Geography, 1989): 18-35.

25. L. Rodwell, "Saskatchewan Homestead Records," *Saskatchewan History* 18 (1965): 10-11.

26. McQuillan, "The Importance of Ethnicity" (note 22 above), Wonders, "Scandinavian Homesteaders" (note 21 above), Lyle Dick, "Estimates of Farm-Making Costs in Saskatchewan, 1882-1914," *Prairie Forum* 6 (1981): 183-201; Lewry, "A Study of the Locational Changes" (note 21 above), Ste-

phen Boyd, "'Prairie Bound': A Geographical Analysis of Migration and Settlement in the Luseland and Hyas-Norquay Areas of Saskatchewan, 1902-1930," (M.A. thesis, University of Regina, 1989).

27. Wonders, "Scandinavian Homesteaders" (note 21 above).

28. McQuillan, "The Importance of Ethnicity" (note 20 above).

29. John Hudson, "Migration to an American Frontier," *Annals, Association of American Geographers* 66 (1976): 242-65; "Who Was 'Forest Man?': Sources of Migration to the Plains," *Great Plains Quarterly* 6 (1986): 69-83; "North American Origins of Middlewestern Frontier Populations," *Annals, Association of American Geographers* 78 (1988): 395-413, citation p. 397.

30. Paul Voisey, "Rural Local History and the Prairie West," *Prairie Forum* 10 (1985): 335. Voisey makes a similar point in *Vulcan: The Making of a Prairie Community* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988).

31. *Ibid.*, p. 336.

32. Weyburn Rural Municipality #67 History Book Committee, *As Far As The Eye Can See* (Weyburn, 1986).

33. Widdis, "Scale and Context" (note 3 above).