

The Community and the Fair: Vankleek Hill,
West Hawkesbury Township and the Agricultural Fair,
1900 to 1950

by

Dorothy-Jane Smith

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral
Affairs in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

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**The Community and the Fair: Vankleek Hill,
West Hawkesbury Township and the Agricultural Fair, 1900 to 1950**

submitted by

Dorothy-Jane Smith, B.A. Hons., B.A.

in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of Master of Arts

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13 January 2012

Abstract

This study of social networks and representations of community is grounded in a linguistically bifurcated place—West Hawkesbury Township and Vankleek Hill, in Prescott County, Ontario—and focused on one social space, the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society and Fair prior to 1950. The Society reflected family and economic relations that underlay local social structures, allowing a few Francophones to be leaders even as Anglophones kept majority control.

The Society represented the agricultural community as materially modern and progressive, but ignored issues of rural depopulation and marginalization and only slowly accommodated the wider needs of the town. The Board and its captive local press emphasized the masculine elements of the fair in defining rural life. Children were encouraged at the rural school fairs to accept city-based reformers' view of men as sole breadwinners but, like the fair board, they did not ignore the productive value of women's and children's work.

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I also wish to thank my family. Bruce Laforce accepted its constant intrusion into our lives, while Ruth and Tom McLelland gave me a home to come back to each evening while I was working at the Ontario Archives. My sisters, Deanna Krause, Margaret Goldik, and Bette Smith, encouraged me all the way, with Deanna cheerfully driving me around southern Ontario in my quest for archives, and Margaret reviewing my text. My brother, Edward Smith, also reviewed text as well as taking care of a myriad of jobs that were being left undone while I focused on this project. Last, although not last in my heart, I wish to thank my parents, Edward and Mildred Smith. While they are now deceased, they are still alive in memory and it is their stories of their rural childhood that gave me this pathway to explore.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Figures and Tables	v
Introduction.....	1
1. Looking for Community in Place.....	11
Where is the Community in the Agricultural Fair?	12
Community and Community Dynamics	16
Community in Relationship with Place	22
Framing the Changing World of the Rural Community	31
Sociability, Socialization, the Press and the Fair	37
Conclusion	45
2. Language and Place, Language and Community	46
Settlement and Soil	48
The Nature and Range of Influence: Vankleek Hill as a Central Place	68
Evolving Patterns of Power	78
Making Community Visible: History-Telling and Social Relationships	86
Conclusion	101
3. The Agricultural Society and Rural Community	103
The Idea of the Agricultural Society and Its Early Manifestations in Upper Canada and Prescott County	105
The Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society in the First Half of the Twentieth Century	121
Participation of French-Canadians and Women in the Agricultural Society	134
Conclusion	145
4. Being Rural	147
Socialization, Community and Being Modern in the Face of Rural Decline	152
The Gendered Rural Community and the Agricultural Fair	166
Developing Rural Skills and Rural Pride: Children at the Fair	180
Conclusion	191
Conclusion	193
Appendix A: Notes on Sources and Family Reconstitution	200
Appendix B: Profiles of Officers of the Ottawa District Agricultural Society	208
Appendix C: Profiles of Prescott County Stockbreeders	212
Appendix D: Family Charts	214
Bibliography	217

List of Figures

Figure 1: Map of Prescott County	50
Figure 2: Prescott County soils, sketch of early road network, 1839, and population trends, 1841 to 1941 (inset: 1839/1843 road map)	53
Figure 3: Settlement of Hawkesbury Township, 1822	59
Figure 4: Settlement of Hawkesbury Township, 1841	59
Figure 5: Settlement of Hawkesbury Township, 1923	60
Figure 6: Population and Commercial / Industrial Establishments, 1870 to 1941	71
Figure 7: Capitalization of Commercial / Industrial Establishments, 1870 to 1941	73
Figure 8 : Range of goods and services available for sale in Hawkesbury, L'Orignal and Vankleek Hill, 1941	75
Figure 9: Origin and Location of 1837 District Agricultural Society Officers	113
Figure 10: Origin and Location of 1844 District Agricultural Society Officers	114
Figure 11: Location of Vankleek Hill Members 1906 to 1930.....	124
Figure 12: Municipal and Agricultural Society Positions Held	132
Figure 13: Premium Book Cover, 1895	171

List of Tables

Table 1: Population and Growth, Prescott County by Township 1820 to 1845	54
Table 2: Population and Ethnicity, Prescott County by Township, 1881 to 1941.....	61

Introduction

I came to the agricultural fair in a search for a way into community and the rural. How could I see the lines of belonging and identity being drawn in a rural place? And how could I see these processes in places of linguistic diversity in the early years of the twentieth century? To answer these questions, I have grounded this study in a specific geographical place, West Hawkesbury Township and Vankleek Hill in Prescott County, Ontario and a specific social space, the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society and Fair. In short, I am using the country fair as a pathway into community dynamics.

I have approached community by first identifying who controlled the administration of an agricultural fair and distinguishing this group from passive participants: those who might have exhibited once or twice, and those who simply came to look. From this, I will argue that the agricultural society leadership was dominated by overlapping social networks formed from old families, a few leading livestock breeders, and town politicians. These networks included only a few French-Canadian men. To the extent that individuals among the Francophone population had kinship ties into the Anglophone community or economic or political reasons for involvement in township institutions, to that extent the lines of inclusion drew in those individuals. But community is equally about how social networks define the face of a community to its members and to others. This study will argue that the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society did this within a hegemonic message of modernity and progressiveness. At the same time, traditional gender roles were made visible at the Vankleek Hill Fair in the contradiction between the invisibility of women producers and the visibility of their production.

The first agricultural fair was held in Ontario prior to 1800, but the glory years of the fair were from 1840 to World War I. In that period in Ontario, any place which wished to be a “Place” would form an agricultural society and hold a fall fair. The smallest fairs, and also the most agricultural, were the township and county fairs. Layered over these were regional fairs, such as the Toronto Canadian National Exhibition and the Ottawa Central Canada Exhibition, but these were industrial shows as much as they were agricultural. While many popular histories focus on both small and large fairs as nostalgic community events, starting in the 1990s a number of studies used the fair to examine issues of modernity and power. In particular, Keith Walden, in *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture*, has looked at modernity at the urban fair while Elspeth Heaman, in *The Inglorious Arts of Peace: Exhibitions in Canadian Society during the Nineteenth Century*, and David Mizener, in his dissertation “Furrows and Fairgrounds: Agriculture, Identity, and Authority in Twentieth-Century Rural Ontario,” addressed hegemony at the rural agricultural fair.¹

These historians included community in their frames but not at the forefront of their analysis. On the other hand, a sociologist from Columbia University, Wayne Neely, wrote in the 1930s a baseline study of the history of the American agricultural fair.² His functional analysis of the fair as an institution identified socialization (or the creation of a

¹ Kenneth Walden, *Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press 1997); E.A. Heaman, *The Inglorious Arts of Peace: Exhibitions in Canadian Society during the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press 1999); David Mizener, “Furrows and Fairgrounds: Agriculture, Identity, and Authority in Twentieth-Century Rural Ontario” (PhD diss., York University, 2009). Useful histories of the development of American fairs within the frame of hegemony are Julie Avery, *Agricultural Fairs in America* and Donald B. Marti’s “Introductory Essay” in his *Historical Directory of American Agricultural Fairs*.

² Wayne Caldwell Neely, *The Agricultural Fair* (1935; repr., New York: AMS Press 1967).

sense of identity) in rural communities as one of the fair's main purposes. His analysis rests on an equation of community with geography but his focus on socialization suggests a way in which community and fairs can be framed together. As a result, Neely will be looked at along with more recent studies in the next chapter.

The approach I have taken requires both community theorization and theorization of the agricultural fair. A fair was not just a community place or a place of socializing, but had a primary objective of disseminating values, first those of agricultural improvers and later of the rural reformers. Community, on the other hand, has been written about theoretically as a concept and historically as specific places and events. In the lower Ottawa Valley of Eastern Ontario it is a word as loaded with potential tension as can be found anywhere. This is a region of villages and towns with one dominant population centre, the city of Ottawa. The towns and their surrounding farm families form a rural world which is diversified along lines of class, age, town and farm, but also between Franco-Ontarians and Anglophones. The original settlers had been a mix of British and Americans who lost their majority status as French-speaking farm families from Quebec migrated into the region. By 1900, the two waves of settlement had formed culturally separate groups that were sometimes co-located and sometimes geographically separated, interacting within the townships and counties in a dance of relationships.

This study is, to some extent, a micro-history. It can serve, as Donald Akenson has argued, to bring detail into focus and thereby give a better understanding of broad historical processes. Akenson's point is that places are important, not because they are typical, but because each has specific attributes or social conditions that can speak to an

historical process.³ I have chosen to study community in Vankleek Hill and West Hawkesbury because of a mix of common characteristics that have created a unique place in Prescott County.

This is a place with distinct French- and English-speaking communities that were approximately in balance as to numbers in the years between 1900 and 1950. It occupies the better agricultural land in the county and was the first part of the county to be settled by British and Americans. Even after the second wave of the French settlement began in the 1850s, the earlier settlers remained a majority in the township. Here, they retained their dominance in municipal politics well beyond the period when they had lost political control at the level of the county. By 1900, West Hawkesbury was an agricultural district of prosperous farms served by a single market retail centre in Vankleek Hill. But the town was closely connected to the farm community in a symbiotic relationship. Residing among the farm implement salesmen and general store merchants were retired farmers, and there were working farms on the fringes of the village. The area had relied on the traditional Ontario mix of hay and cereal crops plus dairying for cheese making, but by the 1920s, like the rest of Prescott County, this was changing. The farms were shifting to whole milk production for sale to city dairies and away from mixed farming. Demographically, economically, and politically, West Hawkesbury and Vankleek Hill began and developed according to a slightly different pattern from the rest of Prescott County. Yet the differences were ones of degree and not of complete opposition. Just as importantly for this study, there has been an agricultural society in the area since 1844, and the society has had its fairgrounds in Vankleek Hill since at least the 1870s.

³ Donald Harman Akenson, *The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press 1984), 4.

The minute books of the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society from 1906 to 1955 still exist and permission has been obtained to study them from the Vankleek Hill and District Historical Society.⁴ A local newspaper, *The Eastern Ontario Review*, was started in 1893 and is still being published today as *The Review*. I had expected the local press would compensate for incomplete institutional records, as well as easing family reconstitution and mapping for the period after 1911 when the federal manuscript censuses are not available. I had also expected that a local press would disclose the public discourse on fairs as it was elaborated, negotiated and communicated between communities in the town. This last expectation proved to be wrong. I found the Vankleek Hill newspaper to be a controlled forum in which wide-ranging public debate did not occur, on which more later. I had also hoped to find early copies of *Le Moniteur*, the French-language newspaper published in the neighbouring town of Hawkesbury, through which the voice of Francophone residents could be heard. Again, this expectation failed, as no issues were found. *Le Droit* in Ottawa appears to be the only French-language newspaper for eastern Ontario that is available for the period of study.

Placing community at the centre of my study of the fair asks who comprised the community that put on the small agricultural fair, and how that community excluded or included groups who arrived after the original establishment of the fair. Were certain groups in the community more or less prominent, whether in directing or participating in fairs? Who saw themselves as leaders? Who was willing to participate and who stood

⁴ This is a rare source of information. In the nineteenth and early-twentieth century, secretaries of small agricultural societies often kept minute books in their personal possession and might or might not hand them on to successors. Those records that still exist are for the most part held by the individual societies. Western University Archives have the records of one society from southern Ontario but there is no equivalent archival holding for the fairs of Eastern Ontario.

apart? By situating this study geographically in Eastern Ontario, I can probe whether, and to what extent, the differences Heaman revealed between Ontario and Quebec fairs can be found in an area of mixed population on the borders of the two provinces. Yet another question is what kind of community the fair organizers were trying to present as the face of their district. In small-town Ontario, well into the twentieth century, education and improvement strove with entertainment for precedence at most fairs. Examining how the rural press judged fairs, and how local correspondents wrote to the press to describe their own local fair, can bring out not just the question of whether fairs were to be serious educators or frivolous diversions. It can also shed light on how contemporaries perceived the community at the fair. There is also the question of the extent to which agricultural societies were seen as useful players in solving early-twentieth-century issues stemming from the perceived changes in rural community due to agricultural restructuring. Were they the leaders of the agricultural community who could address structural issues? Or, given that specialists at the agricultural colleges and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture dominated agricultural and rural education after 1900, were the agricultural societies irrelevant to discussions on community issues? Finally, it was not only the agricultural societies that were performing a role about community at the agricultural fair. Exhibitors were standing up in front of their peers, sometimes literally in the show ring and sometimes figuratively through their craft work on display in the fair hall. What roles were they presenting to the public, some of whom would have been neighbours, friends, and family, but many of whom were strangers?

At the beginning of this study, I had anticipated including an examination of the degree to which the countryside changed between 1900 and 1950 from a place of

production of goods to a place of consumption by urbanites seeking a rural experience.⁵ I had expected this would become visible at the fair as the education of farmers was de-emphasized in favour of showcasing rural life to urban visitors.⁶ David Breen and Kenneth Coates have given a 1947 example from the Vancouver Pacific Exhibition, where living cows were replaced with static displays about milk production.⁷ In Eastern Ontario, however, this change was not visible prior to 1950, and may be related to improvement of transportation links after World War II. A reasonable consideration of this question requires extension of the study into the 1960s and must be left for others.

Availability of primary sources has been a challenge in this study. Heaman, Jones and Mizener relied on the papers of government agencies responsible for agricultural societies, newspaper articles, and the reports of the agricultural exhibition association printed in the provincial *Sessional Papers*.⁸ As well, they pieced together a story from reports and records available for study from a small number of agricultural societies. This worked well, for their scope was the province rather than a specific region or fair. As well, Mizener supplemented the paper record with oral histories recorded in a 1984 Guelph University project, "Farm Work and Farm Life in Canada since 1890," plus interviews conducted by him.

I have used the same types of sources to understand the provincial context for the Vankleek Hill Fair: that is, the Reports of the Ontario Association of Fairs and

⁵ Jeremy Burchardt, "Agricultural History, Rural History, or Countryside History?", *The Historical Journal* 50, no. 2 (2007): 465-481.

⁶ Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies, *The Story of Ontario Agricultural Fairs and Exhibitions, 1792-1967* (Picton, Ont.: Picton Gazette Publishing 1967), 203; Guy Scott, *A Fair Share* (Peterborough: John Deyell 1992), 119.

⁷ David Breen and Kenneth Coates, *Vancouver's Fair: An Administrative and Political History of the Pacific National Exhibition* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press 1982), 109.

⁸ Each historian found this general range of sources of varying usefulness depending on the time period and the jurisdiction.

Exhibitions (since 1936 the Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies) printed in the *Ontario Sessional Papers*, and coverage of Eastern Ontario fairs as reported in *The Ottawa Valley Journal* and *The Farmer's Advocate*. I have examined the social network created by the Vankleek Hill Fair from the minute books of the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society. These have provided lists of members, prize winners and sponsors as well as annual reports, expenditure and financial reports, and decisions taken at meetings, although the content varies depending on who was the secretary. In order to situate the social networks found in the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society I used census returns and civil registration of birth, marriage and death to reconstitute family relationships among the leading members of the Society. For a consideration of the relevance of the Society to agricultural improvement, I used the reports of Ontario's county agricultural representative in Prescott County. These date from 1919 with the appointment of the first such representative to the county.⁹

The Vankleek Hill newspaper, *The Eastern Ontario Review*, gives an additional but limited view into the workings of the local agricultural society. I say limited because it seldom printed letters to the editor in which voices from the community might be heard. To understand why the local press was not useful, one needs to look at William Jones's study of the Welsh small-town press. Jones found that the popular press had in the early- and mid-nineteenth century encouraged plebeian participation in the making of the newspaper, but by the end of the century discouraged this by privileging the professional

⁹ Heaman and Walden did not use the records of Ontario's agricultural extension program due to it coming into existence after the period of their studies, but Mizener did use them to help identify the official expectations set for fairs and plowing matches by the government.

journalistic voice.¹⁰ As well, the Vankleek Hill paper was a “patent inside” newspaper, for which newsprint was bought with one side already printed with the news equivalent of canned music. This left less space for local news. Most importantly, between 1909 and 1920 the newspaper’s owner-editor, H. Carl Jones, was the Agricultural Society’s secretary-treasurer and controlled the published dialogue about the fair.

The oral histories consulted by Mizener were not helpful for this project as the only Eastern Ontario interviews conducted were in Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry. I decided not to conduct local interviews myself, as I did not anticipate oral history would provide sufficient useful information. This study is focused on the period before World War II when interviewees would, at best, have been small children and not privy to how the agricultural society was managed. In addition, it is difficult for an outsider in a small community to elicit full responses on difficult issues such as inclusion and exclusion. I do not have ties into the local Anglophone community and, as an Anglophone with a limited command of French, I anticipated limited responses from the Francophone community. These limitations could have been overcome through trust built up with the local historical society, but not in the time available for this study.

What follows is divided into four chapters. Chapter One reviews the historiography of the fair and of community. The key question for this chapter is to what extent studies of the fair have contributed to an understanding of the drawing of lines of exclusion and inclusion. More broadly, how have community and community dynamics been studied within the specificity of a rural place? Chapter Two examines the town of

¹⁰ William D. Jones, “Going into Print: Published Immigrant Letters, Webs of Personal Relations, and the Emergence of the Welsh Public Sphere,” *Letters Across Borders: the Epistolary Practices of International Migrants* ed. Bruce S. Elliott, David A. Gerber, and Suzanne M. Sinke (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2006), 175-199.

Vankleek Hill and the surrounding area, first to show how settlement and economic relationships created a unique place, and then to address how the linguistic patterns created by these forces affected political, economic, and social relationships. Chapter Three focuses on community as found in the social networks formed in the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society and the power relationships that were reflected in those networks. Chapter Four examines how the agricultural community was made visible by the Agricultural Society as it put on the fair, by exhibitors and by children attending both agricultural fairs and the school fairs that were modeled on those fall fairs.

As a child, I listened to my parents' stories of childhood in the Russell County countryside of the Ottawa Valley and felt the farm and village of their stories to be a place where I belonged. When I visited that countryside, I was treated as belonging even though I was a summer visitor from the city. I started by wishing to understand how the lines of belonging can be drawn to include a person living outside a place. Yet I have undertaken a study of belonging based those living within a place and belonging to an association, an agricultural society in Prescott County. Here, lines of exclusion and inclusion were drawn by social networks formed around family relationships, as I had experienced, but also around economic and political interests. Combined, these reinforced linguistic lines of division while simultaneously allowing a few of the Franco-Ontarians of Prescott County who shared at least one of those networks to cross. At the same time, the agricultural fair acted as a social space in which community roles were made visible for all those attending as well as those at a distance who only read about the fair.

Chapter 1 – Looking for Community in Place

Community is a word that can mean so much and so little, depending on the emotions wrapped up in it. Most people refer to community in a positive sense, to stress a group's internal cohesiveness. In political conversations, community is used to underline that there are people "out there" who must be met with, consulted, involved and listened to. However, for anyone who has been outside a group—whether on the playground or in society at large—the lines of exclusion which set the bounds around a community are very real and can be deeply hurtful. My goal is to develop an understanding of how people were both linked to and separated from each other in a rural place and in an iconic rural institution: the town of Vankleek Hill in Prescott County and its agricultural society and fair.

In this introductory chapter, I will explore how the fair has been studied by historians and its potential for locating and analyzing community. To what extent has the fair been recognized by historians as a place where lines of exclusion and inclusion were drawn? How has the fair been used to tease out that process for examination? And given that the small agricultural fair is pre-eminently a *rural* institution, how have historians viewed community in rural social spaces? Answering these questions raises questions about the nature of rural society in the first half of the twentieth century. After World War I, people in the countryside were questioning their place in Canadian society. Reformers writing in the rural press were preaching the necessity of becoming "modern." They meant changing traditional family relationships and economic roles, as well as increasing farm use of technology and adopting business methods that would make farming an industrial activity rather than a family way of life. Economic relationships

were changing, not only between city and countryside, but between towns and their hinterlands in the countryside. The response of rural people, both individually and as organized groups, was to try to control the rate and effect of change. It is impossible to study rural community in the first half of the twentieth century without considering the effect of change.

I will start with an overview of the historiography of the fair in order to identify the broad themes that have been explored by historians with respect to that site of study. Second, I will review how community and community dynamics have been redefined to focus on social relationships and social representation. Third, I will consider how place and the local have been used in understanding rural communities. Fourth, I will look at how change and identity have been studied within the context of both rural communities and rural fairs in the early-twentieth century. Last, I will consider approaches to the study of community, as exemplified by recent historians who have looked at small towns and rural regions. From this review of the different frames for community, I will argue that social networks and social representation need to be combined with an understanding of the agricultural society as a social space if we are to understand community dynamics in a rural Ontario fair.

Where is the Community in the Agricultural Fair?

Fairs catch both the popular and the academic imagination. Popular histories of fairs, whether a specific fair or just fairs in general, aim to present the essence of a rural place as it is found on fairgrounds. Thus, Charles Fish entitles the preface of his book on

the fairs of his youth, “Magic.”¹ Guy Scott, a history teacher and past president of the Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies, has written a lavishly illustrated, archivally-based history of the fair in Canada that begins with the word “memories.” He goes on to speak of the intertwining of the history of each fair with its community, and of fairgrounds as holding “a sense of family ... a friendliness [that] develops among disparate groups.”² But historians have also taken more critical views of the agricultural societies and their fairs. The question in this section is which of the approaches taken would be most fruitful in trying to use the fair as a lens on “community.”

The first, and still authoritative, study of the agricultural fair is by Wayne Neely, a sociologist writing in the 1930s. Neely views the fair as carrying out three major functions: agricultural education, recreation, and community socialization, with each contributing to the building of community.³ Neely’s approach is that of a structuralist as described in Kerry Abel’s review of the changing ways sociologists have framed community. That is, he approaches community as an organization in which individuals formed an interdependence structured around shared activity and belief.⁴ And there the matter was left until the late twentieth century, even as the frames for understanding community changed radically. Then, in the 1980s Leslie Prosterman undertook an ethnographic study of cultural and social values as found in contemporary midwestern American fairs. Her study, later published as *Ordinary Life, Festival Days*, like Neely’s examined the social functions of fairs in rural communities. She emphasizes how fairs

¹ Charles Fish, *Blue Ribbons and Burlesque* (Woodstock, Vermont: The Countryman Press 1998).

² Guy Scott, *Country Fairs in Canada* (Markham, Ont.: Fitzhenry and Whiteside 2006), 5-9.

³ Neely, 243-4 and *passim*.

⁴ Kerry Abel, *Changing Places: History, Community, and Identity in Northeastern Ontario* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press 2006), xv.

used everyday farm life as the content for a festival showcasing rural aesthetic values. For Prosterman, culture is both a presentation of community and a way in which a common identity is built around the values displayed in the material world of the fair.⁵

This ethnographic focus on culture is found in Keith Walden's *Becoming Modern in Toronto*, a cultural look at the modernizing effect of an urban agricultural-industrial fair, Toronto's Canadian National Exhibition, in the 1890s.⁶ In contrast, Elspeth Heaman, in *The Inglorious Arts of Peace*, focused on the development of agricultural fairs in Ontario and Quebec over the nineteenth century, as well as later Canadian participation in world fairs. In looking at the smaller, more intensely agricultural fairs, Heaman uses the lens of hegemony to focus on relations between social classes.⁷

Even though David C. Jones's monograph on Prairie fairs precedes Walden's and Heaman's work by about 15 years, he parallels Walden's approach while extending Heaman's findings into the twentieth century. Another who has extended Heaman's conclusions is David Mizener, in his dissertation on Ontario's fairs. Both argue that the tension between entertainment and education continued to be an issue well past the 1890s, but that the nature of the battle lines changed. Whereas in the nineteenth century the argument had been between entertainment and education on livestock and agricultural techniques, in the twentieth century education at the fair centered on modern, urban values of production, along with missionary work on new roles for women as non-income-producing family members.

⁵ Leslie Prosterman, *Ordinary Life, Festival Days* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press 1995).

⁶ Walden, 6 and *passim*.

⁷ Heaman, 5.

Jones's *Midways, Judges, and Smooth-Tongued Fakirs* explores this through a thematic examination of Prairie fairs from the late nineteenth century to their eclipse in the 1930s.⁸ He is concerned with conflict between the disorder of the fair and the ideal of agricultural improvement, but adds that the western fair was a forum through which governments and rural reformers sought to turn peasant immigrant farmers into Canadian producers. While theory is not a central focus in Jones's text, Mizener, in "Furrows and Fairgrounds," is overtly concerned with hegemony. He argues that the conflict between improvement and entertainment extended beyond the period when Heaman concludes the latter to have overwhelmed any other purpose at a fair. He finds that the rural improvement movement used Ontario's fairs in the twentieth century as one of the fora for persuading farm families to adopt the aesthetic values of the urban middle class.⁹

These different analyses of the fair all assume that community and the fair are in one way or another linked. Even an administrative history of an urban industrial-agricultural fair, such as David Breen and Kenneth Coates's study of Vancouver's Pacific National Exhibition, recognize that fairs have a social and cultural dimension. They call the fair's social processes "very important, but more elusive," but do not address this further.¹⁰ Neely argues that social interaction at the fair is one of the mechanisms that structure community. Prosterman, Walden and Jones view the fair as a site where the cultural values of a community are displayed both as affirmation among those who subscribe to them and to make a case for the values to those for whom they are foreign. Walden and Jones, however, are concerned with the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-

⁸ David C. Jones, *Midways, Judges, and Smooth-Tongued Fakirs: The Illustrated Story of Country Fairs in the Prairie West* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books 1983).

⁹ Mizener, 342-3, 345.

¹⁰ Breen and Coates, 5.

century attempts to spread modern, urban-based values, while Prosterman looks at how exhibitors and managers used fairs in the 1980s to display a vision of “traditional” rural values. For Walden and Jones, power is part of the process by which cultural statements are made, but culture is in the centre of the frame. For Heaman and Mizener, the story is power, with the fair a site of hegemonic struggle.

The different historians also approach fairs at different levels of detail. Walden looks at a specific fair and the people who made that fair, but it is an urban fair. Prosterman selects a small number of rural fairs on which to concentrate her gaze. The other three, Jones, Heaman and Mizener, look at fairs at the level of the provincial. Mizener is sensitive to the range of diverging interests that coalesced around the Indian fairs at Brantford, Ontario, but does not delve as deeply into the differing interests within other rural communities. While recognizing that there were reformers and those who were to be reformed, he tends to speak of “farm men and women” and of “community” as if the agricultural fair took place within a single community. What is not portrayed clearly in any these studies is specifically who was included and who was excluded, whether by self-selection or by deliberate drawing of lines.

Community and Community Dynamics

Even though fair historians agree that community and the fair are linked, they tend to treat “community” as an unproblematized given. Can a clearer understanding of the most useful approach be found by examining how community generally has been studied? One starting point for this question is a 1999 essay by John Walsh and Stephen High. Due to their main question being how historians can profitably use the concept of

community to frame historical questions, they have collapsed a long period of theoretical debate among sociologists about the meaning of the term. They move quickly to the end result, in which a reified and static concept of “community lost” was challenged by an equally reified and static concept, “community found.”

Kerry Abel, in the preface to her monograph on community in northeastern Ontario, ignores for the most part how the concept of community has been used by historians and refocuses on the concept itself. She argues that there is something to be extracted today from the process sociologists went through as they first grappled with the concept of community. These theorists were arguing against the centrality of the lone individual, as conceptualized in utilitarianism, and arguing for the centrality of community made up of interdependent individuals as well as for the idea that community was a site of analysis.¹¹ This last is at the heart of what Walsh and High are seeking to achieve: to persuade historians that “community” is not a given. It is a problem worthy of study. This can be done by moving beyond concepts of community that rest on place, sharing, or commonality, and instead focusing on three concepts: community as imagined reality, community as social interaction, and community as process.¹² Each of these emphasizes a social construction of community based on human relationships.

Walsh and High’s analysis contrasts what they treat as two approaches elaborated to move past a sterile debate of community lost versus community found. They characterize these as, on one hand, a sociological approach employing social networks and, on the other, a social anthropological representation of community through signs and

¹¹ Abel, xiv-xv.

¹² John C. Walsh and Stephen High, “Rethinking the Concept of Community,” *Histoire sociale / Social History* 32, no. 64 (1999): 256-7.

symbols. Abel follows the same path, but defines community as involving relationships and signs and symbols that create systems of meanings for these relationships.

Walsh and High identify social networks as the first step in moving the sociology of community beyond the limits imposed by reifying community as an unchanging product of shared history or an emotional state bound to a geographic place. This allows an examination of how links or relationships between people create a sense of belonging and identity. It also opens up possibilities for analysis by placing community in “the social spaces of everyday interactions and exchanges.”¹³ Walsh and High credit the sociologist Craig Calhoun as seeing the potential in social network theory, both as a fluid process of change and as a process of exclusion and inclusion. With these two concepts, community can be studied as a social construction (not a reified structure) involving power, authority, legitimacy and resistance. They also take from Calhoun the insight that intensity of social interactions is equally important, since not all interactions create community. We have only to think of the interactions between shopkeeper and occasional customer to understand the point.

Yet Walsh and High see cultural meaning as missing from social network theory, preventing historians from understanding the experience and social consequences of community. This requires an exploration of “cultural values, truths, and imagery” and brings them to the anthropological approach to community.¹⁴ Here, their starting point is the “social space” of Henri Lefebvre, which will be spoken of later, and the “deep play” of Clifford Geertz. Geertz’s work, “Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture,” is mentioned briefly by Walsh and High to indicate that “community,” like

¹³ Walsh and High, 260.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 261-3.

other social structures, is a human creation with many layers of meaning. Peeling back those layers requires the historian to explore both macro- and micro-influences (demographics, politics, economics, gender, ethnicity, class, age). Only then can we read community in the round and so understand its significance for individuals. Walsh and High also speak of “spatial markers and symbols.”¹⁵ These words suggest that both human use of space and human activity in space become a physical representation of the community, making the boundaries visible to all. Abel is also concerned with symbol and signs, but does not specify their spatial aspects. Instead, she goes back to beginnings with the semiotics school of Ferdinand de Saussure as it was elaborated by Roland Barthes, but also by Geertz.

Given that we are dealing with two processes both working to create community, social networks and representation that gives meaning to the networks, is there a way to conceptualize what appear to be separate but interdependent moving parts? Walsh and High use the phrase “dynamics of community” without definition. A 1986 paper by psychologists David McMillan and David Chavis defines dynamics as the process that creates “sense of community.” This is an emotional state involving the feeling of belonging, a sense of making a difference to the group or of the group making a difference to the individual, fulfillment of needs, and shared emotional connection.¹⁶ It is also a value-laden understanding which stems naturally from one of their criteria for a useful definition: that it convey “the warmth and intimacy implicit in the term.”¹⁷ In

¹⁵ Ibid., 266-7.

¹⁶ David W. McMillan and David M. Chavis, “Sense of Community: A Definition and Theory,” *Journal of Community Psychology* 14 (January 1986): 9.

¹⁷ Ibid. McMillan and Chavis are not blind to the harm caused by exclusion or by the narrow foundations of some communities, but argue that overall a sense of community contributes to a better society.

consequence, McMillan and Chavis do not address how power, the “othering” that forms the boundaries of community, relates to community. Given this gap, the most useful part of this analysis for historians is their articulation that community dynamics is an iterative process. Each emotional element and each communal activity is both cause and effect.¹⁸ This suggests that it is difficult to distinguish the process of joining in community (as found in networks) and the process of developing meaning from being in community (found in representation).

We end here with an understanding that both social networks and social representation must be brought into play in order to study community. The creative relationship between community and the people in community is found in Benedict Anderson’s work, *Imagined Community*.¹⁹ Anderson is concerned with how the national state was created by a commonality of interest among people who never met, through a combination of ideas as purveyed in the writings of the press, invented tradition and symbols. Recently Walsh joined with James Opp to come back to the question of how to find meaning in place. As editors of *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada*, they brought together essays exploring how, in different places and periods in Canada, a sense of place has been created by commemoration and in memory.²⁰ Abel also speaks of social constructions created by memory. She moves from Anderson to a discussion of identity which she argues is the product of the stories we tell, the symbols

¹⁸ Ibid., 15-9.

¹⁹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (rev. ed. London and New York: Verso 2006).

²⁰ James Opp and John C. Walsh (ed.), *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press 2010).

we use to give meaning and emotion to our lives, and the rituals and performances that both create and affirm our understanding of the world and our place in it.

Anthony Cohen has written on the importance of symbol in creating community. He begins by treating community, not as a thing, but as a relational process. Community defines both what is similar and what is different within a given set of phenomena. For this reason, Cohen argues that community is best understood by focusing on the boundary of whatever it is that is being distinguished, for it is in boundaries that each community defines itself.²¹ Boundaries are formed most powerfully by symbols, but “[s]ymbols do not so much express meaning as give us the capacity to make meaning.” Even though each individual understands the meaning of a symbol idiosyncratically, all agree that the symbol has power and will use it to conceptualize the world and their relationship to the world. Cohen calls symbols “the things with which we think.”²²

Walsh and High started their examination of how historians have addressed community with Gérard Bouchard’s 1996 work on the Saguenay region (*Quelques Arpents d’Amérique*). They describe it as an example of the sociological approach which does not allow for drawing out the experience of being in that community. Bouchard acknowledges these limits when he notes that he has not analyzed family life in qualitative terms, “de ses tensions et conflits, de ses solidarités vécues.” He argues, though, that the data he has amassed will allow future work to be done on the inner life of the family.²³ On the other hand, Royden Loewen (Walsh and High’s example of the

²¹ Anthony P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. (London and New York: Tavistock Publications, 1985), 12.

²² *Ibid.*, 15.

²³ Gérard Bouchard, *Quelques Arpents d’Amérique: Population, Économie, Famille au Saguenay 1838-1971* ([Montreal]: Boréal 1996), 12.

ethnological approach) does examine the inner life of families and individuals as part of studying a Mennonite community, but this is a group with a tradition of literary self-examination. With less articulate communities, the historian will need to be open to a range of ways in which the meaning of community was conveyed. Cohen focuses on symbols as key to understanding identity. Symbols do indeed become very important as one shifts the gaze from the surface of the community to its inner life, but deciphering meaning remains difficult.

I find from this discussion that, as Bouchard argued in his work, one must start by identifying the bounds of the community. Only then is it possible to dig more deeply into the meaning of identity in that community. Representation, however, can be studied in many ways. It can be studied as commemoration and memory. It can also be found in history telling and in the claims communities make about the world and what they regard as important in that world.

Community in Relationship with Place

Walsh and High present Henri Lefebvre's argument in *The Production of Space* that institutions (church, school, work or associations) are "social spaces," that is, places where communal processes happen. But while they do not go deeper into space and community, and indeed dismiss the old sociology in which community was geography, admitting "social space" as a site of representation opens a question of whether community and *place* interact. Is space meaningful only when it is metaphoric?

Walsh and High do not dispute Doreen Massey's arguments on place or Chad Gaffield's on region: that is, that "place" can bring into focus unique combinations of

historical and societal processes. But they place the social creation of community first. Massey, who is a geographer, would agree. She argues in the article referenced by Walsh and High, "Power-Geometry and a Progressive Sense of Place," that place is not a point on a map, nor does it have an ancient and unchanging identity. Place, like community, is always in the process of becoming, as people move in and out of a point on the map bringing with them changing social connections to other points on the map. A sense of place comes from the unique mix of social connections found in a particular place.²⁴ This is the essential point of Walsh and High's argument that "[w]hile the making of place is embedded in the processes of community they are not the same, and in fact the meaning and identities attached to place are very much the product of inter-communal relationships and struggles."²⁵ It is not Massey's place and Gaffield's region that make community visible. Rather, community, or social relationships, creates "place."

Opp and Walsh, in their introductory essay in *Placing Memory*, make an argument for studying community in the local as a means to "focus in." While they recognize there are merits to studying how the land itself plays a role in creating community and identity, and examine with sympathy the works of William Turkel and Julia Cruickshank written in this vein, their emphasis is on how community creates "place."²⁶ They set aside, therefore, the question of how local conditions establish the possibilities for communities which might develop in a place, and how those communities will experience the place. The distinction I am trying to make, between community creating place and place as one factor creating community, is a matter of

²⁴ Doreen Massey, "Power-geometry and a progressive sense of place," ed. Jon Bird et al. *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change* (New York: Routledge 1992), 63-8.

²⁵ Walsh and High, 266.

²⁶ Walsh and Opp., 6-7.

emphasis rather than of disagreement. Dolores Hayden, in *The Power of Place*, makes the argument for a dynamic interplay between location and community. Streets, buildings and natural land formations frame the comings and goings of those who live in an area and, through this, individual and collective memories. Only then, after living in the place, can people invest geography with emotion. Yes, people make a “place.” They take ownership by naming their surroundings, by erecting buildings, and by hanging street decorations that reflect cultural values and spiritual beliefs. People change the land even as the land shapes memories. People also tell stories—written, oral and in public art—of their history in a place. All these actions reflect how power and lack of power, along with the topography, shape the lives lived within the landscape.²⁷ There is an on-going interaction between community and place that makes the local worth studying.

All of the previous discussion is about the difference between community as social network and community as place. It is clear that community cannot be bound by geography nor by the local. At the same time, I believe it is worthwhile to consider the claims of local history and micro-history to understand community. Bruce Elliott states that, while the local can be a place to study wide historical themes, local history takes “locality as an object of study.” He describes community studies as focusing on the human relationships that can cut across geographic boundaries.²⁸ Walsh and High, as well as Abel and Opp and Walsh, are concerned with the human relationships and use the local to focus in. This is what I am trying to do, but it requires an understanding of what Walsh and High call “a person's address.”

²⁷ Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place* (Cambridge, Massachusetts & London England: MRT Press 1995).

²⁸ Email from Bruce S. Elliott, March 26, 2010.

Walsh and High argue that focusing on “address” can impede historians from “recogniz[ing] power relationships that create critical differences among community members.”²⁹ Chad Gaffield, in “The New Regional History: Rethinking the History of the Outaouais,” argues that regional and micro-regional history can disaggregate high level conclusions. This allows the historian to determine whether such conclusions hold true generally or are relevant to specific groups, such as urban elites.³⁰ Place can help to shed light on power relationships. This makes both local history and regional history potentially of value when considering how to study community. A local history will need to understand the particular mixes of human relationships and meanings, or communities, found in a place as they were formed by topography, by social interactions, by local power relationships, all within the context of broad societal, economic and political changes. As an example of this process consider Glenn Lockwood’s monograph, *Montague: A Social History of an Irish Ontario Township, 1783-1980*, which is a municipal history commissioned by the Township Council.³¹ Yet it is not devoid of critical attention to issues of power, in particular around gender and ethnicity. For example, in his chapter, “A Long Victorian Afternoon,” Lockwood uncovers the culture of order and disorder in the township through Orange Lodge records and symbols of identity used in banners and parades.

Walsh and High praised Bouchard’s analysis of the Saguenay in *Quleques Arpents d’Amerique* as a study of social networks linking the local to the world outside

²⁹ Walsh and High, 257.

³⁰ Chad Gaffield, “The New Regional History: Rethinking the History of the Outaouais,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 26 (1991).

³¹ Glenn J. Lockwood, *Montague: A Social History of an Irish Ontario Township, 1783-1980* (Kingston, Ont.: Mastercraft Printing and Graphics 1980).

the region. By showing how family relationships were maintained even as individuals moved away, Bouchard is able to separate community from place.³² But Bouchard himself situates his work in the French Annales School, seeking to be grounded in the specifics of local geography while transcending political boundaries.³³ He asserts that material conditions on the ground have an effect: “une dynamique complexe où l’environnement physique a joué un rôle à certains égards déterminants.”³⁴ His analysis, though, rests primarily on the families of the region and their economic decision-making. From this, he is able to study and understand the influences of official institutions and wider social structures as part of changes in the collective life of that society. It is the Annales School, however, as much as non-geographical social networks that takes Bouchard beyond a traditional narrative of rural Quebec saved from English-Canadian culture by being bounded within Quebec and thereby socially distant from the other. Instead, he looks at the Saguenay and continental settlement and growth as part of the same large sweeps of history.

But how does Bouchard use social network theory and what does he mean by community? As noted by Walsh and High, Bouchard is dealing with a culturally homogeneous population. Bouchard states that the main cleavage was rural/urban and that the urban element was not strong.³⁵ Again, an understanding of the place is necessary to understand the social networks in that place. To understand community integration, Bouchard considers three factors: geographic mobility, the process of putting down roots (*enracinement*), and familial relations. This allows him to combine a regional

³² Walsh and High, 263-4.

³³ Bouchard, 7.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 33-5.

study of the agricultural, forestry and industrial development of the region with a migration study that includes both newcomers and out-migrants. He did this by reconstituting 197 families from among the pre-1842 settlers. He then tracks them through three generations to account for other waves of settlement and ongoing departures. In this way, he teases out the networks of individuals which formed the family-based collectives. In his argument, the individual was an integral part of a patrilineal family, which acted both as an individual unit and, at the level of the neighbourhood (the concession) and the parish, as a collective.³⁶

Examining the links between places, as well as the links between people, can show the evolution of social networks and how changes in transportation and economic connections led to new social relationships. One approach, linking regions to metropolises, has been examined by J. M. S. Careless. In a 1979 article he makes the case for the reciprocal ties that bind together cities and hinterland, while his 1987 lecture series examines the impact of these ties on national and regional identity.³⁷ Careless argues that frontiers are created and then developed into regions by metropolitan demand for resources, followed by metropolitan financing of the extraction of those resources, and finally distribution of the products of the resources by the metropolis. He recognizes that there are layers of influence, but sees these as linear: from London, to Montreal and Toronto and then through Ottawa, Winnipeg, and Regina to small cities and towns and the farms in the countryside. At the same time, these relationships are reciprocal and end

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 41-5, 276, 303.

³⁷ J. M. S. Careless, "Metropolis and Region: The Interplay Between City and Region in Canadian History Before 1914," *Urban History Review* 7, no. 3 (February, 1979): 99-118; *Frontier and Metropolis: Regions, Cities and Identities in Canada before 1914* The Donald G. Creighton Lectures 1987 (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press 1989).

in “systems of interdependent communities in town and country.”³⁸ His concern, however, in both article and lectures is the national sweep of history in which a few cities enjoyed paramount power, or influence, over whole regions “without competition.”³⁹

Careless argues that the ties between metropolis and region are better suited to analysis of place in Canada than Walter Christaller’s central place theory. He feels that the latter reflects a European geography of an evenly distributed population and many market centres. Canada’s geographical conditions have clustered the population into a limited number of places, the metropolises, to which immense regions become tied for investment, retail goods and a market for rural resources.⁴⁰ While Careless appears to regard economics, in the form of investment and trade, as the key tie between places, he touches in two paragraphs on social networks, an example being kinship networks in nineteenth-century long-distance trade connections.⁴¹

Despite Careless’s dismissal, can central place theory help us understand how places affect social networks? I would argue that this is possible if the theory is not slavishly followed. Christaller’s theory was developed in the 1930s, and was most used in the 1960s in economic geography, town planning, analysis of economic pricing, and to a limited extent in anthropology.⁴² It was intended to explain spatial relationships between rural retail centres delivering goods and services to final consumers in the agricultural countryside. It was not intended to explain the location of manufacturing, industrial, distribution, or resort centres, which develop in response to the presence of specific,

³⁸ Careless, “Metropolis and Region,” 100.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 111-2.

⁴¹ Careless, *Frontier and Metropolis*, 66-7.

⁴² Leslie J. King, *Central Place Theory* (Beverly Hills, London, New Delhi: SAGE Publications 1984).

limited-supply resources. In contrast, it is assumed that there are no specific “resources” required to justify the existence of retail market centres other than the presence of rural consumers.⁴³

The most relevant approach to central theory for my question, of whether or not social networks can be understood by examining relationships between places, comes out of anthropology studies. Carol Smith, who is an anthropologist studying Guatemalan society, reviews the results from her own work as well as from a wide range of other studies. She concludes that regions are organized according to hierarchical structures affecting marriage and kinship patterns as well as religion and politics. The differences between systems in different cultures, for example whether kinship networks are located at one level of societal and spatial organization or another, reflect the structures and complexity of the systems of social relationships in that culture. Structures can also determine what social roles are played at these different levels.⁴⁴

In writing history, place linkages have largely been left to regional and local historians. Explicit comparison of functions delivered by market towns appears to be rare. Bruce Elliott used central place as a frame for examining the degree to which local needs for goods and services were met in Carp Village, and how this changed with the railway. This provided an explanation of why business did not increase even as the population grew. It also underlined the degree to which the residents of Carp looked to Arnprior as

⁴³ King, 15; Carol A. Smith, “Regional Economic Systems: Linking Geographical Models and Socioeconomic Problems,” ed. Carol A. Smith, *Economic Systems* Vol. 1 of *Regional Analysis* (New York, San Francisco, London: Academic Press 1976), 26; John Urquhart Marshall, *The Location of Service Towns: An Approach to the Analysis of Central Place Systems* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1969), 71-3. 80, 123.

⁴⁴ Carol A. Smith, “Analyzing Regional Social Systems,” ed. Carol A. Smith, *Social Systems*. Vol. 2 of *Regional Analysis*. (New York, San Francisco, London: Academic Press 1976), 18.

well as to Ottawa for daily commercial activities.⁴⁵ I suggest that the key insight for historians from central place theory is that networks between people in a rural region are affected by economic linkages between a market town and the farmland that surrounds it, and among competing market centres within the region. Central place theory also provides a methodology for comparing the extent of influence of places.

Both central place theory and metropolitan-frontier theory focus on relationships between places of different sizes and different complexity. The broadest such relationship is between the urban and the rural. If we dismiss what Walsh and High called “address,” are we more equipped to understand power dynamics in rural places, or less? In Gerald Creed’s 1990s anthropology study of Eastern European society, he finds “uncompromising” rural/urban polarities that infuse power relations between places:

Inhabitants of areas where town and country seem nearly indistinguishable may nevertheless elaborate a difference through extensive cultural discourse. Where visible differences do exist, cultural oppositions may exaggerate them and erase countervailing similarities ... people live the rural/urban distinction through mundane cultural activities such as their selection of music (country versus rap) and their choice of clothing (cowboy boots versus wing tips)—means through which identity is commonly expressed. ... Such choices shape identity in concert with less flexible markers of place such as regional accents and hometown origins.⁴⁶

Creed and Barbara Ching point to the range of ways in which rural communities are turned into an “other” within a dominant western discourse that is urban. In popular culture, the few times when a rural audience is the focus it is specifically identified as

⁴⁵ Bruce S. Elliott, *The Origins and Early History of Carp Village* (Carp, Ont.: Huntley Township Historical Society 2003), 51-7.

⁴⁶ Gerald W. Creed and Barbara Ching, “Recognizing Rusticity: Identity and the Power of Place,” *Knowing Your Place: Rural Identity and Cultural Hierarchy* ed. Barbara Ching and Gerald W. Creed (New York and London: Routledge 1997), 2-3.

such and becomes a “culturally marked category.” Thus rural is not a “natural” identity, but a heightened element in the rural definition of self. Exaggerated rural features become resistance to the dominant urban discourse, and displaying guns and driving a truck is as much about upsetting cultural hierarchies as it is about utility.⁴⁷ But Creed and Ching’s examples underline how “rural” is a cultural creation. When positive views of rural life are presented, it is often as a means to criticize urban life, either by rural residents justifying their own values and way of life or by commentators seeking a moral lesson for residents of the city. Negative urban visions of the rural often are presented in a gendered, ethnic, and class form (Daisy Mae and Li’l Abner, poor white trash, black sharecroppers). They also point to a similar process of social construction of place when environmentalists differentiate between rural (where people live and work) and wilderness (defined as being empty of human activity by means of ignoring historical reality and the claims of indigenous populations).⁴⁸ It seems that “rural” can be as difficult as “community” to encompass within simple boundaries and definitions. It is not a place so much as it is a state of mind. Yet there is an underlying discourse about being rural that turns place into something to be understood both socially and geographically.

Framing the Changing World of the Rural Community

Walsh and High present Royden Loewen and his study of the migration of a Mennonite community as an example of an anthropological-historical study that goes where Bouchard was unable to. By shifting away from studying social networks to studying the “imaginative world of community networks” through cultural exchanges,

⁴⁷ Ibid., 17-20, 25-7, 27-9.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 15.

Loewen was able to look at power relationships within community as well as the experience of being in community.⁴⁹ Loewen's questions are fundamentally about how a Mennonite community both changed and resisted change as it migrated from Russia and dispersed within North America. This was a small community which sought to live separate from the world while fully integrating church, family and the market in their lives, thereby retaining their own cultural understanding of the world. Loewen finds culture to be the major factor in shaping the effect change had on the community and concludes that migration ended in a dynamic, dialectical relationship with the cultures encountered, despite efforts to maintain a separate identity.⁵⁰ Loewen's approach was ethnographic in that he sought to immerse himself in the everyday life of the group, whether household economy, gender roles, social networks, the laity's perceptions of the world, or community stratification. He points out that this focus on everyday life is a common approach in studying urban migrant groups but not rural migrants. For rural groups, the usual approach has emphasized culture and the organized (or political-geographic) community.

Like Bouchard, Loewen proceeded by reconstituting the families of the community as a means to identify the social structures and networks. This allowed him to understand what set the group apart while linking people within the group. But then he went further. Perhaps because the size of the study was more manageable than Bouchard's Saguenay, but also because the literary basis of Mennonite culture resulted in reams of diaries, letters, memoirs, sermons, and family records, Loewen was able to show

⁴⁹ Walsh and High, 264-5.

⁵⁰ Royden K. Loewen, *Family, Church and Market: A Mennonite Community in the Old and the New Worlds, 1850-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1993), 1-4.

the community from the inside.⁵¹ He concludes that the family was the primary social unit in creating community. Unlike the Saguenay, though, the Mennonite families were tied together by their membership in a laity-led religious congregation. By studying the most closely held beliefs of the families, he showed the power of the *Gemeinde*, or congregation, in structuring their sense of community:

[I]t interpreted the historical stories that gave members a common identity ... it legitimized social arrangements that structured community and defined boundaries; it built social networks that tied together distant places; and it set the agenda for discourse, debate and conflict. ... Religion was the very heart and soul, the fundamental language of Mennonite community and culture.⁵²

Another way of studying community is found in the work of Lynne Marks on Ontario town life at the end of the nineteenth century. Walsh and High cite her study, *Revivals and Roller Rinks*, as an example of the complexity of meaning that can be found in a geographic place, such as a small town.⁵³ I would add that it is an example of how Henri Lefebvre's social spaces or cultural institutions intermingle in a place to create a complex set of inclusions and exclusions. Studying the overlapping of these spaces gives insight into power relationships within the community as well as broader socio-economic, cultural, and spiritual changes. The element of community with which Marks is concerned is identity, a word that appears again and again in her introduction.⁵⁴

Marks's study delves into everyday life in three Ontario towns, Thorold, Campbellford and Ingersoll, to understand the weave between culture and identity. She looked at the usual community sources (census, tax rolls) to profile community

⁵¹ Ibid., 3-6.

⁵² Ibid., 50.

⁵³ Walsh and High, 266-7.

⁵⁴ Lynne Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure, and Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Small-Town Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1996), 4-9.

demographics with respect to family structure, distribution of occupations, and class. She then added church membership records to determine affiliation and to identify those who had none. She brought in records of fraternal organizations to determine what kind of men participated in associational life. Newspaper coverage of town events gave her insight into the discourse around religion, leisure, and the family. It also allowed her to see how identity as male or female, working class or propertied, respectable or rough, affected the choices possible. As a result, she was able to argue that there were a number of contrasting forms of community life within each small town. She took what is often treated as a monolithic community, Protestant Ontario, and dissected it into its parts as found in different social spaces.

Marks chose not to address religious history in terms of belief and value systems, that is, what church adherents and non-adherents believed, as Loewen has done. Rather her goal was to understand what influenced people as they made choices among voluntary activities, whether attending church services and joining church societies such as missionary circles or Sunday School, or participating in fraternal organizations such as the Knights of Labour, or going to the roller rink. She concludes that the range of choices open depended first on the individual's class and gender and then on age and marital status. As these choices were made, they became part of the individual's identity.

In 2001, Marks followed up this work with a lengthy article arguing that historians need to use an integrated cultural approach in their work. For the history of the nineteenth century, this specifically requires integrating the study of religious affiliation with the study of gender and class. A secularist who refuses to consider religion as an

important factor in past lives simply fails to understand those lives.⁵⁵ But it can be asked whether understanding does not require more than establishing the associational links to a church. Here, Loewen's words on how religious experience and feeling gave importance to the association are relevant. Choosing whether to join a church or to join the Knights of Labour could involve for many individuals beliefs that were more than just choice factors in their lives. There might not actually have been a choice to the extent that deep spiritual convictions *were* their lives. It is difficult, however, to determine convictions about the world that lie behind an association, without access to self-revealing memoirs.

The preceding discussion has looked at three ways of studying community. In Bouchard, social networks tied people from the local, or the region, to points on the map outside the region. Loewen looked at how the combination of a social network and a sense of being in community kept a group together through migration and change, even though eventually migration led to a rural-urban fissure. Marks looked at three towns and a range of associations to show how social interactions and associational choices created community. The last is closest to what I am attempting to do, but I am studying just one association in one place. This means that only a portion of the range of communities that Marks found will be made visible here.

The fair was a more public space than the family life that dominates Bouchard's and Loewen's studies. But it was not as public as many of the venues studied in the essays contained in Opp and Walsh's monograph. Unlike the family, an agricultural society was open to all which people chose to join because it served an interest. Yet unlike street parades celebrating community or public monuments of commemoration,

⁵⁵ Lynne Marks, "Heroes and Hallelujahs — Labour History and the Social History of Religion in English Canada," *Histoire sociale / Social History* 34, no. 67 (May 2000): 186.

“performance” of community at the fair happened on privately owned and even fenced fairgrounds. But whether the fair is viewed as generally open to the public or as a privately-run event, fair historians have addressed the fair in terms of the power relationships involved. For example, Jones addressed who was an appropriate participant in his discussion of “professional exhibitors” who traveled from fair to fair with specially purchased prize livestock. He also used evidence of tensions between townspeople and farmers over the management of agricultural fairs to examine who were considered to be the appropriate leaders.⁵⁶ But there has been little detailed study of who joined the social networks of the agricultural society.

Heaman has looked at interaction on the fairgrounds between the agricultural improvers and ordinary farmers as an example of Jürgen Habermas’s public sphere.⁵⁷ Habermas had developed the concept of the public sphere as an ideal political type to critique the workings of democracy in modern capitalist society.⁵⁸ He defined a social space, the “public sphere,” where private individuals acted independently of both the official sphere of state institutions and power, and the private space of home, personal property, and work. In this “in-between” space, private individuals formed a “public” that influenced the official sphere through rational debate, both face-to-face in places such as coffee houses, and in the press. The problem with connecting the agricultural fair to the public sphere is the extent to which government sponsorship of agricultural societies made them an arm of the official sphere rather than an independent forum of debate.

⁵⁶ David C. Jones, 117-26.

⁵⁷ Heaman, 52-78.

⁵⁸ Habermas published *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* in 1962. The first English translation was published in 1989 as *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. Craig Calhoun organized a conference on the public sphere that same year. He later published the conference papers as *Habermas and the Public Sphere*.

But Habermas's public sphere can also be connected to less benign social processes than independent and enlightened rational debate. Here, there is a close connection with Heaman's assessment of the agricultural fair as a hegemonic site. Geoff Eley argues that the public sphere, sitting as it does between official authority and private interests, is the place where Gramscian hegemony happens. He points to scholarship (from the history of liberalism to the sociology of communication) that identifies voluntary associations as "the main medium for the definition of public commitments."⁵⁹ But while voluntary associations can be viewed as a means for defining bourgeois life and values, they could also contain and mold other classes.⁶⁰ Thus the agricultural society can be framed as a social place where a sense of community was created, defining who was part of that community as well as the behaviour expected from both those inside and outside the bounds of community.

Sociability, Socialization, the Press and the Fair

While Heaman and Mizener have emphasized the fair as a site of hegemony, it can also be framed as Lefebvre's social space; that is, an institution in which community ties were created or reinforced by the ascription of meaning to social networks. In rural places social space is partially physical, as people are enmeshed in webs of face-to-face church and associational contacts that can reach across a county or a district. It is also partially manufactured by the medium of the rural press. Both processes create, question, reinforce, and alter unconscious ideas about which commonalities matter and which

⁵⁹ Geoff Eley, "Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century," *Habermas and the Public Sphere* ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press 1992), 296.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 298-303.

differences are to be the basis of social boundaries. The result is the carving out of distinct as well as overlapping communities within the neighbourhood, village and township.

Fairs have been understood to do this both through socialization and sociability. Wayne Neely was the first to draw attention to the socialization function of the fair, with his argument that the agricultural fair had three prime functions: education, recreation and socialization. He distinguished socialization from education because he meant the creation of shared identity: the creation of community. He saw the fair as a solution to rural “psychosocial” isolation, an isolation that required more than the automobile to solve. Instead, the fair could address isolation by creating a show of solidarity. Neely found this in the display of individual and collective achievement in the exhibits at the fair, and even simply in the production of a fair.⁶¹

The fair as a display of local achievement has been used in local histories to present the story of progress. For example, Glenn Lockwood includes in his history of Montague two appendices listing the prize categories, one for the 1865 and one for the 1878 fall fairs of the Montague Agricultural Society. He uses these to show signs of growth in the new settlement.⁶² But Neely meant more than just a display of progress. Yes, he did literally mean achievement, but figuratively he was speaking of an intangible display of rural values, in the form of the pride of individual craftsmanship and of belonging to a productive rural community. Neely’s argument suggests that the agricultural societies which managed the fair structured community as a by-product of the

⁶¹ Neely, 230-1.

⁶² Lockwood, *Montague*, 249-50, 610-1. Lockwood also points out the ideology of the fair—that fairs raised local agricultural standards—but does not critique this ideology or set it in a class framework.

exhibits. Prosterman also presents the exhibits as speaking about the community. In her argument, they displayed values the exhibitors considered “rural,” values of aesthetic balance and taste combined with functionality. In contrast, Anthony Cohen would say that boundaries were defined at the fair by a process of agreeing the things exhibited had meaning and were important, irrespective of the meanings attached. Thus, fair commentators, managers, exhibitors, and visitors all looked at the displays of cattle, corn and lacework and agreed that these represented their understanding of what being rural meant, even if each particular understanding differed.

While Neely talked about “socialization” as a purpose of the fair, he treated sociability as a mechanism for achieving this. The fair historians of the 1990s instead looked at sociability as one of the challenges to the high purpose of education and not as a mechanism of community building. We need to look to other types of events to examine historical analysis of sociability as a community building process. Historians have increasingly studied shared recreation, or “merrymaking,” as a means of reinforcing ties of attachment. This is the subject of James Paxton’s article on community and identity in the early years of Upper Canada, “Merrymaking and Militia Musters: (Re)Constructing Community and Identity in Upper Canada”.⁶³ Mohawk and White Loyalists used socializing to keep alive an earlier sense of community. This was a sense founded on a common history of living in the Mohawk Valley and fighting together under Joseph Brant, but which had been disrupted by the geography of resettlement in Upper Canada. The merrymaking included muster dinners, complete with the rituals of toasts and speeches. These were official events intended to reinforce a worldview of

⁶³ James W. Paxton, “Merrymaking and Militia Musters: (Re)Constructing Community and Identity in Upper Canada,” *Ontario History* 102, no. 2 (Autumn 2010): 218-38.

hierarchy and deference, linking the British Crown to the lowliest private by a chain running from the government in York via the militia officers. The merrymaking that attended those particular musters, the dinners and toasts, did indeed support a hierarchical worldview. Their only problem for the authorities was that their inter-ethnic social mixing undermined the Upper Canadian government's understanding of hierarchy.

Françoise Noël's monograph, *Family and Community Life in Northeastern Ontario: The Interwar Years*, is about the community created around family through celebratory events, or again through socializing.⁶⁴ She has taken from Anthony Cohen's work on symbols the importance of how people celebrated and how they identified themselves through the symbols that set their boundaries.⁶⁵ Stating that family life was lived in a community context, she organizes her study within themes, starting with family celebrations and rites-of-passage, and ending with community leisure and celebrations. These, along with the practical matter of population size and critical mass, became the mechanisms by which Franco-Ontarians and Italian Canadians maintained community boundaries.⁶⁶

Social events can also bring social tensions to the surface. Catharine Wilson looks at how reciprocal exchanges of labour in early-nineteenth-century Upper Canadian work bees created shared values between families as well as exposing community tensions. Wilson uses "interaction episodes" for discussing tension. This is a concept she takes from Rhys Isaac's study of colonial Virginia. An episode is an out-of-the-everyday event

⁶⁴ Françoise Noël., *Family and Community Life in Northeastern Ontario: The Interwar Years* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press 2009), 8.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 254.

that breaks up and thereby highlights the discourse of the everyday.⁶⁷ Examples of how out-of-the-ordinary events can shed light on the expected social discourse by exposing conflicts include Emanuel LeRoy Ladurie's *Le Carnaval de Romans*. This study examines social tensions between peasant, artisan, and merchant in early modern France as they were made visible during an outbreak of class and rural-urban violence under the guise of Mardi Gras festivities. H.V. Nelles's *The Art of Nation Building* explores conflict amongst interest groups with respect to the planning of the Quebec Tercentenary celebrations and the multiple meanings that were attached to such a festive occasion.⁶⁸

The nature of the agricultural fair is also defined by being separate from the everyday as a regular, ritualized social interaction. Just as with the strawberry socials analyzed by Lynne Marks in *Revivals and Roller Rinks* and Wilson's work bees, fair participants knew what would happen there and what roles they would be expected to play. This aspect of the agricultural fair has been used largely to highlight the discourse around modernity and gender. Less has been done on how the agricultural society and fair did or did not address social dislocation as argued by Neely. Neely's argument that the fair was needed to address rural isolation goes deeper than bad roads to a sense of rural marginalization in the post-World War I period.

Hal Barron brings community into the struggle between rural Americans and the forces of modernity in *Mixed Harvest: The Second Great Transformation in the Rural*

⁶⁷ Catharine Anne Wilson, "Reciprocal Work Bees and the Meaning of Neighbourhood," *Canadian Historical Review* 82, no. 3 (Sept. 2001): 431-64.

⁶⁸ Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Le carnaval de Romans: de la Chandeleur au mercredi des Cendres, 1579-1580* ([Paris]: Gallimard 1979); H. V. Nelles, *The Art of Nation-building: Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1999).

North 1870-1930.⁶⁹ He is concerned with the impact of change on rural residents as citizens (the politics of localism and educational centralization), as producers (using cooperatives to resist the big businesses that seemed to epitomize a faceless urban world), and as consumers (the rural desire for mail order catalogues as a counter to the monopoly of local merchants who argued back that small towns required commercial support by the countryside). Barron concludes that while “community” was often invoked in the rhetoric around the struggle, rural community was not a monolith. Agents of change came from within rural places as well as from outside, while individuals picked and chose the aspects of being modern that would retain their sense of distinctiveness from the urban while easing life in the countryside.

Ronald Kline and John Fry also focus on the agency of the rural resident in the face of changing technology, as well as the efforts of rural reformers in the press to define rural values. Kline points out in *Consumers in the Country* that efforts to urbanize farm families by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) were believed by that organization to have been achieved by the 1960s.⁷⁰ It had sought to spread into rural America a gendered vision of urbanized life. Women and children were to have no part in the economic life of the farm, work and home were to be separate, and all rural residents were to be consumers rather than self-sufficient producers. Kline concludes that the countryside had indeed been transformed, but the process of getting there had been contested. Farm people made choices about which technologies they would adopt, how they would use them and how they would re-purpose them to suit their own interests.

⁶⁹ Hal S. Barron, *Mixed Harvest: The Second Great Transformation in the Rural North 1870-1930* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press 1997).

⁷⁰ Ronald R. Kline, *Consumers in the Country: Technology and Social Change in Rural America* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press 2000), 272-3.

They also determined gender roles for themselves. Fry comes to much the same conclusion, but from a study of the farm press in the American midwest. He finds that, even as farm papers continue to exist today as dispensers of information, they have disappeared as agents of change. Prior to 1920 they had self-consciously acted as reformers of rural life but, Fry says, they had been ineffective reformers. His analysis of surveys and letters to the editor show that farm families were picking and choosing what they learned from the farm journals. What the farm journals did was define the issues of community and rural degradation and the components of the goal of farm modernization. They did not determine what their readers thought on those issues.⁷¹

The fair as an agent of modernization has been studied by a few of the fair historians. In *Becoming Modern in Toronto*, Walden looks at how the Canadian National Exhibition purveyed changed values, with Walsh and High citing it as an example of the anthropological approach to the historical study of cultural practices as performance and symbols.⁷² Walden's focus was on the large urban fair as a mechanism for Ontarians to learn to cope with modernization in the 1890s which he approaches through themes of order and disorder, display, space, identity, and entertainment. The fair's managers intended the Toronto exhibition to introduce both urban and rural visitors to new technologies as well as to new ways of thinking about the world. Visitors went there looking for the new and the modern.

The role of the *small* agricultural fair in explaining and making the new familiar has not been studied to the same degree as historians have done with the large fair. Jones

⁷¹ John J. Fry, *The Farm Press, Reform, and Rural Change, 1895-1920* (New York and London: Routledge 2005), 157-67.

⁷² Walsh and High, 271.

comes closest, although he does not attempt to place his study of Prairie fairs within any particular theoretical framework. His themes are similar to Walden in covering order and disorder (in the form of the judging disputes, horse racing, and the midway with girlie shows and gambling), and gender, respectability, and education (women's exhibits at the fair, beautiful baby contests, and youth programs such as junior exhibits). The question of what was modern and what was traditional flows through all of these, although without Walden's sharp focus. Mizener also raises modernity at Ontario fairs in the early twentieth century. But he emphasizes the hegemonic relationship between fair organizer and the unnamed masses who visited, rather than on the fair as a site in which cultural change was explored by both fair managers and fair visitors.

The historians looked at here recognize that agricultural societies were created by local elites and supported by governments in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries as agents of rural change. The fairgrounds operated by these societies became sites for demonstrating symbols of modernity, whether in technology or in gender roles, as well as manufacturing rural identity. The qualifying term in all of this is resistance. Heaman and Mizener focused on the resistance of those outside the agricultural societies who demanded more entertainment and less education. Subversion can also come from those who are part of the activities that support the hegemonic message. Just as Paxton's militia dinners subverted ethnic hierarchy in the interests of maintaining an older community, we should look within the agricultural society for subversion of the purposes set for these societies. This internal tension, along with hegemonic power by the rural press and the agricultural society, is also part of the dynamics of rural community.

Conclusion

For framing my study of community in Vankleek Hill and West Hawkesbury, Marks's focus on the social spaces that sit outside the family is closest to my intended lens of the agricultural society. But this study looks only at one social space and will not show the full complexity of communities in place. The first challenge, however, is to determine the social networks that coalesced around the agricultural society. Then it is possible to look more closely at the world view of that community.

In the chapters that follow, Chapters Two and Three will focus on social networks. The first part of Chapter Two is primarily informed by a local history approach of studying locality, linking the patterns found to developments outside the local. The second half of the first chapter looks at the extent to which patterns of power and boundaries formed in history-telling and sociability created "communities." In Chapter Three I have been inspired by Marks to look for community in the social space of the agricultural society. Chapter Four is about the fair as a place where representations of what it was to be rural were displayed by the agricultural society, commented on by the press and reinterpreted by visitors, particularly by the children who visited and who experienced a form of fair participation in the local school fair.

CHAPTER 2 - Language and Place, Language and Community

Vankleek Hill in Prescott County, Ontario is a town on the map and it is a town of communities. I would start a local history of the town with a description of the land and how the people who came to the place interacted with the land. But I wish to study community, and this points me towards studying something different: the social networks that tied people together in relationships that were sufficiently intense to have meaning, and the social representations by which the communities made this meaning visible. Community has little to do with the map, for social networks and social representations extend beyond place. But the map does have an effect on the potential for face-to-face interactions that can tie together a community, influencing how one community interacts with another. The focus of this chapter is on this potential in a place in Prescott County—West Hawkesbury Township and within it the town of Vankleek Hill—as the place developed over the course of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

By 1900, this part of Prescott County was an anomaly in a county where French had become the majority language. Here, the population was numerically balanced between French- and English-speakers. But both county and township were a further anomaly viewed from the provincial level, where English was the majority language. Chad Gaffield's study of the development of Franco-Ontarian identity, in his monograph *Language, Schooling and Cultural Conflict: The Origins of the French-Language Controversy in Ontario*, focused on Alfred and Caledonia Townships adjoining West Hawkesbury. As Alfred was predominantly French-Canadian almost from its beginnings, while Caledonia slowly shifted to a French-Canadian majority, he was able to show how

demographic change altered provincial and federal political power in the county over the 1870s and 1880s.¹

My study is concerned with how two linguistic communities were reflected in a specific social space where community ties could be created and community divisions made explicit: the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society and its annual fall fair. As I am building on Gaffield's study of Prescott County, I need to start by examining how the linguistic communities developed in West Hawkesbury, and within it Vankleek Hill, so as to reach numeric balance, and the implications this had for power dynamics and social relationships. To what extent did the descendants of the first British and American settlers in West Hawkesbury, as owners of the most prosperous farms, continue to exercise dominance over the non-political world of commercial and social structures?

I first will detail how the settlement and development of West Hawkesbury and Vankleek Hill differed from Prescott County as a whole. Second, I will look at the influence of Vankleek Hill as a central place in West Hawkesbury and its relationship with two other local central places, L'Orignal and Hawkesbury. This will give an understanding of how social spaces centered on Vankleek Hill could extend beyond the town. The specific social space of the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society will be examined in depth in the next chapter. Third, I will turn to the influence of settlement on ethno-linguistic power in Vankleek Hill and West Hawkesbury. Last, I will examine how linguistic community boundaries were made visible through the telling of local history and then in socializing. This chapter will show that, even as linguistic communities became geographically entwined, allowing for day-to-day interactions, the most intense

¹ Chad Gaffield, *Language, Schooling, and Cultural Conflict: The Origins of the French-Language Controversy in Ontario* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press 1987).

social networks remained within linguistic groups. Walsh and High, in their 1999 essay on community, pointed out the importance when studying social networks of Craig Calhoun's argument that community formation requires both the existence of social interactions and intensity of interaction.² It will be argued that intensity of interaction was limited in West Hawkesbury and Vankleek Hill. The linguistic communities remained as much apart as in the rest of Prescott County, where geographic separation was the norm.

Settlement and Soil

There are two important studies that identify the pattern of settlement in Prescott County as a whole. Gaffield starts his monograph on Prescott County with an examination of both French-Canadian and British-American settlement. Donald Cartwright, in his PhD dissertation "French-Canadian Colonization in Eastern Ontario to 1910" and his article "Institutions on the Frontier," has focused on French-Canadian migration into Glengarry, Russell and Prescott Counties.³ The question in this section is why French-Canadian settlement differed in West Hawkesbury from the patterns found by Gaffield and Cartwright for the county. By understanding this difference, it is possible to understand the potential for social interactions between linguistic communities.

We need to start, as local history does, with situating the question. Prescott County sits on the eastern edge of Ontario and is surrounded on two sides by Quebec (see figure 1). The Township of Hawkesbury was surveyed in 1795 as part of the Eastern District and predates the county, Prescott, which was created as an electoral district in

² Walsh and High, 261.

³ Donald Cartwright, "French-Canadian Colonization in Eastern Ontario to 1910" (PhD diss., University of Western Ontario 1973); "Institutions On The Frontier: French-Canadian Settlement In Eastern Ontario In the Nineteenth Century," *The Canadian Geographer* 21, no. 1, (Spring 1977): 1-21.

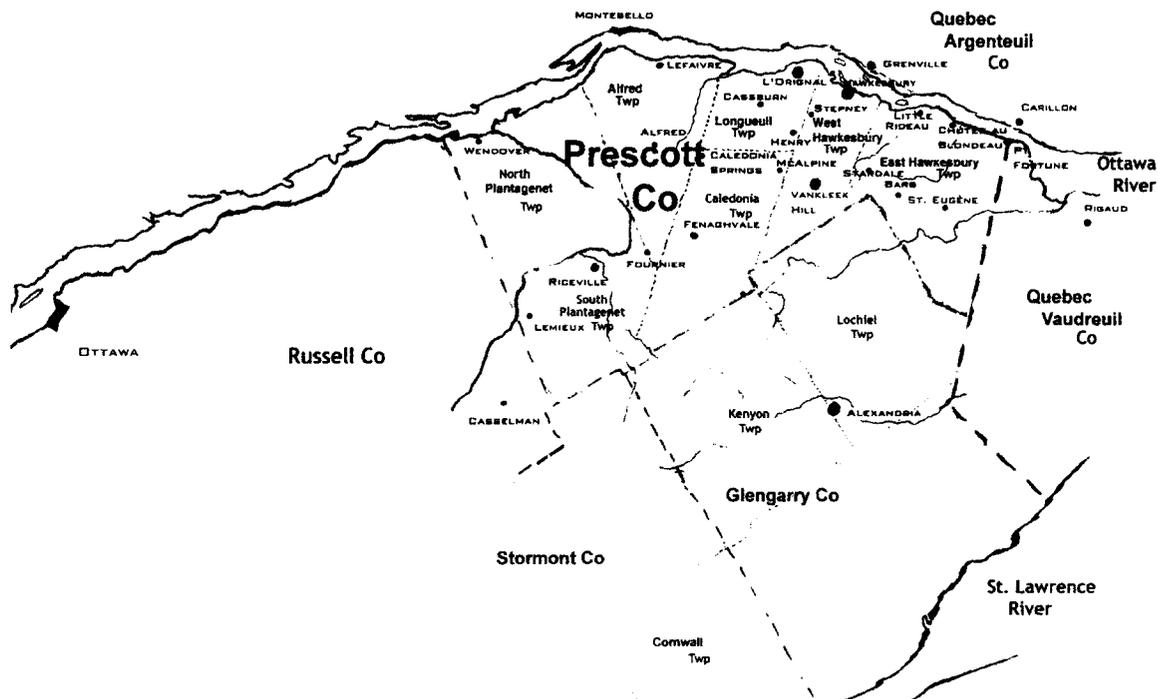
1800. In 1816, Prescott and Russell Counties were set off as the Ottawa District with L'Orignal in neighbouring Longueuil Township as the administrative centre. Hawkesbury Township was then divided into its west and east divisions in 1844. In 1858, a portion of the first two concessions of West Hawkesbury was removed when the Town of Hawkesbury became an incorporated village. Vankleek Hill was the township seat for West Hawkesbury from 1844 until it too was incorporated as a town in 1897.⁴ Finally, in the year 2000, West Hawkesbury Township, Longueuil Township, and the towns of L'Orignal and Vankleek Hill were reunited as the Township of Champlain. These administrative changes, though necessary for visualizing the place, had little impact on settlement and development. To understand that, we need to turn to topography.

Gaffield and Cartwright conclude that differing soil preferences created two cultural and linguistic communities which, at the level of the county, were geographically isolated from each other. This geographic separation left little potential for development of social networks across linguistic lines. In West Hawkesbury Township, however, the Francophone and Anglophone communities were interlaced even though both the county pattern and the township pattern rose out of the same factors: land policy decisions taken at Toronto, soil and human responses to the soil, an evolving transportation network, and the colonization policies of the Ottawa and Montreal Catholic dioceses.

Understanding the county pattern starts with the “empty frontier” that stretched from the Rideau River east along the Ottawa River to the St. Lawrence, as described by

⁴ W. G. Dean ed., *Economic Atlas of Ontario / Atlas Économique de l'Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969) http://www.archives.gov.on.ca/english/on-line-exhibits/maps/ontario-districts.aspx#districts_table; Frederick H. Armstrong, *Handbook of Upper Canadian Chronology* (rev. 1985; Toronto: Dundurn Press 1967).

Figure 1: Map of Prescott County. Townships, population centres and neighbouring jurisdictions. Map traced from Army Survey Establishment Map, published 1965 (original scale 1:250000).



Glenn Lockwood.⁵ “Empty” is a relative word, for Lockwood is comparing the speed and density of settlement in this region with that west of the Rideau Canal. The western region had benefited from the military and government-sponsored settlements established in the Ottawa Valley after 1815 to protect the planned transportation route along the Rideau River system in the event of a new war with the United States. But even if the region to the west had not been of military significance, settlers would still have had to leap over the eastern end of the Ottawa Valley to find large tracts of unalienated Crown Land on which to settle cheaply. This was the result of a 1788 decision by the Upper Canadian government to increase the size of loyalist grants, extend eligibility to the children of loyalists, and set aside clergy reserve lands. That one decision had increased

⁵ Glenn J. Lockwood, “The Pattern of Settlement in Eastern Ontario 1784-1875,” *Families* 30 (1991): 235-57.

land demand to a degree that required 29 new townships, one of which was Hawkesbury. The government then granted the bulk of that land to the loyalists. The new grantees, however, held their lands unimproved for future sale, thereby closing up much of the region to settlement for decades. As one example of the unintended effect, it is not until the 1840s that parts of neighbouring Russell County began to fill in as the children of earlier settlement in Carleton County were forced to look for land to the east.⁶

The long delay to the 1840s in settling much of Prescott and Russell Counties was also the result of transportation favouring the Rideau Canal lands. Between 1832 and the 1840s, a flood of British immigrants traveled up the Ottawa River to the Rideau Canal and on to southern Ontario. When they passed by the Long Sault rapids that fronted Hawkesbury Township, they traveled on the Quebec side by the Grenville Canal which had been built between 1818 and 1833. After leaving the Canal, there was no further opportunity to decide spontaneously to disembark and inspect a possible location for settlement until the immigrants reached Ottawa.⁷ An even greater factor limiting settlement was the soil. Quite simply, large sections of Prescott County were low-lying and even boggy (see figure 2). British and American settlers bypassed low land because everything they knew and everything they read in settler guide books told them that this land led to unhealthy, ague-ridden homesteads.⁸ They also lacked the finances and infrastructure to undertake the massive drainage projects needed to bring low land in Prescott County into production.⁹

⁶ Bruce S. Elliott, *Irish Migrants in the Canadas: A New Approach* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press 1988), 161-4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 237-9, 255-7.

⁸ Gaffield, *Language, Schooling and Cultural Conflict*, 68-72.

⁹ Cartwright, "Institutions on the Frontier," 4.

But while this description of the factors limiting settlement was true for Prescott County as a whole, the area between L'Orignal, Hawkesbury Village and Vankleek Hill enjoyed more favorable topography, better inland transportation, and a foothold for settlement from which farmers could diffuse into the countryside. The area has high land with large deposits of sandy loam, which Wicklund's soil survey described as "excellent crop land."¹⁰ Here, the settlers could quickly establish farms as well as harvest the most marketable pine trees which grew on the sandy soil. With topography channeling settlement into the area, Hawkesbury Township was settled prior to and grew faster than the rest of the county, and roads began to be built. In 1820, two-thirds of the population of the entire Ottawa District (both Prescott and Russell Counties) was concentrated in Hawkesbury Township. Almost all of the remaining population was in neighbouring Longueuil and Caledonia Townships. By 1840, the area of Hawkesbury and Longueuil still accounted for three-quarters of the Prescott County population even as the other townships had slowly started to fill in (see table 1). This concentration of population was the result of the difference in soil and the early start that difference gave to settlement.

The primary central places of L'Orignal, the town of Hawkesbury and Vankleek Hill had their beginnings with Americans. Central places are those towns or villages to which the inhabitants of the surrounding hinterland travel in order to obtain services and goods. Between the central place and its hinterland there is a reciprocal relationship of settlement and development on a smaller scale but similar to the metropolis and frontier relationship defined by J. M. S. Careless. L'Orignal on the Ottawa River in Longueuil

¹⁰ R. E. Wicklund and N. R. Richards, *Soil Survey of Russell and Prescott Counties* (Guelph, Ont.: Research Branch, Canada Dept. of Agriculture, Ontario Agricultural College 1962): description of soil given in map legend.

Figure 2: Prescott County soils, sketch of early road network, 1839, and population trends, 1841 to 1941 (inset: 1839/1843 road map). *Source:* Charts, Library and Archives Canada, Upper Canada Returns of Population, 1841; Census of Canada, 1881, 1901 and 1911. Map - simplified version of R.E. Wicklund and N.R. Richards, *Soil Survey of Russell and Prescott Counties*. Original scale 1 inch: 1 mile (copied map scale approximately 0.5 cm: 1 kilometre). Inset: detail from "Map of the Province of Canada." 1839/1843. Prepared under direction of Col. Oldfield. (Carleton Library).

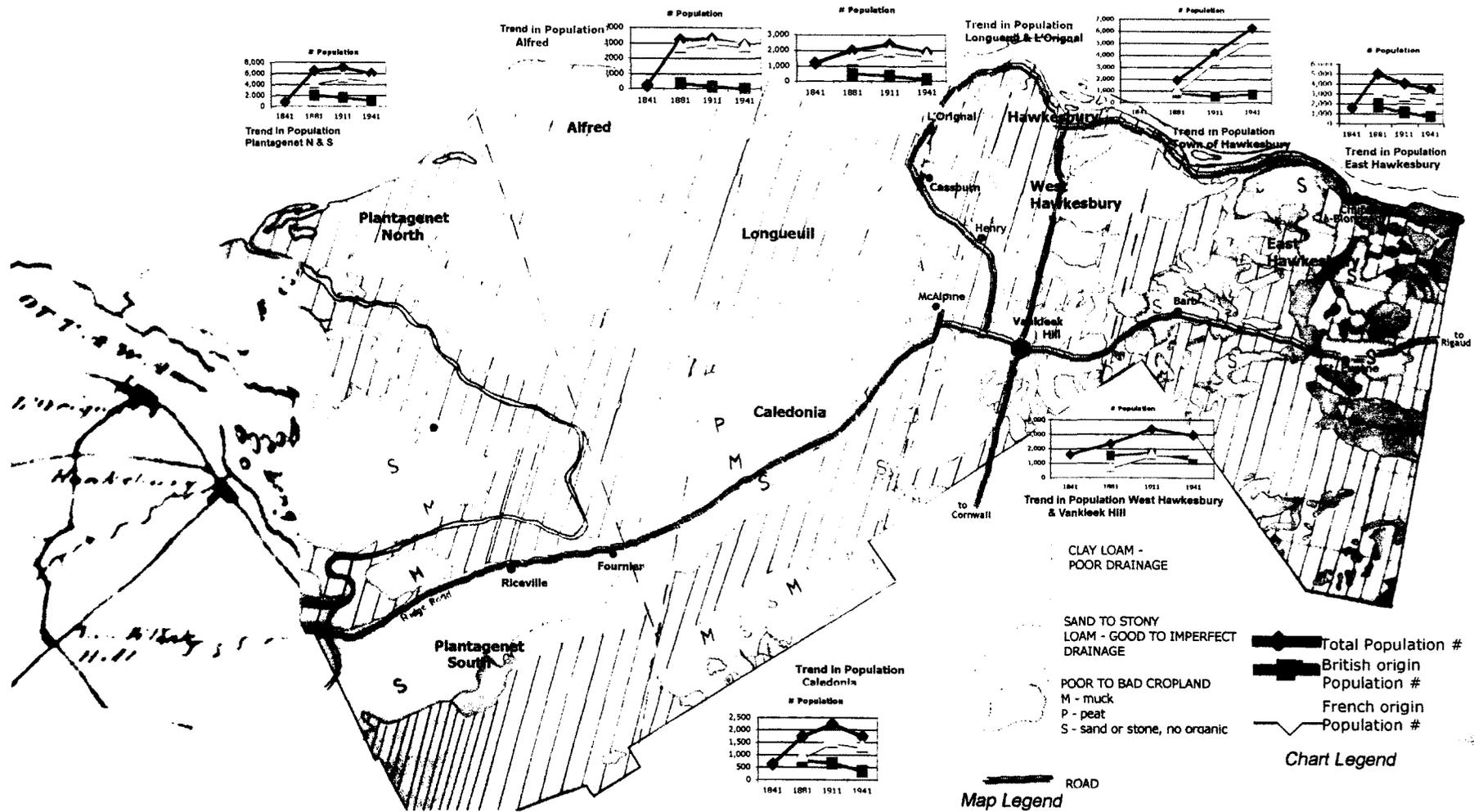


Table 1: Population and Growth, Prescott County by Township 1820 to 1845.

Source: Library and Archives Canada, Upper Canada Returns of Population., RG 5, B 26, reels H-1174-6.

While some areas appear to have greater growth than Hawkesbury, the low base at which they started meant that the growth was not as impressive in absolute numbers, and it proved impossible to catch up to Hawkesbury in this period.

	1820	1824	1828	1829	1830	1831	1832	1840	1841	1842	1844	1845
Hawkesbury	1,031	1,393	1,726	1,661	1,873	1,832	2,462	3,340	3,234	3,649	1,904	1,751
East / West											E 1,869 W 1,869	1,976
Growth %		35.1	23.9	-3.8	12.8	-2.2	34.4	35.7	-3.2	12.8	E W	-8.0% 5.7%
Longueuil		572	672	745	811	858	903	1,218	1,214	1,175	1,231	1,122
Growth %			17.5	10.9	8.9	5.8	5.2	34.9	-0.3	-3.2	4.8	-8.9
Caledonia	437	89	212	159	260	184	331	524	628	613	630	714
Growth %			138.2	-25.0	63.5	-29.2	79.9	58.3	19.8	-2.4	2.8	13.3
Plantagenet	102	323	475	420	465	537	658	802	788	881	893	934
Growth %		216.7	47.1	-11.6	10.7	15.5	22.5	21.9	-1.7	11.8	1.4	4.6
Alfred		0	86	86	94	100	168	220	229	260	207	220
Growth %				0.0	9.3	6.4	68.0	31.0	4.1	13.5	-20.4	6.3
Prescott County Total	1,570	2,377	3,171	3,071	3,503	3,511	4,522	6,104	6,093	6,578	6,734	6,717
Growth %		51.4	33.4	-3.2	14.1	0.2	28.8	35.0	-0.2	8.0	2.4	-0.3
Russell County Total	98	123	176	129	137	157	438	709	858	1,023	1,185	1,227
Growth %		25.5	43.1	-26.7	6.2	14.6	179.0	61.9	21.0	19.2	15.8	3.5
Ottawa District Total	1,668	2,500	3,347	3,200	3,640	3,668	4,960	6,813	6,951	7,601	7,919	7,944

Township was the centre of the administrative system, first for the Ottawa District and then for the United Counties of Prescott and Russell. Hawkesbury, ten kilometers downriver in West Hawkesbury, was the only significant industrial centre east of the city of Ottawa along the Ottawa River until Rockland was founded in Russell County in 1868. Vankleek Hill was an inland town which became a retail centre servicing its agricultural hinterland in West Hawkesbury. L'Orignal and Hawkesbury were the earliest nodes of population in the county and the locations that fixed the terminal points of the main roads going inland.

L'Orignal had its start as the riverfront entry to the one area of Eastern Ontario that fell outside the crown land system, and therefore was not tied up by absentee loyalist owners. In 1675, 23,000 acres centered on Pointe-à-l'Orignal had been conceded as a seigneurie, although it was not surveyed or settled under the French Regime. A New Yorker, Nathaniel Hazard Treadwell, purchased the seigneurie in 1796 and set up a sawmill in 1798. After his title was recognized in 1805, he sold lots to other Americans as well as a few British settlers.¹¹ This created the first pocket of population in Prescott County, the Treadwell Settlement. The town of Hawkesbury started about 1811 downriver at a spot of particular industrial attractiveness for its water power, the islands in the Ottawa River at the Long Sault Rapids. A sawmill was built by a group of Americans, led by Thomas Mears and David Pattie from across the river in Argenteuil County, Quebec. Shortly afterwards they lost control of the mill to the mortgage holder, the Hamilton Brothers. Mears then partnered with Peter McGill of Montreal to build a second industrial centre (a mill pond with a grist mill) in West Hawkesbury about two kilometers inland of the riverfront mill. Mears soon lost control of this second company

¹¹ Lucien Brault, *Histoire des Comtés Unis de Prescott et de Russell* (L'Orignal, Ont.: Conseil des Comtés Unis 1965), 19-22.

and McGill turned the grist mill into a brewery.¹² The result of this entrepreneurial energy was that by 1814 there was a concentration of industrial and agricultural activity on the Ottawa River front at L'Orignal and at Hawkesbury, which attracted yet more settlement. At some point before 1816, Hawkesbury also became the terminus for a road between the Ottawa River and Cornwall, which had been the administrative centre prior to that date.

Vankleek Hill owes its existence to a combination of the local soil conditions and the main road to Cornwall. This brought settlement into the interior of West Hawkesbury and in particular to lot nine of concession six. The lot contains the high, sandy soil that was so attractive to early settlers (figure 2) as well as the hill that Wicklund describes as the only prominent feature on what is otherwise a rolling plain.¹³ According to legend, this land was specifically sought out by the United Empire Loyalist, Simon Vankleek.* After climbing a successive series of high points up the Ottawa River from Montreal, he spotted the hill as the tallest point in the area.¹⁴ The location was fixed by a crossroads on the post road to Cornwall, now Highway 34, where a road coming from Rigaud, Quebec in the east met a road from L'Orignal in the northwest.¹⁵ The number of interior roads

¹² Ibid., 210.

¹³ Wicklund, 4.

* Vankleek's given name is often spelt Simeon in local histories, including those of Cyrus Thomas and Lucien Brault. Both Vankleek and his son who was named after him, however, signed road petitions and their land grant petitions as Simon.

¹⁴ Cyrus Thomas, *History of the Counties of Argenteuil, Quebec and Prescott, Ontario* (repr. Kessinger Publishing, n.d.; Montreal: John Lovell & Son 1896), 564.

¹⁵ Carleton Library, R. Pilkington directed by Col. Oldfield, [Map of the province of Canada, 1843]; Library and Archives Canada National Map Collection (hereafter LAC NMC), Road from Rigaud to Vankleek (sic) Hill, H3/400/Prescott/[nd]. (This shows Vankleek Hill on a road leading from Rigaud but does not show the Hawkesbury Road. Joan Winnearls dates the map to 1846 without detailing why. Joan Winnearls, *Mapping Upper Canada 1780-1867: An Annotated Bibliography of Manuscript and Printed Maps* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1991)); LAC NMC, Major Baron de Rottenburg, Map of the Principal Communication in Canada West, HC3/400/Prescott/[1858] section L (This shows Vankleek Hill located where the "military road" from Hawkesbury to Cornwall meets a road coming from L'Orignal).

crossing the post road also spurred on early and faster settlement, for they allowed inland transportation of goods not found elsewhere in the region east of Ottawa.

It is difficult to precisely date these developments. Vankleek arrived between 1797 and 1799 and cleared 50 acres of land, but only petitioned for a grant in 1801.¹⁶ He actually obtained the land in 1808 from the original owner, Alexander Chisholm, who had obtained the patent in 1802.¹⁷ Local history credits Vankleek with establishing a tavern at the crossroads. University of Ottawa historian Lucien Brault dates the tavern to at least 1808, when the first meeting to name the Hawkesbury Township administration was held there.¹⁸ The earliest map showing the north-south highway dates from 1828. It indicates the presence of a number of crossroads but gives no information on where those roads go. Nor does it show an inland settlement in Hawkesbury Township.

The failure to find Vankleek Hill on the map in 1828 is not a surprise. Evidence from an 1896 local history indicates that Vankleek Hill was no more than a handful of buildings serving as a retail centre for inland farmers at that time. The local history records three buildings at the crossroads in 1819: the tavern, a store owned by John Glass Macintosh (who also owned a store in L'Orignal), and a store and house owned by William Clarke. An early settler, Colonel John Shields, is quoted as saying there were six buildings by 1826.¹⁹ About this time, 1827 to 1831, the place acquired a post office.²⁰

¹⁶ Library and Archives, Canada Land Petitions, RG 1, L 3, vol. 514 Bundle 5, 1798-1802, petition 20 "U-V" reel C-2947; "Return of Persons who have taken the Oaths and subscribed the Declaration required by law before the Commissioners at Missikouie Bay," reel C-2566: 9251 (signed attestation of Vankleek's taking the Oath attached to petition in Canada Land Petitions, vol. 514(a). "U-V" Bundle 8, petition 23, reel C-2947).

¹⁷ Prescott Land Registry Office, Abstracts Index for West Hawkesbury lot nine of concession ten.

¹⁸ Brault, 208.

¹⁹ Thomas, 565. John Shields was born about 1820 and would have been six years old in 1826. As he was alive in 1896, he may have given his information directly to Thomas.

The land records indicate that the Vankleek family began to sell off individual acres in 1824 with the first acre going to a Cornelius Phillips, who then sold to the store owner, Macintosh. Joan Winearls describes the first town survey of Vankleek Hill by Robert Hamilton as dated in May 1850 and registered in September 1850. Unfortunately, she says that the plan does not name the owner(s) who registered it.²¹ The records of land transactions indicate that streets had been named as early as 1835. That is the year one lot being sold was described as being on the south side of Hamil Street.²²

Vankleek Hill became the point where two groups of British origin settlers met. At the same time as Americans were filtering into the northern part of Prescott County from Argenteuil County in Quebec, Scots were coming in from the south. The Americans were taking a natural path of expansion across the river rather than north into the more difficult country back of their settlements in Quebec. The Scots were balancing the increasing price of land in the Scottish-settled townships of Lochiel and Kenyon in Glengarry County with their desire to stay close to extended kin. It was natural for them to diffuse into neighbouring Caledonia and Hawkesbury Townships.²³ The resulting pattern of Scots in the south and Americans in the north was visible by 1822, but by 1841 the American presence in the north had faded slightly. At the same time, an Irish

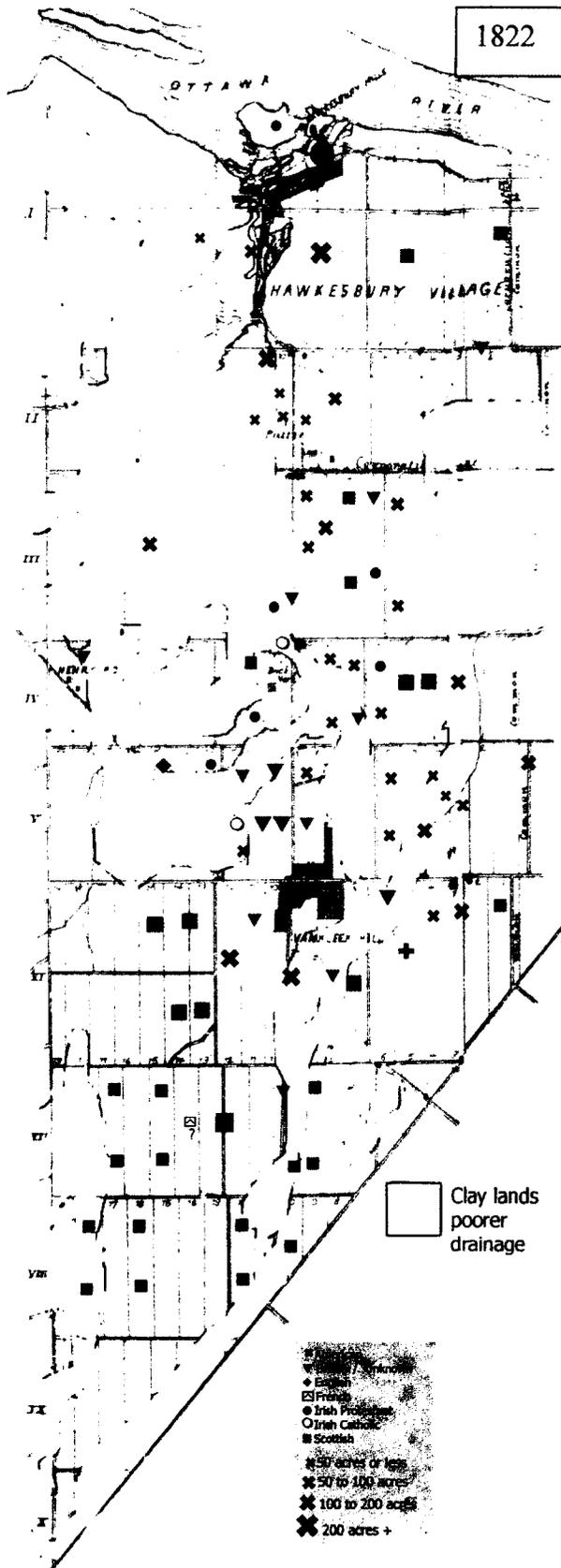
²⁰ Date of 1827 from Thomas, 565; Date of 1831 from Ontario Archives, Certificate of Appointment of Neil Stewart as Deputy Postmaster in Vankleek Hill dated July 6, 1831, Neil Stewart Papers. There are no entries for Vankleek Hill in the Library and Archives Canada Postmaster card entries, indicating that the card has been lost or Vankleek Hill was missed when the cards were created in the 1950s.

²¹ Winearls, B2667. This map was disposed of when the Prescott County Registry Office moved to a service centre in Hawkesbury and has not yet been located. It is possible it is with the Hawkesbury Local History Society, but confirmation of this has not been received. The survey was made after the Vankleeks started selling town lots in the 1820s, as Robert Hamilton was only appointed provincial land surveyor on February 16, 1848, Armstrong, 244.

²² Prescott Land Registry Office Abstracts Index West Hawkesbury.

²³ Marianne McLean, *People of Glengarry: Highlanders in Transition* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press 1991), 214.

Figures 3 and 4: Settlement of Hawkesbury Township, 1822 and 1841. By 1841 land was still available as many owners had multiple lots, but not in the amount required to create a homogeneous French-Canadian parish. *Source:* Library and Archives Canada, Township of Hawkesbury Assessment Rolls, 1822 and 1841, reel M-7735. Map copied from Belden Illustrated Historical Atlas, 1879.



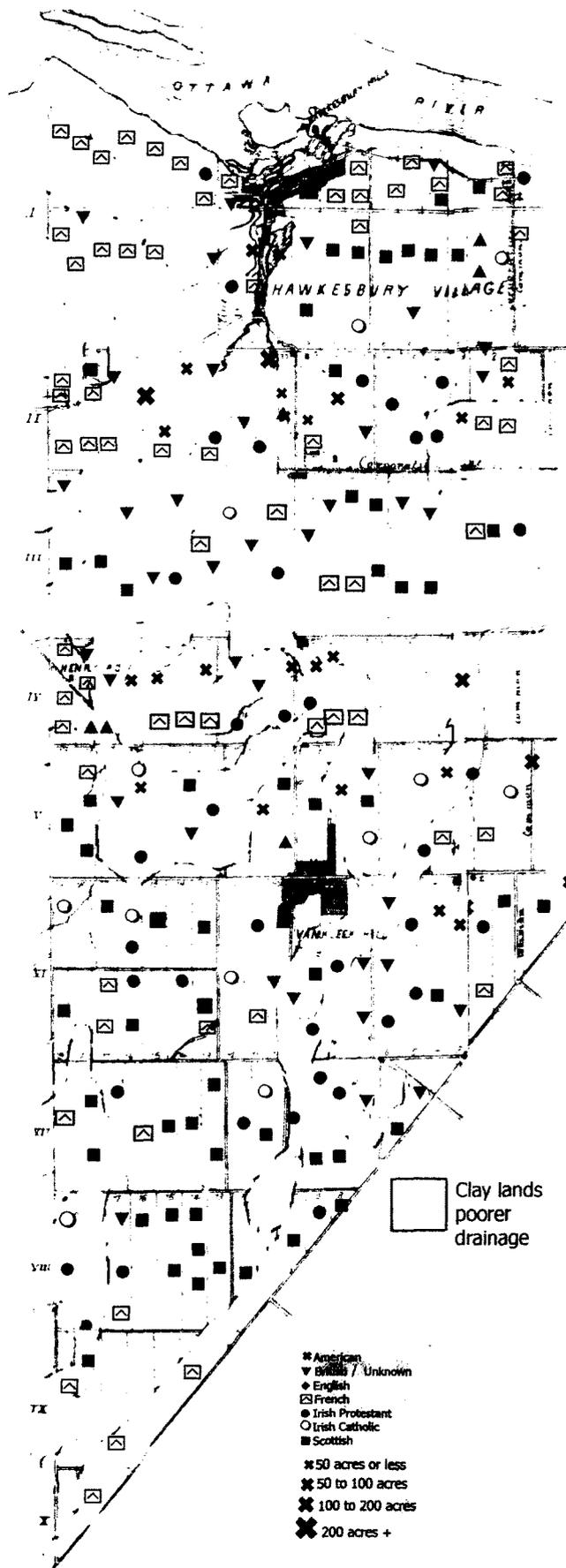


Figure 5: Settlement of Hawkesbury Township, 1923. By 1923 French Canadian settlers had interlaced themselves into rural West Hawkesbury. Only in the north-west corner was there sufficient empty land to create a homogeneous French language neighbourhood. Source: Library and Archives Canada, Cummins Rural Directory Map 1923. Map copied from Belden, Illustrated Atlas 1879.

Table 2: Population and Ethnicity, Prescott County by Township, 1881 to 1941.

Source: Library and Archives Canada, 1845 Upper Canada Return of Population RG 5, B 26, reels H-1174-6. *Census of Canada* 1881, 1911 and 1941.

	1845	1881			Total Population % Change 1845 to 1881	1911			Population % Change 1881 to 1911 (total / British / French)	1941			Population % Change 1911 to 1941 (total / British/ French)
	Total N	Total N	British Origin N % of total	French Origin N % of total		Total N	British Origin N % of total	French Origin N % of total		Total N	British Origin N % of total	French Origin N % of total	
Alfred	220	3,208	395 12.3%	2,784 86.8%	1358.2	3,261	192 5.9%	3,068 94.1%	1.7 / -51.4 / 10.2	2,910	48 1.6%	2,858 98.2%	-10.8 / -75.0 / -6.8
Caledonia	714	1,750	786 44.9%	948 54.2%	145.1	2,235	681 30.5%	1,550 69.4%	27.7 / -13.4 / 63.5	1,757	382 21.7%	1,375 78.3%	-21.4 / -43.9 / -11.3
Hawkesbury, East	1,751	5,082	1,819 35.8%	3,183 62.6%	190.2	4,034	1,216 30.1%	2,816 69.8%	-20.6 / -33.2 / -11.5	3,465	785 22.7%	2,640 76.2%	-14.1 / -35.4 / -6.3
Hawkesbury, West	1,976	2,360	1,559 66.1%	781 33.1%	116.2	1,840	933 50.7%	907 49.3%	44.0 / 12.5 / 109.2	1,526	675 44.2%	842 55.2%	-17.1 / -27.7 / -7.2
Vankleek Hill						1,559	821 52.7%	727 46.6%		1,435	619 43.1%	798 55.6%	-8.0 / -24.6 / 9.8
Hawkesbury town						1,920	854 44.5%	1,046 54.5%		4,243	591 13.9%	3,631 85.6%	121.0 / -30.8 / 247.1
Longueuil	1,122	1,162	180 15.5%	981 84.4%	79.6	1,068	184 17.2%	884 82.8%	-8.1 / 2.2 / -9.9	751	91 12.1%	660 87.9%	-29.7 / -50.5 / -25.3
L'Orignal village		853	338 39.6%	513 60.1%		1,343	214 15.9%	1,122 83.5%		57.4 / -36.7 / 118.7	1,118	67 6.0%	1,049 93.8%
North Plantagenet	934	3,997	1,107 27.7%	2,863 71.6%	598.2	3,655	761 20.8%	2,893 79.2%	-8.6 / -31.3 / 1.0	3,257	511 15.7%	2,729 83.8%	-10.9 / -32.9 / -5.7
South Plantagenet		2,524	976 38.7%	1,502 59.5%		3,484	953 27.4%	2,526 72.5%		38.0 / -2.4 / 68.2	2,779	614 22.1%	2,159 77.7%
Prescott County	6,717	22,856	8,014 35.1%	14,601 63.9%	240.3	26,722	6,546 24.5%	20,124 75.3%	16.9 / -18.3 / 37.8	25,261	4,539 18.0%	15,618 81.2%	-5.5 / -30.7 / 1.9

Population by origin not available for townships after 1941 or before 1881. Other groups include Swedish, Chinese, Netherlanders but are statistically miniscule.

Protestant presence had grown (Figures 3 and 5). Yet even as much of the better land found in Hawkesbury Township was taken up, large tracts of low-lying land in the other townships remained “empty” to be occupied by settlers from French Quebec. The start of this second wave of settlement which would transform the county has been dated to the 1850s. The peak of that migration would come in the 1870s.²⁴

Cartwright mapped land settlement in Prescott and Russell Counties to show a clustering of French-origin families around the Catholic missions and parishes, and thereby the importance of Church institutions in directing the flow of French-Canadian migration. But he also emphasized the effect of soil. Clerical leadership of the French-Canadian settlement of Prescott County meant that these migrants arrived with the institutions required to undertake extensive drainage projects. As well, the land is an extension of the St. Lawrence lowlands with which the incoming French-Canadians had long experience.²⁵ Gaffield has traced 51 of the 86 pioneer French-Canadian families to the nearby Quebec Counties of Soulange, Vaudreuil and Deux Montagnes, where they had farmed much the same kind of land.²⁶ Thus, the new settlers could see the opportunity and they had the means to seize it. The Ottawa Valley was also being actively promoted by the Roman Catholic Church. Bishop Bourget in Montreal saw the value of the Ottawa Valley as a Church-organized destination that would divert the existing French-Canadian migration stream away from the New England mill towns. Since Quebec Church links were seen as making the area more attractive for these migrants, in 1847 the Quebec and Ontario sides of the Ottawa River (from Argenteuil and

²⁴ Gaffield, *Language, Schooling and Cultural Conflict*, 33-4.

²⁵ Cartwright, “Institutions on the Frontier,” 4.

²⁶ Gaffield, *Language, Schooling and Cultural Conflict*, 73, figure 9.

Prescott Counties east) were united into a single diocese suffragan to the ecclesiastical province of Quebec. This allowed French-Canadian migrants to feel linked to their home parishes through the parishes of the Ottawa Diocese.²⁷

To study the beginnings of Franco-Ontarian identity, Gaffield focused on the townships of Alfred and Caledonia. These were adjacent townships that had sufficiently different linguistic profiles in the nineteenth century to allow him to isolate the effect of linguistic differences. In Alfred, in 1871, French-Canadians were in the majority at 79.5%. They were a minority in Caledonia at 34.7%. West Hawkesbury had the smallest French-Canadian presence of all the townships in Prescott County, 27.6%.²⁸ The result of differing land preferences was already visible to all two decades later. The *Montreal Witness* wrote on June 6, 1889 that “the French wave” had occupied “the low swampy lands which Treadwell colonists [of Longueuil Township] and their descendants had rejected.” The *Witness* stated that British settlers were still strong on the high lands but were “hemmed in by the *habitants*.”²⁹ Cartwright also quotes correspondence to Bishop Guigues from parish priests claiming that English-speaking settlers had effectively abandoned the low land in Prescott County: “Des groupes d’Anglo-Saxons s’étaient peu à peu installé sur les côteaux de sable ou de roche, à Vankleek Hill, à Saint-Eugène sur le ridge de Caledonia et autres hauteurs semblable.”³⁰

²⁷ Cartwright, “Institutions on the Frontier,” 4-5. The 1841 diocese ran along the Ottawa River in Upper Canada to include the Nippissing District, Carleton County, and Prescott and Russell Counties. It extended across the Ottawa River to include Argenteuil up through the Pontiac to Lake Temiscaming. Today the Ontario side of the earlier Ottawa diocese is part of the Ontario conference.

²⁸ Gaffield, *Language, Schooling and Cultural Conflict*, 41, table 8.

²⁹ *Montreal Witness* quoted in Cyrus Thomas, 505.

³⁰ Undated letter Archdiocesan Archives Ottawa, Parish Records, “Parish History: St. Thomas d’Alfred,” quoted in Cartwright, “Institutions on the Frontier,” 10.

There was a French-Canadian community in West Hawkesbury Township, but it was not visible until the 1880s. Compare the 1822 and 1841 map (Figures 3 and 4), on which the low-lying northwest corner of Hawkesbury Township was empty, to the 1923 map (Figure 5) where this area had filled in with Francophone families. The 1822 map (Figure 3) gives an appearance of almost complete linguistic homogeneity. Only one name, Simeon Matte, in the south of the Township is a possible French-Canadian settler, but his name is gone in the 1823 assessment.³¹ Otherwise all the names of those for whom the assessor found at least a cow to be taxed were English, Scottish, Irish or American. There is a claim that there were about 100 French-Canadian families working at the Hamilton mills in the early years of the settlement.³² We cannot see these families or know when they arrived, as they did not own rateable property. What is clear is that French-Canadians living in West Hawkesbury were invisible, not just in the records but in any calculations of power, for the ratepayers were English speaking.

By the 1841 tax year, things were starting to change. Altogether that year there were 33 rateable inhabitants whose surname or whose first name suggest a French-Canadian origin. These households represented 12% of the 255 rateable inhabitants of the Township.³³ But 23 of these residents did not own land and therefore cannot be mapped. Eleven of the families were assessed for a single milch cow, while one had one horned

³¹ Simeon Matte cannot be connected to the Vankleek Hill carriage maker, Noé Matte. Noé Matte's marriage registration from 1897 states his father was Léon Matte of the parish St. Philippe d'Argenteuil while his 1903 death registration indicates he was born in Carillon, Quebec in Argenteuil (parish register of St. Grégoire de Buckingham, 377; Ontario Civil Registration of Deaths, 1903-023361).

³² Alexis de Barbezieux, *Histoire de la Province ecclésiastique d'Ottawa* (Ottawa: la Cie d'imprimerie d'Ottawa 1897), 326.

³³ This should be read as an indicator of magnitude rather than a definitive count. The assessment rolls do not indicate origin or language spoken. Some names are obviously French-Canadian, for example the surname Delorme and first names of Baptist, André and Hyacinthe. As well, though, I have counted as French, surnames which are unlikely English names but could have been an anglicized spelling of a common French name (for example, the surname Grew is more probably Groulx, and therefore French).

cattle. Another five had a horse as the sole animal owned and taxed. One was being assessed only for the squared-timber house in which he was living. It seems likely that these families were mill workers in Hawkesbury. Only five families had multiple animals and only one had more than a horse and a cow. It is possible that these families were either mill workers or farm laborers. There were another ten families who were likely French-Canadian and who owned land. Two, Peter Seyier and Joseph Hamill, were perhaps artisans, for each owned only a quarter acre. As well, there may have been other French-Canadians in Hawkesbury Township working in the mills or in the lumber camps who had no reason to keep a cow. While this would have kept them out of the Township tax records, they would have formed part of a French-speaking backdrop, even if they were lumber and river workers retaining their ties to their home parishes in Quebec.

In the 1861 census, Irish Protestants were the largest single group north of Concession 6 (56 farmers out of 125 or 32 households of 89), while Scots were dominant south of it (57 out of 86 farmers or 35 households of 45). English, American and Irish Catholic origin families were scattered among these two groups. Irish Protestants and Scots were found in equal numbers on Concession 6 itself: 26 Irish Protestant farmers (14 households) and 26 Scottish farmers (13 households).³⁴ There were a number of French-Canadian families in the township, but they were not identified as farmers in the census nor were they shown as owning land. Instead, adults over the age of 18 worked as labourers or servants, although only eight of the 40 enumerated as such resided in an

³⁴ Library and Archives Canada, Census of Canada 1861, RG 31 reel C-1068. The direction to enumerators to list farmers' sons as labourers caused some difficulty in that these men were not waged employees. Further, the West Hawkesbury enumerator listed every male who was not a head of household as a labourer, down to new-born children. I decided to count only the occupations of people age 18 and over and to count farmers' sons, age 18 and over, as farmers. This has resulted in more farmers than households.

employer's household. This was different from the work pattern of the 36 British-origin labourers and servants, where 17 lived in the employers' households and only 15 formed labourer families. The latter situation suggests farm labourer was a lifestage for Anglophones rather than a permanent class. As well as being different from their British neighbours, the wage-dependent French-Canadians in West Hawkesbury were different from their compatriots elsewhere in the county who were land-owning farmers.

The French-Canadians were also concentrated geographically.³⁵ Twenty-four families were enumerated among Anglophone farmers located between concessions 2 and 4, just outside the village limits of Hawkesbury, while 72 were enumerated among the residents of concession 6 near Vankleek Hill. The Francophone population of West Hawkesbury was gravitating towards the villages, where there was a variety of work opportunities, while continuing to live in the countryside. But while the Francophone families were concentrated, they were not separate from Anglophones who owned the farms on the concessions where they lived.

West Hawkesbury simply did not have expanses of unoccupied land for parish settlement by the Ottawa and Montreal dioceses. Although a chapel was built in Vankleek Hill by the local Irish and Scottish Roman Catholics, the parish of St. Gregory in Vankleek Hill was not founded until 1878. Before then the chapel was served, as a mission, by the priest at L'Original. The Church's decision to form a parish was driven by the concern of the Ottawa hierarchy for the spiritual lives of 200 Catholic families in a

³⁵ Location was approximated based on the agricultural census location information given for families who were adjacent in the nominal census sheets.

place dominated by Protestants.³⁶ It was not part of the Church's goal of diverting French-Canadian migration into a French Roman Catholic place. That door was closed. Yet both here and throughout Prescott County, the French origin population continued to grow between 1881 and 1911, while the British origin population either remained static or dropped as British origin families started to move west (see charts figure 2 and table 2).

The 1911 census shows some change in West Hawkesbury, but not as much as was happening elsewhere in the county. There were now 62 French-origin farmers in West Hawkesbury, but this made up only 30% of the farmer population, the rest being English-speaking. At the same time there were 40 French-Canadian men over the age of 18 giving their occupation as farm labourer while only five Anglophone men gave that occupation. The Anglophone heads of household were also far more likely to be farmers. with 150 of the 182 households reporting that occupation (or 82%). Francophones dominated the unskilled jobs, with 47 households showing occupations of labourer (farm and unspecified), four working on the CPR, eight working in a pulp- or a saw-mill and 13 working in a brickyard or stoneworks. There were also two Francophone blacksmiths (one of whom worked in the Riordan Pulp Mill), a carpenter and two cheesemakers. In general, the Francophone population of the West Hawkesbury countryside remained less agrarian than Francophones elsewhere in the county.

After 1911 both Francophones and Anglophones were leaving Prescott County's rural townships. Again West Hawkesbury and Vankleek Hill were slightly different. In West Hawkesbury the effect of rural depopulation was less than it was elsewhere for both

³⁶ "Historical Sketch," *Souvenir Program of the Golden Jubilee of St. Gregory's parish July 1st and 2nd 1928* (Vankleek Hill: The Review n.d.); Barbezieux, 518.

linguistic groups, with the French-origin population rising very slightly in Vankleek Hill itself. The result was that by 1941 the French-speaking population of West Hawkesbury had risen above the British-origin population, but the two groups remained essentially in demographic balance. Figure 5 shows the demographic result as of 1923. Only the Francophones who lived along the Ottawa River in the northwest of the township had no Anglophone neighbours with whom they would have had regular, if not intense, interactions.

By 1911 Alfred Township was close to 100% Francophone. Townships which had been minority French-Canadian in 1871, such as Caledonia, were now majority French. Even West Hawkesbury had a sufficiently strong French-Canadian population that the two communities seemed to be in a state of balance. Vankleek Hill was the only place where those claiming British descent were in the majority that year and, at 52%, it was a bare majority (table 2). Overall, at the beginning of the twentieth century, both rural and industrial Prescott County can be characterized as French speaking with the exception of rural West Hawkesbury and the agricultural service town of Vankleek Hill. There the population was evenly divided between French and English. Things had changed for the descendants of the British and American settlers of 1822, even in Vankleek Hill and West Hawkesbury.

The Nature and Range of Influence: Vankleek Hill as a Central Place

In order to understand the potential of Vankleek Hill to extend its economic and social influences beyond its hinterland of West Hawkesbury, we must ask how these places evolved in the period after 1870. By 1911, the town was the one central place, or

retail centre, in West Hawkesbury. So complete was its commercial dominance that all but two of the 74 commercial families of West Hawkesbury, including all nine farm implement salesmen, were resident in the village.³⁷ Over the next 30 years, this relationship between countryside and town would deepen as Vankleek Hill's economy became increasingly agricultural in nature. It was a symbiotic relationship in which the town dominated the hinterland commercially, but was itself dependent on the farming families as well as being the home of retired farm couples. The effect on the "natural" sphere of influence of the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society between 1900 and 1950 will be studied in the next chapter on social networks.

Central place theory seeks to understand hierarchical relationships between retail centres serving agricultural hinterlands. In this study, however, I will compare the evolution of the commercial presence of Vankleek Hill with that of the primary administrative central place of L'Orignal and the industrial central place of Hawkesbury (for a discussion of methodology, see Appendix A). It is expected that the extent of commercial influence will give an indicator of the reach of social spaces, or institutions, beyond Vankleek Hill into the countryside and into nearby towns. While a local history of Vankleek Hill would focus on relationships with yet more places, in particular Alexandria in Glengarry County, I focus here on L'Orignal and Hawkesbury as having the strongest, continuous influences on West Hawkesbury and Vankleek Hill from the beginnings of settlement to 1950.

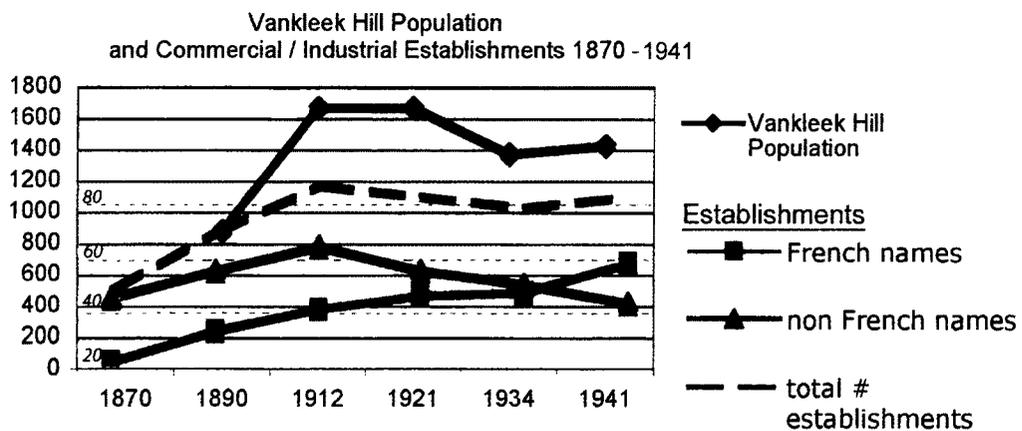
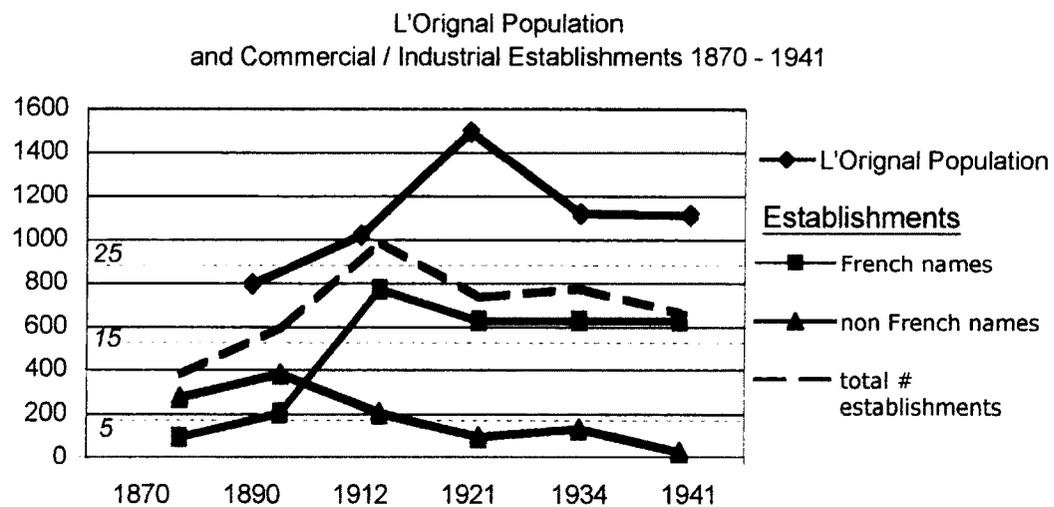
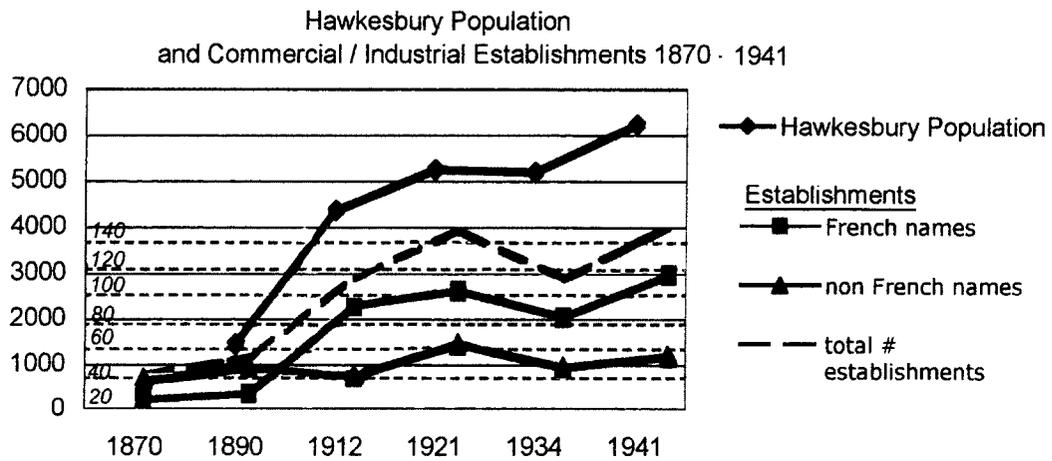
³⁷ Library and Archives Canada, Census of Canada 1911, RG 31 reel T-20394; Gaffield, *Language, Schooling and Cultural Conflict*, 65 states centralization of service occupations in Hawkesbury, L'Orignal and Vankleek Hill was evident as early as 1871.

L'Orignal was the primary administrative centre for the United Counties of Prescott and Russell. Here land transactions were registered and justice and welfare were doled out in the Court and the House of Refuge. The town of Hawkesbury was an industrial centre that stood outside the retail market system of the region. It also had the largest population, primarily mill workers. The three places formed a tightly located triangle of about 10 to 15 kilometers per side. L'Orignal and Hawkesbury had the advantage over Vankleek Hill from the beginnings of settlement. They had access to the Ottawa River and, in the 1870s and 1880s, access to the railway that ran along the river's north shore. Despite this, Vankleek Hill in 1870 was the most advanced retail centre in the county, as evidenced by the Dun Mercantile Reference Books. It was the only centre with a bank, as well as having two doctors, a drugstore and a larger number of the usual small town enterprises than the others.

Figures 6 and 7 compare the changes in commercial activity that happened in the next 70 years in Vankleek Hill, L'Orignal and the town of Hawkesbury.³⁸ The number of French-Canadians surnames listed as the owners of companies grew in all three towns. At the same time, the number of Anglophone-owned companies were dropping, but their numbers dropped fastest in L'Orignal and slowest in Vankleek Hill. Francophone-owned companies tracked the overall population trends in Hawkesbury and Vankleek Hill. This suggests a strong responsiveness to the consumer base. In Vankleek Hill, however, Francophone-owned companies continued to grow whether the population was rising or falling. The resilience of the Anglophone companies in Vankleek Hill suggests that the Anglophone farmers were continuing to support local businesses. There does not

³⁸ The source used, the Dun Mercantile Reference Books, under-reports the businesses in the towns, as found in a range of sources, but restricting the analysis to them gives a comparable base for analysis.

Figure 6: Population and Number of Commercial / Industrial Establishments, 1870 to 1914. Source: Dun Mercantile Reference Books.



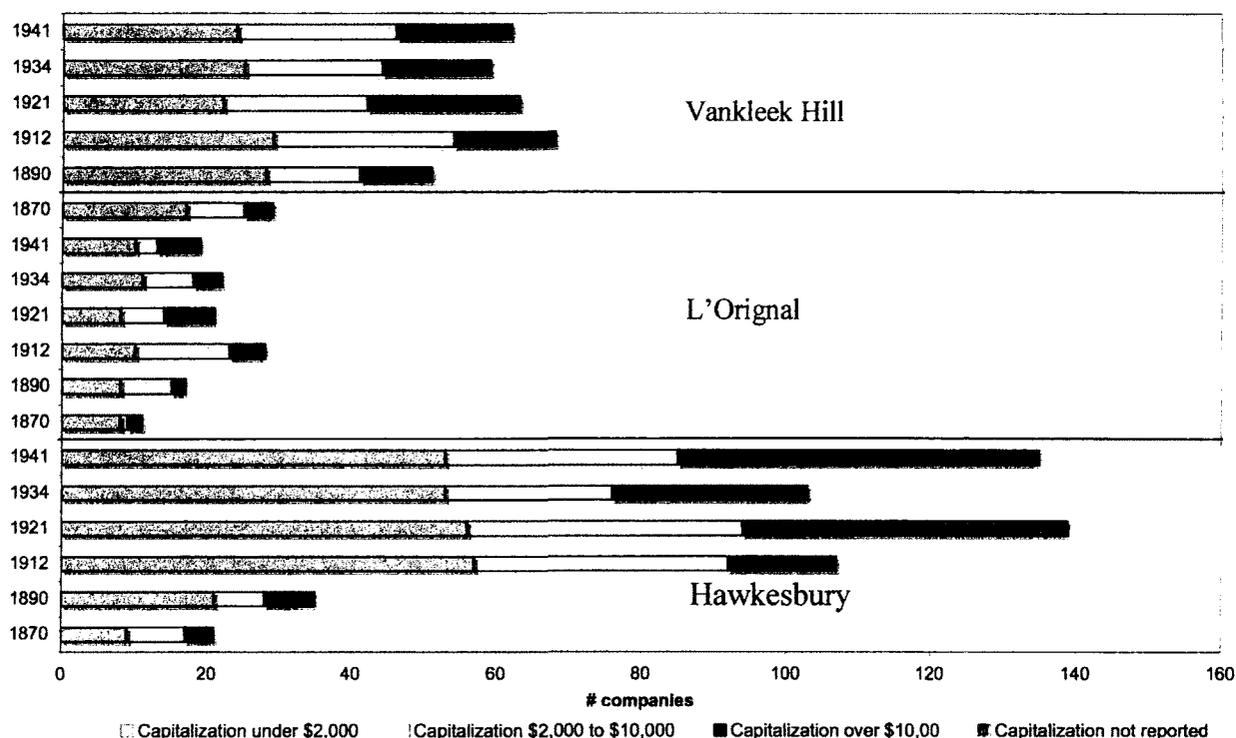
seem to be any one commercial field in which Anglophones dominated. Both language groups were involved in cheesemaking, in agricultural implement sales and in the general stores.

The other part of the story is changes in the complexity of companies (as indicated by level of capitalization) in the three towns. Figure 6 shows that Hawkesbury grew all sizes of businesses, with the smallest (in capitalization) growing the most. By 1921, its Francophone-owned commercial base was made up largely of general stores and grocery stores, each capitalized at less than \$2,000, suggesting a myriad of corner stores. Vankleek Hill suffered the effects of competition from other places, with the number of its most highly capitalized businesses dropping through the period. But it did retain more well-capitalized businesses than might be expected given the general trend. The Vankleek Hill businesses were more resilient than those of L'Orignal, but they had started from a stronger position and they were in the centre of the agricultural hinterland, rather than on the edge of it as L'Orignal was.

The degree to which being in the hinterland helped Vankleek Hill offset competition from the much larger Hawkesbury is illustrated both by the number of companies retained there and by the changes in the functions of the towns. Over the period from 1912 to 1941, Vankleek Hill shed much of its aspirations to be an industrial place while retaining the functions of an agricultural service town as well as a shopping place subsidiary to Hawkesbury. In 1934, both Hawkesbury and Vankleek Hill had clothing stores owned by new families, Jewish and Syrian, in the region. But Assaly, Greenspon and Rubenstein had had clothing stores in Hawkesbury since 1912, while Assaly opened a store in Vankleek Hill sometime between 1928 and 1934. This is an

indicator that by World War I Hawkesbury had become the point from which commercial businesses diffused into Vankleek Hill.

Figure 7: Complexity and Level of Capitalization of Commercial establishments, 1870 to 1941. Source: Dun Mercantile Reference Books.



The two years used in this last part of the analysis, 1934 and 1941, were unusual. One was the worst year of the depression and the other was early in World War II with wartime rationing in full effect. Yet they show a continuation from 1921, in which Hawkesbury grows and the other central places decline. By 1941, Hawkesbury had taken on the shape of an urban place with dairy distribution (milk delivery to urban dwellers). It also had eight manufacturers in a variety of sectors versus Vankleek Hill's timber-based three. Above all, Hawkesbury had become the place to go to buy non-essential consumer goods.

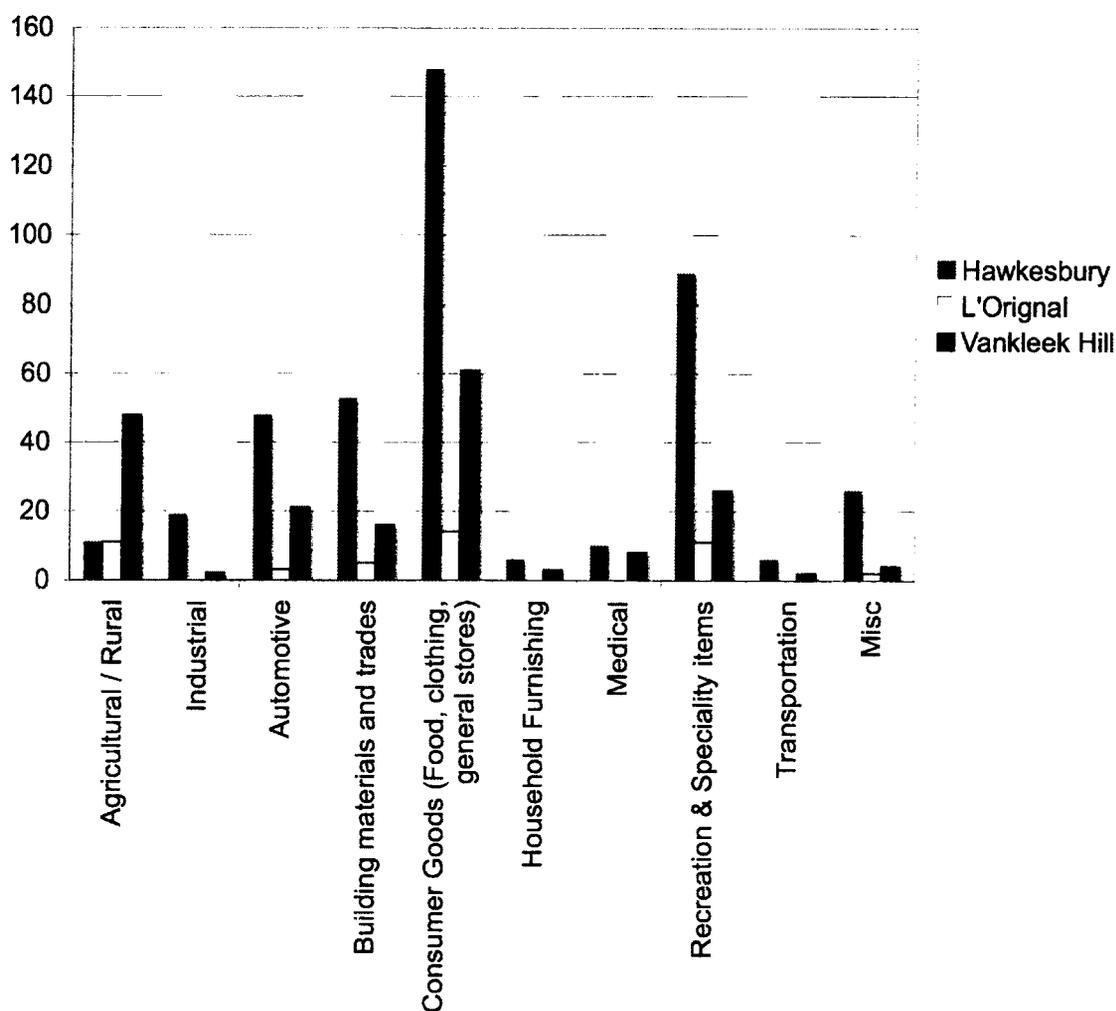
Hawkesbury was the only place with a specialized establishment for playing billiards in 1921, billiards being the only commercial recreation listed by Dun beyond the hotel bar (Hawkesbury had in total three establishments offering billiards, but two were connected to other businesses; Vankleek Hill also had a place to play billiards, but it was one of three functions offered at Matte's men's clothing store). The Vankleek Hill *Eastern Ontario Review* carried ads for a cinema in Vankleek Hill called the "Opera House." It was showing Buster Keaton movies in January 1926 but it disappears from the newspaper by 1930.³⁹ That year, the *Review* was advertising a cinema in Hawkesbury which would have drawn both young men and women from all over West and East Hawkesbury seeking a recreational evening out. The 1941 Dun Mercantile Reference Book identified 63 functions offered in the three towns that can be called recreational or non-essential goods and services. Nearly three-quarters of these were offered in Hawkesbury (table 3). Overall, Vankleek Hill had become a more purely agricultural and rural place in the second quarter of the twentieth century than it had been before 1900.

Vankleek Hill had started with a certain level of economic diversity that neither L'Original as the administrative town nor Hawkesbury as a mill-town had enjoyed. Vankleek Hill had been a school centre since 1849, when a public high school was established, a position it consolidated when it was opened to students from the surrounding area in 1865. There was also some industrial activity owned by both French- and English-speaking entrepreneurs, although the number of employees hired by these companies appears to have been small. A brickyard that employed 13 in 1911 appears to

³⁹ *Eastern Ontario Review*. Advertisements January 1, 1926, April 1, 1926, January 1, 1930.

have been the largest single employer that year.⁴⁰ By 1934, the carriage makers, foundry and brickyard had disappeared. What was left was the grist mill and a saw and planing mill, both owned by British-origin families, and a monument maker, Martel et fils.⁴¹

Figure 8: Range of goods and services available for sale in Hawkesbury, L'Original and Vankleek Hill, 1941. Comparison of number of functions offered in commodity categories, weighted for level of specialization and complexity (see Appendix 1). Total weighted offerings = 653. Source: Dun Mercantile Reference Book.



⁴⁰ No companies' records have been found. This is particularly regrettable with respect to the records of the Phoenix textile mills as this makes it impossible to identify where their hand- and home-manufacturing was being done or by whom.

⁴¹ Library and Archives Canada, Dun, 1934: 991.

This was the result of a long process that had started with the late arrival of train transportation in Russell and Prescott Counties. Lockwood has described how the low density of population east of Ottawa discouraged the development of railways across Prescott-Russell.⁴² When the rail did come, it was in the period when mass production was pushing out small scale production in Canada. As a result, the rail did not enlarge markets for local manufacturers, but took away the market they had.⁴³ L'Orignal and Hawkesbury had been the first to enjoy the benefits of rail when a line on the north shore of the Ottawa River reached Calumet, Quebec in 1876. Both towns immediately established a ferry to take advantage of this service. Vankleek Hill remained relatively isolated for almost another two decades until 1892. That year, a spur line connecting Hawkesbury to the Canada Atlantic Ottawa-Montreal rail line was run a short distance away from the town. Rail service improved for Vankleek Hill in 1896 with the inaugural run of the Canadian Pacific line through Prescott and Russell Counties, giving immediate connection to Montreal and within two years a direct connection to Ottawa. By the beginning of the twentieth century two rail lines crossed just to the north of Vankleek Hill, putting West Hawkesbury within easy reach of both Montreal and Ottawa.⁴⁴

This opened up new markets for local farmers. In 1920 the Ontario Department of Agriculture representative in Prescott County, Ferdinand Larose, commented on the end product of the change for farmers. They were shifting from hay and cereal crops to winter dairying, and having their herds tested for tuberculosis in order to ship milk and cream to

⁴² Lockwood, "Patterns of Settlement," 256-7.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 257.

⁴⁴ Brault, 88-9, 98-102; Bélanger and Diamond, 55,

the cities.⁴⁵ But there was also an effect on where goods sold locally had been made. Links with the greater commercial world had started soon after the arrival of the train. In 1901, Vankleek Hill's *Eastern Ontario Review* carried an ad for a mail order catalogue from Henry Morgan and Company of Montreal. But the broader impact of railways came as local merchants increased the amounts of goods they freighted into the village, replacing goods that were being produced locally. Even bread was brought in daily from Ottawa and sold in George Chalmers's store. It was probably outselling local produce, as baker Emery Valley pleaded in his advertisements in January 1917 "Be loyal to your own town." By the end of the year, Chalmers was still selling Ottawa bread, but there were no longer advertisements placed by Valley.⁴⁶

Local retailing is still evident in a Souvenir Programme printed for a celebration at Vankleek Hill's St. Gregory Roman Catholic Church in 1928. Advertisements were placed by only four local producers of goods: a Francophone baker, the Mercier family of carriage makers, a harness maker and the monument maker, Martel et Fils. Yet, of the 45 ads in the Programme, only nine were from outside Vankleek Hill with the rest being local service companies and stores. Doubtless someone closely connected to the church had obtained the ad from the Montreal company which sold "huile du sanctuaire." The remaining goods advertised had a more general character. Again from Montreal, Dupuis Frères advertised their French-language mail order service and the Montreal company, Canadian Explosives, advertised their stumping powder was available in Ottawa.

The links with outside companies supplying goods for retail in Vankleek Hill are visible in a Montreal grocery supply store which directed the reader to ask their butcher

⁴⁵ Ontario Archives, MS 597 reel 50, Ferdinand Larose, 1927-8 Annual Report: 1.

⁴⁶ *Eastern Ontario Review*. Jan 19, 1917 [3] col. 2; August 29, 1917 [5] cols. 5-6.

and grocer for specific brands of goods. As well, two Ottawa dairies advertised ice cream, with one specifying the Vankleek Hill restaurant that served it, and an Ottawa wholesaler of stationery and fancy goods took out an ad. A Hull company advertised automobile accessories, while local Francophones were told they could get their news from Ottawa with *Le Droit*. All of the ads in the souvenir program were bilingual except those of Dupuis Frères and *Le Droit*. These were aimed specifically at the Francophone market.⁴⁷ The ties between Vankleek Hill and the metropolises extended equally east and west, to Ottawa and to Montreal.

Over the course of the first half of the twentieth century, the influence of Vankleek Hill had become increasingly agricultural in nature. Consumer goods meanwhile had shifted to the town of Hawkesbury, making it the place to go for specialized goods and for modern recreational services such as the cinema. Vankleek Hill would have maintained some level of influence in its rural hinterland, a circumstance valuable for the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society, but had limited influence elsewhere in Prescott County. Its day as a county place was gone even as it remained a rural central place within the township.

Evolving Patterns of Power

In this section, the focus is on the impact of settlement patterns on the social relationships between groups. With settlers of different linguistic and ethnic origins intertwined geographically in West Hawkesbury and Vankleek Hill, how did they relate one to another? According to Gaffield, awareness of linguistic differences with the

⁴⁷ *Souvenir Programme of the Golden Jubilee of St. Gregory's Parish.*

second wave of settlers submerged cultural distinctions within the English-speaking community over the course of the nineteenth century.⁴⁸ Thus, when conflict with French-Canadians began in the 1880s, there was no sense of difference between a Gaelic-speaking Roman Catholic highlander, an Irish Church of England immigrant and a Methodist Late Loyalist from New York State. This was a relatively recent phenomenon, however. Conflict between communities of different origins has a long tradition here, just as it does anywhere. Community may be about ties of attachment, but as Anthony Cohen argued community is a relational word defined by the divisions that separate.

There were clear signs of conflict between the American settlers and the Irish Protestants who arrived at the end of the Napoleonic Wars. From the beginnings of the Longueuil settlement, the American Nathaniel Treadwell was in conflict with the government at York over a line of survey that left much of the best land outside his seigneurie and inside West Hawkesbury. That conflict ended in the War of 1812 with Treadwell being imprisoned and losing his lands for refusing to swear the oath of allegiance.⁴⁹ Another conflict was either an opening of an old wound or a continuation of an old feud. Ethnicity may or may not have been the basis of the original conflict but it distinguished the groups involved. In 1820, William Hamilton, one of the owners of the Hamilton (or Hawkesbury) mills, was fraudulently elected to the Upper Canadian legislature. The defeated opponent, against whom Hamilton's votes had been artificially inflated, was Dr. David Pattee. This was less than ten years after the Irish Protestant Hamiltons had taken over the mills from the original American owners, Mears and

⁴⁸ Gaffield, *Language, Schooling and Cultural Conflict*, 17.

⁴⁹ Brault, 22-3.

Pattee.⁵⁰ These divisions are similar to those Glenn Lockwood found between American and Irish settlers in Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Counties in his article “Temperance in Upper Canada as Ethnic Subterfuge.”⁵¹ In the case examined by Lockwood, contending American- and Irish-origin groups sought to control official appointments and move forward their respective Reform and Tory agendas. The Irish used the Orange Lodge and the Americans formed temperance societies as means to carry on a political struggle for local dominance.

In Hawkesbury, the conflict was largely economic until the 1837 Rebellion. The government was sufficiently distrustful of the Americans living in Vankleek Hill and along the post road that it sent a detachment of cavalry to escort through the town a shipment of arms destined for the Hawkesbury militia.⁵² A relative calm lasted until the night after the December 1837 burning of St. Eustache during the Lower Canadian Rebellion. That night Charles Waters, a member of the American community and the Reform representative in the Legislative Assembly, was singled out as a target of official distrust. He later described in a letter to William Lyon Mackenzie how men armed with guns and bayonets lined the streets of Vankleek Hill while William Hamilton, as Colonel of the militia, searched his home at midnight for treasonous material.⁵³

These undoubtedly bitter divisions appear to have faded over the course of the nineteenth century. I would argue that this was inevitable given sufficient time. A local

⁵⁰ Brault, 37; Armstrong, 108. Armstrong simply says Hamilton was elected 1820 and declared not elected March 1821.

⁵¹ Glenn J. Lockwood, “Temperance in Upper Canada as Ethnic Subterfuge,” *Drink in Canada: Historical Essays* ed. Cheryl Krasnick Warsh (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press 1993), 43-69 *passim*.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 38.

⁵³ Ontario Archives, William Lyon Mackenzie Collection, reel 516-9 item 7199, Charles Waters to William Lyon Mackenzie April 13, 1849.

historian, Maria A. Higginson, has stated that the American families moved to the American midwest and were replaced by British families.⁵⁴ Certainly a number of names such as Kellogg and Cobb disappear from the record after 1850. Nor was the gulf between the communities impassable. In 1849, the Irish Protestant Higginson family hosted the daughters of the American Cass, Jackson and Wells families one evening.⁵⁵ As well, tracing local families shows that by the late nineteenth century there had been sufficient intermarriage that families such as the American Grouts and the Irish Protestant Mooneys were extended kin to one other. This, as much as the arrival of a more distinct “other” in the form of French-Canadian migrants, is likely responsible for the sense of a monolithic Anglophone community struggling with an equally monolithic Francophone community for dominance.

The number of French-origin families grew from about a third of the population in 1881 to about half the total population of Vankleek Hill and West Hawkesbury in 1911. Yet British-origin residents continued to dominate municipal politics. The minute book of the Vankleek Hill Town Council from 1897 to 1910 combined with the *Eastern Ontario Review* reports of municipal elections for 1916, 1917, 1924 and 1925 produce a list of 49 elected officials (mayor, reeve and six councillors) over a period of 18 years. The Municipal Reports of West Hawkesbury to the provincial government from 1914 to 1948 produce a list of 34 elected officials (reeve and four councillors) covering 35 years. In West Hawkesbury, the only French-speaking councillors were Samuel Charbonneau and Gustave Gougeon, both of whom had addresses in L’Orignal, and Henry [Henri] A.

⁵⁴ Maria A. Higginson and Mrs. James T. Brock, *The village of Hawkesbury, 1808-1888* (Hawkesbury, Ont.: Ladies Guild of Holy Trinity Church 1961), unpaginated.

⁵⁵ *The Diaries of Thomas Higginson* ed. Thomas Boyd Higginson (London: Research Publishing 1960), September 1, 1849, 10.

Fauteaux of Hawkesbury. In Vankleek Hill, by contrast, 15 or about 30% of the 49 elected officials (as measured over the entire period) had French origins. One of these, E. Z. (Eustache Zephirin) Labrosse, was reeve for four years while P. S. (Peter Sylvester) Paquette was mayor for three years and reeve for four years. The demographic split between the French-Canadian and British-origin populations was almost the same in rural West Hawkesbury as it was in the town of Vankleek Hill. Since it was not force of numbers that produced a higher French-Canadian representation in Vankleek Hill, the difference in French-Canadian representation was likely due to the presence in Vankleek Hill of a commercial and manufacturing French-speaking elite.⁵⁶

French-Canadian families had started to penetrate the elite ranks of the town in the 1870s. The leading families were the Merciers and the Mattes (both manufacturing carriages), Felix Routhier and sons running a foundry they had acquired from fellow French-Canadians the Martin brothers, the Labrosse family who were general merchants and blacksmiths, Joseph St. Denis a local inn-keeper and real estate speculator, and Joseph O. Leguire, an agent selling agricultural implements. All of these became involved in local politics, while Felix Routhier and Joseph St. Denis went on to provincial and federal politics. All of them were also among the leaders of the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society, of which more in the next chapter. The spin-off effect of daily economic interactions with a French-speaking commercial sector was the potential

⁵⁶ An analysis of the 1921 Vankleek Hill assessment rolls held at the town hall, Township of Champlain, indicates that Anglophones were still in the majority as municipal electors in all three wards, making any Francophone representation that much more noteworthy while explaining why Francophone councillors remained a minority (ratio Anglophone to Francophone voters: Centre Ward 67:33, East Ward 53:48, West Ward 65:35).

awakening of both communities to the power and the weaknesses of their own versus the other.

Gaffield has thoroughly reviewed the political events of the 1870s and 1880s that led to French-Canadian control of provincial and federal politics in the county. Robert Choquette has claimed that Franco-Ontarian identity commenced with the struggle around Regulation 17.⁵⁷ Gaffield, however argues that Prescott County was the epicentre of the debates over schooling, leading to the exercise of the electoral power that comes with demographic strength. Thus his work identifies the first stirrings of group consciousness in the earlier struggles over control of school boards in this rural county. West Hawkesbury and Vankleek Hill were not at the centre of this conflict due to the small numbers of Francophone voters in that township. By the time of Regulation 17, the Francophone presence had grown sufficiently that the issue should have hit home. Yet this does not seem to have been the case. As far as local news coverage was concerned, it was almost a non-event for the Anglophones of Vankleek Hill.

Regulation 17 was issued in 1912 by the provincial government as an attempt to make English the language of education for all years beyond the first year of schooling in both public and separate schools. It is a regulation that has never been rescinded, but it was allowed to fall into disuse by the 1940s due to the impossibility of enforcing it.⁵⁸ The Vankleek Hill *Eastern Ontario Review* paid little attention to the growing Francophone opposition in 1912 and 1913 beyond reprinting editorials from Toronto and Ottawa

⁵⁷ Robert Choquette, "L'Histoire des franco-Ontariens bilan de la recherché," Colloque sur la situation de la recherché sur la vie française en Ontario *La Situation de la recherche sur la vie française en Ontario*. (Ottawa: Centre de recherche en civilisation canadienne-française de l'Université d'Ottawa 1975), 69.

⁵⁸ "Regulation 17: Circular of Instruction No. 17 for Ontario Separate Schools for the School Year 1912-1913." Site for Language Management in Canada. http://www.salic-lmc.ca/showpage.asp?file=legislations_ling/documents_hist/1912_reglement_17&language=en&updatemenu=false&noprevnext Accessed September 15, 2011. Site provides commentary and complete text.

newspapers on the advantages of bilingualism for Francophone children (without addressing why Anglophone children should not have had the same opportunity).⁵⁹ In reporting on specific events, the few paragraphs carried on Franco-Ontarian fund-raising avoided overt comment, but slanted the words to show disapproval. Thus, a donation from the Montreal St. Jean Baptiste Society was presented as an attack funded out of Quebec. The article described the French Ontario Educational Association as being “back” of the movement against Regulation 17, as if dealing with secret forces, and stated that donated money would be used “to wage war against the Ontario Government and the Education department of this province.”⁶⁰

Until late November of 1913, the focus in Vankleek Hill’s newspaper was on events in Ottawa. There was one article that started with a report that students at Ste. Anne de Prescott in East Hawkesbury had walked out on the arrival of the government inspector, stating he had no business in their school. That event was taken care of in a short paragraph, without further comment. The article then concentrated on events in Ottawa and on reporting the split between the Catholic School Board’s English-speaking and French-speaking trustees. It quoted Anglophone trustees as saying that Regulation 17 was not a “‘Catholic’ fight.”⁶¹ Finally, on November 18, 1913, an incident happened in Vankleek Hill itself. The newspaper reported that many children did not attend the second day of the visit of the government inspector to the convent school run by the Sisters of Saint Mary. The newspaper claimed that the St. Gregory priest, Father Beausoleil, and his curate had intercepted children on their way to school and sent them

⁵⁹ *Eastern Ontario Review*, November 8, 1912, 4 col. 4-5 copy from *Toronto News* (June 27, 1913); July 11, 1913, 4 col. 2, copy from *Ottawa Free Press* (n.d.).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, September 5, 1913, 1 col. 5.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, November 1, 1913, 2 cols. 1-3; 6 cols. 3-5.

home. The conclusion of the newspaper was that the priests had interfered in the education of local children, and claimed many Anglophone Catholic parents were opposed to their actions.⁶² An editorial in the same issue called for the government to either remove the cause of defiance, the regulation, or ensure that it was enforced. How the latter was to be done was not addressed.⁶³ There were no further comments found in the Vankleek Hill Anglophone press on the local incident. The newspaper had focused in its reporting on only one of the two struggles encompassed in the reaction to Regulation 17. They chose to ignore, or failed to recognize, the struggle over French-language rights while concentrating on the Church struggle to gain total control over all institutions in which Roman Catholics were members.

This chapter has shown how soil created a distinctly different settlement pattern in Hawkesbury Township from that of the county. But while geographic separation, language and social relationships reinforced each other to create two separate and non-interacting linguistic communities at the level of the county, in West Hawkesbury the two waves of settlement were isolated from each other socially rather than geographically. By 1900, a French-speaking commercial and manufacturing elite was politically active in Vankleek Hill, while the number of Francophone residents equaled that of Anglophone representatives. Yet, with Anglophones remaining a majority among the property-owning municipal voters, Francophones remained under-represented among office holders. The overall dominance of Anglophones within the small orbit of the township allowed the local press to treat the controversy over Regulation 17 as a conflict with the Roman Catholic church centred in Ottawa rather than as a local language debate. The inability to

⁶² Ibid., November 21, 1913, 1 col. 4.

⁶³ Ibid., [4] col. 2.

see this event in the terms understood by Franco-Ontarians indicates the distance between Anglophones of West Hawkesbury and Vankleek Hill and their Francophone neighbours.

Making Community Visible: History-Telling and Social Relationships

My final question for this chapter concerns the degree to which the French and English who came to the area saw themselves as distinctive communities. Community is not a given. Benedict Anderson calls the nation an “imagined community” because it involved people who never met and yet found commonalities amongst themselves based on a “feeling” of community: a condition of the mind rather than of facts and figures. Anthony Cohen stresses the importance of symbols for drawing the lines or boundaries between groups by which individuals could agree on who could be considered “us” and who were “them.” While many Canadians may believe that history is a matter of facts and dates, history is perhaps one of the strongest of imagined symbols of community. This section will first consider how the two communities approached their own histories and then examine social interaction across linguistic lines in the twentieth century.

In the case of Prescott County, both French-Canadian and British-American settlers could see on their arrival in Prescott County a place open for settlement. Both could claim it as part of their own history. By the 1790s there were few signs of a former presence in the land. Disease and war had forced out the original inhabitants, the Petite-Nation group of Algonkians, in the 1600s.⁶⁴ The settlers saw the Algonkians of Golden Lake pass by as they traveled to Montreal. Some may have heard that John Whitlock of Argenteuil County, Quebec had contracted in 1805 with the Iroquois of Deux-Montagnes

⁶⁴ Brault, 14-6.

to lease the islands in the Ottawa River only to be told by the Algonkians that those islands were not Mohawk but theirs. Some may have heard of artifacts dug up by John Kirby at Chute au Blondeau.⁶⁵ But these were signs of a people who lived far away or very long ago. Both French and English could see empty land, land without history, which could be shaped to fit their culture and their history.

At the same time, the location of Prescott County made it a place both communities could see as “theirs.” Its proximity to the Scots of Glengarry County, to the American-Scottish settlements of Argenteuil County, and to the French-Canadians of Argenteuil and Vaudreuil made it a natural path of expansion for all these groups. Lucien Brault begins his story of European settlement with the French Regime and the pre-1791 history of the seigneurie which became Longueuil Township.⁶⁶ For French-Canadians, Prescott County was part of the history of Quebec. For British and Americans, it was part of an Upper Canada which had been created to give British settlers a familiar legal framework but which the settlers also expected to be British in language and culture.

We can also see separate understandings of the communities and their right to be in that place in two monographs published at the end of the nineteenth century. Cyrus Thomas published a history of Argenteuil and Prescott Counties in 1896 while Père Alexis de Barbezieux published a history of the Ottawa Diocese, with chapters on both those counties, in 1897. These are local histories typical of the period in which a man of some education, the schoolteacher in the American tradition of local history and the parish priest in the French Canadian tradition, turned the history of the place into a useful

⁶⁵ Henri Clément, Margaret MacMillan and Jean-Roch Vachon (ed), *Hawkesbury 1859 - 1984* (n.p., n.d.), 9; Thomas, 189.

⁶⁶ Brault, 16-21.

lesson about progress, on the one hand, and an exemplification of piety and the leadership of the Church, on the other. Because de Barbezieux's history covers the entire diocese from Prescott County in Ontario and Argenteuil in Quebec up to Temiskaming, while Thomas's history covers just two counties, the two books differ as to depth of information covered. But there are also different views of what settlement meant, as well as who was centre stage and who assumed the role of "other."

Thomas had already written histories of the Eastern Townships and of Shefford, Quebec when he undertook to write his *History of the Counties of Argenteuil, Quebec and Prescott, Ontario*. His book, in both structure and writing process, follows the American model of publisher-driven local histories. In these, compilers processed subscriber-prepared genealogies and local history vignettes into a sellable whole that celebrated local progress and achievement. Thomas's publisher, Lovell of Montreal, may have been the instigator, for the Lovell family was from East Hawkesbury and was appropriately written up in the book. Thomas himself was a schoolteacher descended from an American family that had settled in the Eastern Townships. At the time of writing this particular work, he appears to have been running an orphanage in Montreal.⁶⁷ The Thomas history was a commercial endeavour but it promised to include the names of the original pioneers, even if there were no descendants left in the area, as well as the family histories of his subscribers.⁶⁸

It was a matter of people writing their own history. Thomas gathered content from local people, and it was local people who bought the book. The process is recorded in the

⁶⁷ Carol Kammen, *On Doing Local History* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press 2003), 23-6; information on Cyrus Thomas from Library and Archives Canada, Census of Canada 1851 to 1901.

⁶⁸ Thomas, vii.

diaries of Thomas Tweed Higginson, a leading farmer of West Hawkesbury. He visited his neighbours to collect information on the local veterans of the War of 1812 and then sent the material to Thomas in Carillon.⁶⁹ As a result, even though Thomas was an outsider, his history reflected what the local people thought was important and how they wished to present themselves and their families to the public. Commercial families emphasized their businesses to such an extent that they read much like advertising. The entry on the Hurley Brothers of Vankleek Hill described the range and quality of the stock in their store and concluded that “[t]heir business is done on a cash system and as they carry a good stock,” they were likely to be successful.⁷⁰ A farming family emphasized the quality of their livestock or the presence of a special feature such as an orchard. James D. Newton highlighted his achievement in making a farm of 100 acres pay for the purchase of three more farms for his sons, while his own farm had a brick house and “good farm buildings.”⁷¹ All the family stories were presented as illustrative of the history of the counties, but they were the individual stories of prosperous farmers and commercial men, their achievements, their sons and their marriage connections. Cumulatively, it is the story of how interconnected British and American families settled the two counties and turned bush into thriving, modern towns, villages, and farms.

De Barbezieux, who wrote *Histoire de la province ecclésiastique d'Ottawa*, was French-born and a member of the Capuchin order resident in the 1890s in a monastery in Hintonburg. He came to the attention of Mgr Duhamel, Archbishop of Ottawa, because of a sermon he had preached. Duhamel asked that de Barbezieux be released from other

⁶⁹ *The Diaries of Thomas Higginson* March 29 and 30, 1896, April 14, 1896, 76.

⁷⁰ Thomas, 569.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 556.

duties to become the diocesan historian, to tell the story of “la civilization et de la colonization catholiques.”⁷² But while De Barbezieux claimed to be writing something more than an ecclesiastical history, he organized his book around church officials and structures, with a section for each bishop’s episcopate and chapter contents organized by parish. Unlike Thomas’s oral history, it appears that de Barbezieux’s work was an archives-based history, for he referenced Diocesan archival records, though he sought out for one question the testimony of older residents. He also added a final note on the steamers on the Ottawa River in the 1820s and the first settlers in Argenteuil and Prescott Counties, citing Thomas’s history as his source.⁷³

Neither writer mentioned the local struggles over language and schooling or the shift of electoral power that had occurred in the previous decade. Nineteenth-century American local histories were popular partially because they were a means of boosting the local community, but also because they affirmed residents’ sense of achievement in the face of an influx of new immigrants.⁷⁴ This compensatory reinforcement can be seen in Thomas’s history, where the one change not mentioned was the demographic contest that the British-American settlers were losing. Instead, his focus was on the material triumphs and progress of the past and, in the case of Vankleek Hill, a commercial prosperity that had advanced it beyond the condition of a country corner place to that of an urbanized town. Thomas began his section on Vankleek Hill by listing the marks of progress: 116 brick buildings as well as wood and stone, all gave a general city-like air with “imposing” public buildings and business blocks on wide principal streets. He also

⁷² De Barbezieux, vol 1, iii- iv.

⁷³ Ibid., vol 2, 479-85.

⁷⁴ Kammen, 13-15.

gave the town a narrative about settlement. Thomas attributed the existence of the town to its position in the centre of the land that had the greatest potential for dairying and mixed farming. Because the early settlers realized this, it had attracted “a thrifty class of pioneers” who turned it into a market for the surrounding countryside. He described the town as essentially created by “a few active men [who] had invested their capital in business,” but as well he noted that the place was “on a line of travel between the two great rivers, St Lawrence and Ottawa” which “doubtless helped to facilitate its growth.”⁷⁵ He followed this with the story of the founding family, the Vankleeks, who had started an inn at the spot. He then covered the establishment of places of worship, the schools, a post office and a Mechanics Institute, and the rise in the number of commercial establishments as well as medical professionals, hotels, and manufacturing establishments.⁷⁶ In this narrative, Vankleek Hill was a place destined to thrive.

For de Barbezieux, progress could be achieved solely through the Church. The increasing numbers and prosperity of Catholic families mattered only because both were necessary to create parishes, maintain a resident priest and build a fine Church building. His section on Vankleek Hill in the 1860s, or rather on Saint-Gregoire de Vankleek Hill, concluded by quoting from Bishop Guigues’ note written following a pastoral visit: prosperity was growing and the Bishop would be naming a resident priest.⁷⁷ His Vankleek Hill story ended in the 1890s with the necessity of enlarging the Church building due to increased numbers of parishioners in a village that had all the attractions (“allures”) of an urban centre:

⁷⁵ Thomas, 564.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 564-88.

⁷⁷ De Barbezieux, vol 1, 518.

Le nouveau temple est aujourd'hui une des merveilles du diocèse et digne en tout d'une grande ville avec ses fresques, ses bancs sculptés et ses vitraux. Du reste, le village de Vankleek Hill a déjà toutes les allures d'une ville. Cette paroisse compte aujourd'hui (1895) deux cent trente-six familles catholiques dont cinquante-six irlandaises.⁷⁸

De Barbezieux may have ignored the struggles to turn demographic dominance into political dominance, or even the establishment of French-language schools, because his focus was on the Church foremost and language second. French-language public schools were simply one of the many excellent results to come from a strong network of parishes. Roberto Perin argues that, starting in the 1840s, Bishop Bourget of Montreal undertook parish creation as a first step in forming a French-Canadian "public sphere."⁷⁹ Part of this process involved increasing the Church's presence by recruiting clerics from France as parish priests and as institutional workers.⁸⁰ I would argue that the formation of parishes, and in particular the extension of the Quebec parish system into Ontario, was the essential first step in realizing the longer term goal of Church-run cradle-to-grave institutions: that is, of creating progress in the form of an all-encompassing Catholic culture and civilization.

Neither writer was oblivious of the other community, but each had a different focus. The vast majority of families named by Thomas were British or American, although he also named a few prosperous French-Canadian families. For example, there is a profile of the Routhier family who owned a foundry in Vankleek Hill, but Thomas emphasized the militia rank of the head of the family and the modernity of their

⁷⁸ Ibid., vol 2, 162

⁷⁹ Roberto Perin, "Elaborating a Public Culture: The Catholic Church in Nineteenth Century Quebec," ed. Marguerite Van Die *Religion and Public Life in Canada: Historical and Comparative Perspectives* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2001), 87-105.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 91.

business.⁸¹ De Barbezieux, on the other hand, divided the world strictly on religious lines. In Prescott County, despite the presence of a few Scottish Catholics, he summarized progress by the population figures for French-Canadian Catholics, Irish Catholics and Protestants. Protestants were the competition. A few individuals, such as George Hamilton at Hawkesbury, might serve the work of God by providing land for a church. Others, such as the mill owner McMaster in Plantagenet, might obstruct its advance.⁸² But Protestants were more often either a faceless mob of Orangemen waging fanatic war on all Catholics or simply a set of census statistics. It gave de Barbezieux great satisfaction to point out what Gaffield argued in his 1987 study: that the Protestant population had ceased to grow in Prescott County after 1860 while the French-Canadian population exploded through the years from 1860 to 1890. He could conclude from a comparison of the 1861 and 1871 censuses that “[l]e comté de Prescott semble désormais acquis aux Catholiques.”⁸³

Nearly a hundred years after Thomas and De Barbezieux wrote their histories of Prescott County, a history was written by a cross-linguistic committee in the town of Hawkesbury in 1984. The goal was to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the town’s incorporation.⁸⁴ The result was a popular local history, quite different from Gaffield’s regional micro-history. Where Gaffield used locality as a mechanism to focus on language and the development of identity through political struggle, the committee was, like Cyrus Thomas, writing a history of progress. At the same time, their project was

⁸¹ Thomas, 578-9, 585.

⁸² de Barbezieux, vol 1, 519, 335-6, 167-9.

⁸³ Ibid., vol. 1. 524.

⁸⁴ Henri Clement, Margaret McMillan and Jean-Roch Vachon (ed.), *125 Hawkesbury 1859 1864* (n. publ.), iii.

over-shadowed by the 1982 closure of Canadian International Company's pulp mill in the town. Celebrating an anniversary in the face of the obsolescence of local industry made finding a triumphant past important. The history told the story of the mills in their full working glory, the coming of the post, the phone, and the railway, the doctors and the hospital, but also the clubs and associations.

The committee, when faced with the question of how to write a history of a place bifurcated into two communities, avoided questions of loss and triumph, debate and struggle, and chose not to write one or even two narrative histories.⁸⁵ The work began with an overview of the place and the coming of settlers but the remaining pages were filled with stories written by individuals and organizations, each writing in their preferred language. What dominated all the stories was each group's narrative of how their ancestors arrived, the first buildings, the first churches and schools, the clubs and the industries. Politics was left aside. We do not see the struggles of the Francophone community to gain a voice nor of the Anglophone community to retain a sense of place. A note in the French text did state that, despite the dominance of Anglophone-owned industries, Hawkesbury had achieved a high level of French culture.⁸⁶ Regulation 17 is mentioned only in the French-language section on schools, where it is said to have been irrelevant to teaching in Hawkesbury's separate schools and only slightly disruptive of "les relations [qui] ont toujours été amicales" between Francophones and Anglophones.⁸⁷

History is one of the symbols that can be used to turn groups into communities. Henri Lefebvre's social spaces are also part of this process. Gaffield has argued that

⁸⁵ Ibid., vii.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 36,

⁸⁷ Ibid., 229. The history directs those who wish to know more about "Reglement 17" to consult Lucien Brault's history.

family as well as geography and language separated linguistic communities in Prescott County. For both Francophones and Anglophones, institutions and social lives were structured around the family, which impeded cultural understanding of the other.⁸⁸

Gaffield looks at Anglophone socializing through the Higginson diaries. These were written in West Hawkesbury between 1844 and 1902 by a prosperous farmer of Irish Protestant origins, Thomas Tweed Higginson. They are worth exploring in detail.

Gaffield argues in his examination that there were few formal township and county organizations, while informal collective activities within extended families created a sense of mutual interdependence within a closed social world. For the French-Canadian community, given the proximity to their St. Lawrence Valley origins, it meant that ties with extended family in Quebec remained strong. According to Gaffield, this contributed to both their sense of economic security and their sense of community. His conclusion is that the family itself became for both communities an impediment to cultural understanding of the other.⁸⁹

Thomas Higginson's social relationships can be related to the presence of a large family network, the result of an extended family immigration. Several siblings from three closely connected families (the Higginsons, the Loughs, and the Tweeds) from Carncastle, in County Antrim, Ireland had immigrated together to Hawkesbury, to Cumberland, Ontario and to Buckingham, Quebec. It is not surprising that Higginson's social life would be based on the long-standing and extensive connections with his relations in these three places. The diary of Thomas Dick, who was also a farmer of Irish Protestant origins, reflects a social structure where friends, not family, were important.

⁸⁸ Gaffield, *Language, Schooling and Cultural Conflict*, 118-20, 182-3.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 118-20, 182-3.

Dick came to Prescott County as a teenager with his widowed mother and three sisters. His only relations were a maiden aunt, a bachelor uncle, and another uncle and his wife who appear to have been childless. His sisters moved to southern Ontario following their marriages, leaving Dick with few close kin in the area and none of his own generation. His diary as a young man in Longueuil Township in the 1860s records extensive socializing with unrelated neighbours at bees, weddings and funerals.⁹⁰ The encounters, however, were all within his linguistic community.

The Higginson diaries can also be analyzed to show that among older French- and English-speaking families in the Township there was some recognition of a common history. Gaffield notes an account of a local Francophone barber cutting Higginson's hair to highlight that there were daily but limited interactions across linguistic lines. The full entry reads: "Francois (sic) Deslauriers cut my hair making a nice job. The hairdressing learned from my father."⁹¹ The final sentence about where the French-Canadian barber had learned his craft suggests that Higginson was highlighting a connection between Deslauriers and his own family. Higginson only records three other interactions with French-Canadians in West Hawkesbury in diaries kept over the course of nearly 60 years and which were filled with social and work encounters with family members. Where the diaries go beyond family, he focused on the degree to which he recognized others' experiences as being similar to his own. On May 21, 1883, he attended the funeral of François Xavier Larocque and then recorded in his diary Larocque's history as a soldier in the War of 1812. On April 8, 1890, he recorded a conversation with "old Mr. Cyr" and then on January 22, 1896 he described Cyr's death:

⁹⁰ Archives of Ontario, Diaries collection box 2 MU840, Thomas Dick diary.

⁹¹ *Diaries of Thomas Higginson*, December 1, 1900.

Old Mr. Antoine Cyr of Hawkesbury died from the effects of a fall aged 94 the oldest man in this section. He was a chore boy at Point Fortune in 1819 the date of my Father and Mother's landing at that place. He was a tenant on this farm for some years and bore a good name.

Then, on March 30, 1896, Higginson visited Felix Routhier in order to gather information on the experience of Routhier's father as a veteran of the War of 1812 for Thomas's history.

These were all limited encounters by a man who wrote on April 20, 1877 that the *Toronto Daily Mail*, noted by Gaffield as a repository of much anti-French invective, was "the best conducted Journal in America, or any where else." Higginson's view of a few French-speaking families of long acquaintance may have reflected a compartmentalized view of his neighbours. He separated out for favourable comment the people he knew in the French-speaking community and he ignored, and may well have "othered," the people he did not know. We have only his endorsement of the *Daily Mail* from which to speculate that he was antagonistic to the local French-Canadian population. The diaries do, however, show that he was isolated from all but a few individuals from the other linguistic community.

In addition to diaries, historians have used "merrymaking" or shared recreation as evidence of relationships that create and maintain a sense of community. Françoise Noël's study, *Family and Community Life in Northeastern Ontario*, shows how family celebrations helped to reinforce the boundaries of ethnic-linguistic communities. A review of the personal and social notes in the Vankleek Hill newspaper, the *Eastern Ontario Review*, highlights that a familial and ethnically-limited base for socializing lasted well into the twentieth century. The *Review* was a newspaper that mixed reprinted

world and national news with local personals and reports on social events from correspondents in surrounding villages. These correspondents were likely writing up those events of which they were personally aware: that is, the events within their own social circle. There were 403 social notices reviewed from nine issues between 1900 and 1942 which demonstrate a family base for socializing.⁹² About 27% of the social interactions (110 out of 403) were visits to family. It is highly possible that the proportion was closer to a full third, as there were another 98 social events where relationships could not be determined from the notice. What is most striking is that there were only 27 notices where the social event was specifically among “friends.” For instance, in September 1900 Miss Daisy M. Steele entertained “her friends” one evening, but there are no names to identify specifically with whom she was socializing. One of the few cases where names were given does indicate friendship as well as kinship. This is a report that three men were leaving on a hunting-fishing trip. One of the men, John Northcott, had no connection to the other two, John R. McLaurin Jr and Stewart L. McLaurin (who were likely cousins), by any tie other than being, like them, a member of a Vankleek Hill merchant family.

In 266 of the notices, all the names mentioned were English names; this included notices from such majority Francophone towns as St. Eugène, L’Orignal, and Hawkesbury. This does not mean the English-language press in Vankleek Hill ignored the other community (there were 48 notices where the names were all French) but it does mean that their correspondents reported only the social events of their own linguistic

⁹² *Eastern Ontario Review*, August 31, 1900, September 7, 1900, May 4, 1917, June 1, 1917, January 1, 1926, April 1, 1926, June 18, 1926, June 27, 1929, January 2, 1936, January 8, 1942.

group, those people they knew and socialized with. More telling is that only six notices had a mix of French and English names.

While there was limited evidence of the local French-speaking population in the *Eastern Ontario Review*, the press did accord social recognition to the events at St. Gregory's Roman Catholic church in Vankleek Hill. Here, the parishioners were a mix of Irish-Canadian and French-Canadian families. An article entitled "Scarcity of Palms for Palm Sunday" concluded by noting the days on which St. Gregory would be holding its holy week ceremonies.⁹³ That same year, 1926, the *Review* included an item on the previous week's midnight mass. Since the "excellent sermon" was delivered by a priest who was identified specifically as "son of Mr. and Mrs. Felix Cadieux, High Street," it is possible that this item was the result of a proud family inserting news rather than the newspaper searching out news from both communities.⁹⁴ Yet the proud family expected that those who might be interested in their news, but would not already know by having attended the mass, would see this notice even in an Anglophone newspaper.

Given the degree to which social notices are for church socials, it is not a surprise that social life outside the family largely was a case of socializing with people of a similar background.⁹⁵ There should have been greater potential in non-church based socializing in the various associations (Freemasons, Foresters, and others) and sporting groups that met in Vankleek Hill. Since the mid-nineteenth century, however, the Catholic hierarchy had sought to establish a full range of Church-organized fraternal institutions within Catholic parishes. One example of this is found in the report in

⁹³ Ibid., April 1, 1926, 1 col. 2.

⁹⁴ Ibid., January 1, 1926, 1 col. 2.

⁹⁵ Cf. Lynne Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks* on the complexity hidden within church socials as a community place. At the same time, they did not bring together people of disparate backgrounds.

Clarence Creek's *Le Ralliement* respecting an 1897 meeting of the Vankleek Hill Forestiers Catholiques in St. Eugène. This was a mixed-language Catholic group with Thomas Kelly as chief ranger. Members included two of Vankleek Hill's French-Canadian elite, E. Z. Labrosse and Noé Matte, plus 30 unnamed others.⁹⁶

De Barbezieux had divided the world on the basis of religion, and the mingling of French and Irish in a parish-organized fraternity was in line with that view of the world. Gaffield, however, argued that in Prescott County internal differences within the British-American community, including those of religion, had been erased by the much larger language differences with French-Canadians. The Irish families of the Hurleys, the Shields and the Allison were among those telling their story in the Thomas history, yet de Barbezieux included them in the statistics his history employed to tell the story of the triumph of the Church hierarchy and the spread of Catholic civilization. The Irish and Scottish Catholics were in a liminal position, merged within the parish irrespective of language but at the same time part of the British-American community. Yet Anglophone Catholics do not seem to have acted as links between the communities beyond the activities of St. Gregory's. Had they done so, we would expect to see a number of them in municipal and even county politics where they could have benefited from the support of Catholics of both language groups. Yet James Flood, his son Thomas, and Charles Harkin are the only Anglophone Catholics found among the elected municipal officials of West Hawkesbury or Vankleek Hill in the search taken for this study.

⁹⁶ "À Travers les Comtés – St.-Eugène," *Le Ralliement*, March 18, 1897, 4 cols. 3.-4.

In West Hawkesbury, there was little geographic separation but distinct communities still formed around separate history-telling and separate socializing.⁹⁷ The histories reinforced each group's belief that it had a right to be in the place, while socializing in the early years of the twentieth century was largely structured around church socials. Later, the non-church-based activities of curling and ski clubs continued to attract a largely Anglophone membership. The social events as recorded by the correspondents of the *Eastern Ontario Review* were family events with only a few mentions of socializing among friends. Sociability reinforced existing lines of community and did not build new relations across the communities.

Conclusion

I began with an enquiry about British-American dominance over the non-political commercial and social world. West Hawkesbury Township and Vankleek Hill were different from the county of which they were a part. Due to soil and settlement policies, the township began as a settlement of Anglophone farmers while the rest of the county was filled by a second wave of French Canadians after 1850. With the changing county demographics, the area remained an enclave of the first group of Anglophone farmers, now grown prosperous and joined by Anglophone merchants in Vankleek Hill. The two linguistic communities were not geographically isolated from which other, and in the town a Francophone merchant and industrial class had developed by the 1880s. Overall,

⁹⁷ Chad Gaffield tracked census returns on language spoken to show that both Francophones and Anglophones remained unilingual in Prescott County (Gaffield, *Language, Schooling and Cultural Conflict*, 182 and 181, table 4). There appears to be a higher level of bilingualism among Francophones in West Hawkesbury but I am reluctant to rely on the numbers generated by the 1901 and 1911 census. At a county level, idiosyncrasies of individual enumerators are smoothed out of the large statistical count. This does not apply when dealing with one enumerator in one township.

however, even in the early years of the twentieth century, Francophones in West Hawkesbury and Vankleek Hill were less prosperous with a far greater likelihood of being an unskilled labourer than of being either a farmer or a merchant. At the same time, the agricultural nature of the town of Vankleek Hill became more pronounced as recreational and other consumer goods and services moved up the highway to Hawkesbury and local merchants sold goods shipped in from elsewhere.

Equality in numbers and proximity of location did not result in equality of power between the linguistic communities of West Hawkesbury and Vankleek Hill. Early disputes between American and Irish and Scottish settlers in the county gave way to Anglophone dominance over Francophone settlers within the township and town. Both linguistic communities developed a sense of history that was distinct and that gave them a sense of identity and a sense of belonging within the place. On the one hand, Anglophones could look to how they had carved modern farms and a modern town out of the bush, while Francophones could learn that they were part of a Catholic nation destined to stretch from Quebec across the continent. At the same time, due to the strong influence of family visiting and church organized events such as church socials, there were few overlapping social networks.

But extended family is only one of the social spaces in which community is created, and Lynne Marks has shown in *Revivals and Roller Rinks* the complexity of community that becomes visible as a range of social institutions are studied. I will go on in the next two chapters to consider the agricultural society and the agricultural fair as specific social spaces for understanding the effects of linguistic bifurcation on community.

CHAPTER 3 - The Agricultural Society and Rural Community

When the gates of the Vankleek Hill Fair in Prescott County closed on September 17, 1907, the agricultural society responsible for it had the satisfaction of reading about its success in the *Ottawa Valley Journal*. The newspaper presented the fair as if it were a community festival to which “the loyal citizens of the village and the farmers of the surrounding country came out in their night (sic) in honor of their annual fete day.”¹ But if the fair was a festival celebrating being rural, what can it tell us about community in Vankleek Hill and West Hawkesbury? In particular, to what extent did the community of the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society reflect the broader patterns of community in West Hawkesbury and Vankleek Hill?

The last chapter showed that Vankleek Hill and West Hawkesbury had developed by 1900 into a place where two numerically-balanced linguistic groups co-existed geographically. Separate histories and separate socializing within extended family had turned two demographic groups into two linguistic communities but, at the same time, family and economic ties allowed a few Francophones to cross between communities. No doubt there were also differences of class, gender, and generation, as well as town-rural differences within each linguistic community, but the brush has been too coarse to delineate more than a French-speaking and an English-speaking community in the area under study. To try to focus on who made up the agricultural community that coalesced within the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society, I will look in this chapter at the social networks associated with the organization.

¹ *Ottawa Valley Journal*, September 17, 1907, 10 col. 4

The chapter is organized around a series of sub-questions. First, what were the origins of Ontario's agricultural societies and how have historians approached them as reflectors of power? Second, how was power reflected in the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society in the nineteenth century? Third, who were the leaders of the Vankleek Hill society in the twentieth century and how did the leadership reflect local power and social structures? Finally, to what extent were French-Canadians and women full members of the Vankleek Hill society?

I will show in this chapter that the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society was led by a mix of settler families, livestock breeder interests and municipal politicians who reflected the control of Anglophones in the township, despite domination of politics in Prescott County by the wider French-language majority. These three groups represented both town and country, with neither town nor country in sole control. The Society also included a small number of Franco-Ontarians, most of whom already had marriage or political ties to the Anglophone community and many of whom were part of the political elite of the town. These findings at first seem unsurprising. David Mizener, for example, argues in "Furrows and Fairgrounds" that fair boards depended on leading families who enjoyed sufficient prosperity to give time and energy to the Society.² But this does not explain why such men chose to devote a portion of their time and resources to supporting the agricultural society along with their involvement in municipal politics, church work, and associational activities such as the Orange Lodge or the Freemasons. To understand this, we have to look at the benefits to be had by belonging. I will argue in the next chapter that one benefit was control over the face a society's town and district presented

² Mizener, 113-4.

to the outside world. But there were also economic and political benefits, which will be discussed in what follows. The long-term involvement of so many volunteers in the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society does speak to the importance of the society as an integral part of rural life. At the same time, the range of motives found point to how agricultural societies and the fairs were part of the power structures of the town and township.

The Idea of the Agricultural Society and Its Early Manifestations in Upper Canada and Prescott County

The 1907 *Ottawa Valley Journal* was correct in highlighting both townspeople and local farmers as supporters of the Vankleek Hill Fair. Townspeople supported the fair financially through municipal grants and mercantile sponsorship of prizes, and made up a good proportion of the audience (although the complaint was often made by press commentators that they were an audience for the midway and not the farm exhibits). The main players were farm families. Before 1950, West Hawkesbury farm children participated in school fairs (as discussed in the next chapter) and occasionally were encouraged to exhibit at the agricultural fair, but it was farm men and women who were the regular exhibitors. There, displays of their work demonstrated their hand skills in a carefully tied sheaf of wheat or a knit sweater, and as stockmen, they paraded their prize-winning livestock. This is viewed now as the simple fun of rural life where neighbours renewed their ties to one another and thereby created an “old-fashioned” sociable community. This characterization has a great deal to do with the *Gemeinschaft* concept of a simpler pre-industrial world in which community was based on strong face-to-face ties

of warmth and intimacy, a concept of community used more to critique industrial society than to shed light on rural society.

Some academic writers have referred to Mikhail Bukharin's work on Rabelais where he presented the medieval fairs as a place for disrupting hierarchies and thereby creating a sense of community solidarity. In one such characterization a professor of photography at Norfolk University, Greta Pratt, and an art historian now at the University of Minnesota, Karal Ann Marling, presented the fair as an expression of authentic community. They oppose the fair to the "festivals" they claim were created in the 1920s in an effort to entice city consumers to towns to watch locals perform the role of old-time tradition as it was imagined in the town. The fair, in their analysis, was the true community but it was also world-turned-upside-down. It was a place where Main Street worthies could be dunked, for the benefit of charity, by a ball thrown by the town drunk.³ Closer studies of the fair by Elspeth Heaman, David Jones and David Mizener have shown a very different picture. The fair was a site of hegemonic struggles over rural improvement versus rural recreation. These historians have placed the origins of agricultural societies and their fairs in the rationalism and self-improvement ethos of the English and Scottish Enlightenments. They were not efforts to revolutionize social relations and were the antithesis of a bucolic world-turned-upside-down. Instead, societies tried, at least up to the Second World War, to restrict the carnivalesque (that is, the disruptive play elements) to a specific spatial and cultural place within the fair.⁴

³ Greta Pratt and Karal Ann Marling, "Fairs: A Fixed Point on the Turning Wheel of Time," *American Art* 7, no. 2 (Spring 1993): 24.

⁴ This history of the agricultural society in Ontario is taken from Heaman; "Report of the Association of Fairs and Exhibitions," *Ontario Sessional Report* 26 (1903); Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies, *The Story of Ontario Agricultural Fairs and Exhibitions, 1792-1967*; and Scott, *A Fair Share*..

Few historians, however, have focused on the agricultural societies and the people who ran the fairs. I am attempting to use the agricultural society to study community. But unlike the range of associations examined in Lynne Marks's *Revivals and Roller Rinks*, I am studying in the agricultural society only one of several associations that flourished in West Hawkesbury and Vankleek Hill. As a result, this study will not explore the full complexity of community in that place. Nevertheless, the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society was a social space in which, as argued by Henri Lefevbre, social interaction could create community. Study of the society can, then, bring elements of community into focus. The agricultural society, however, was not a simple organization with clear boundaries. It gathered in many interests which allowed as many interpretations of what it meant as a rural institution.

Wayne Neely's 1935 study of the American agricultural fair approaches it as a rural institution through which agricultural societies delivered agricultural education, recreation, and community socialization.⁵ Neely was a sociologist working decades before sociology reframed community in the 1960s and 1970s. As such, he used structural analysis to describe agricultural societies as layered organizations in which a few leading members formed a closely knit centre and a large "fringe" of members served as a "radiator of interest in the fair."⁶ He then did a functional analysis of their purpose, pointing to a range of underlying motives among members, including power, prestige and sociability, along with various educational and economic interests. But he did not delve deeply into the types of people who could be found within agricultural

⁵ Neely, 243-4 *passim*.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 245.

societies.⁷ Leslie Prosterman focused in *Ordinary Life, Festival Days* on the social functions of the agricultural fair in rural communities. She was concerned with how fairs used everyday farm life as the content for a festival showcasing rural aesthetic values. Both Prosterman and Neely treated the farm community as a more or less undifferentiated whole that spelt warmth and belonging. Even David Mizener in his preface to a dissertation about contending dialogues and power at the agricultural fairs and ploughing matches of twentieth century Ontario speaks of the warmth he remembers from the Eastern Township fairs he visited with his parents as they renewed old acquaintances in the countryside.⁸

Ross Fair in his PhD dissertation, “Gentlemen, Farmers, and Gentlemen Half-Farmers,” looks in detail at the people involved in Ontario’s early agricultural societies through society records, as I am doing with the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society.⁹ His study focused on three Ontario societies from 1792 to 1846: the Midland District around Kingston, the Home District which focused its activities in York, and Newark District for the Niagara area. These were linguistically homogeneous communities but diverse in terms of class and ethnic origin. The agricultural societies reflected that diversity as well as the power structures of pre-Rebellion Upper Canada. For Fair, the agricultural society was a microcosm of local political culture, whether that culture was played out in York in the struggle between reformers and Family Compact or, in Kingston and its hinterland, in the ordering of localized patron-client relations.

⁷ Ibid., 248-55.

⁸ Mizener, vii.

⁹ Ross D. Fair, “Gentlemen, Farmers, and Gentlemen Half-Farmers: The Development of Agricultural Societies in Upper Canada, 1792-1846,” (PhD diss., Queen’s University, 1998).

The first society in Ontario was the Upper Canadian Society located in the capital in 1792, Newark the Lieutenant-Governor, John Graves Simcoe, as patron. The men who established it believed that they would direct from this central organization the activities of local societies as they formed elsewhere in the province. It was, however, a weak institution and disbanded in 1805. Despite this short life, it set a precedent for one form of agricultural society: that of a gentlemanly activity exercising top-down control over others. Fair finds a fatal weakness in the aristocratic yearnings underpinning the original model of 1792, for the members were York gentlemen who did not have “an audience for their performances beyond their own elite ranks.”¹⁰

It was also a problem that the government was seeking to implant hierarchical social structures in Canada while missing a key piece in the form of a strong gentry class.¹¹ Beginning in 1830, legislative grants took the place of an aristocratic and gentry patron class for agricultural improvement, with the government channeling township grants through district agricultural societies. It was expected that the gentlemen running the district societies would both encourage and restrain the yeomen running the township societies.¹² Grants were temporarily terminated when the government failed to renew the legislation in 1834, but were revived in 1837 for a period of four years and then extended to 1844. New legislation in 1845 increased funding while putting in place mechanisms for public accountability of the societies formed pursuant to the legislation.¹³

¹⁰ Fair, 47-8.

¹¹ On the mismatch between governmental theory and reality in Upper Canada, see Jeffrey L. McNairn, *The Capacity to Judge: Public Opinion and Deliberative Democracy in Upper Canada, 1791-1854* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2000), 27-43.

¹² Fair, 234-7, *passim*.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 157-64, 167.

The number of societies began to grow from the 1840s through to a peak in 1920, at which time there were 354 agricultural societies in the province.¹⁴ But by the 1840s the nature of agricultural societies had changed from that of the first Niagara organization. Upper Canadians were by then aware of an alternative American model developed by Elkanah Watson. Watson was a New England woolen mill owner and hobby farmer who had introduced a slightly more democratic fair between 1810 and 1814. His “Berkshire model fairs” still had strong top-down elements with Watson dictating their activities. But he also sought to include as many of the local farmers as he could by setting a low membership fee, and he expanded the livestock shows to include ploughing matches, exhibits of crops and vegetables, and of women’s productive work in butter and textiles.¹⁵

The 1830 and 1837 Upper Canadian grants were directed to District societies, thereby sparking local competition. The hardest fought was in the Home District from 1830 to 1836 between the York gentlemen who made up the Family Compact and the local legislative representative, William Lyon Mackenzie.¹⁶ The Midland District Agricultural Society took a different tack that was more responsive to local farm interests. It rotated its fair among the country villages rather than centralizing it in Kingston, expanded the range of exhibits displayed at the fair, and priced the membership subscription within the reach of middling farmers. Ross Fair attributes this adoption of key elements of the Berkshire model to Kingston’s ties with New York State. He also presents the Midland society as an example of how agricultural societies fitted into a political culture of patron-client relationships. Societies may have been funded to achieve

¹⁴ Scott, 106.

¹⁵ Neely, 64-5.

¹⁶ Fair, 169-95.

provincial aims, but the local patrons who controlled a society used the funds in the 1830s and 1840s to support the activities of their members.¹⁷

Prescott County was not reticent in taking advantage of free government money in support of agriculture. Its first district society was established in 1837 but may have been temporarily disbanded, for a meeting was held in February 1844 to yet again form a district society.¹⁸ The Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society traces its beginnings to the 1844 Ottawa District Society. But, despite a later claim that Prescott's county fair had always been held at Vankleek Hill, the 1844 ploughing match was on Mr. Kellogg's farm in Longueuil Township close to L'Original, while a fair poster from 1852 shows L'Original itself as the location of that year's fair.¹⁹ In 1872, the district society's successor, the Prescott County Agricultural Society, reported that it had been given land in Vankleek Hill where it would build an exhibition hall. The 1871 fair had used a militia drill shed but the specific location was left unstated.²⁰ This move reflected the changes in economic relationships within the county, for Vankleek Hill had become by this time the leading retail centre while L'Original's importance had faded.

A district agricultural society exercised a certain amount of local power after 1844, for it was the conduit through which funds flowed to the small local fairs. For example, in 1845 the Ottawa District Society received a grant of £250 of which £99

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 197-8, 200-5, 224-5.

¹⁸ Bill Byers, "A Preliminary History," *Vankleek Hill Commemorative History* ed. Michelle Landriault (Vankleek Hill, Ont.: L. A. Sproule Publishing 1994), 13. Byers reproduces verbatim the Proceedings of the Courts of Quarter Session, Ontario Archives and a newspaper clipping found in the scrapbook of Thomas Dick.

¹⁹ *The Globe*, October 20, 1894, 2 col. 4; *Diaries of Thomas Tweed Higginson*, October 10, 1844, 8; "County Agricultural Show 1852," reproduced in *Commemorative History*, 14.

²⁰ *Ontario Sessional Papers* 5 (1871-2), Appendix 1 to the "Annual Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture and Public Works for the Province of Ontario," 155.

passed through to a Russell County agricultural society.²¹ This power was initially exercised in the Ottawa District by a small group representing a limited part of the District both geographically and ethnically, although the group was slightly more open in 1844. There are 24 men identifiable from two lists from 1837: a list of officials for an April cattle show and a list of the officers who were elected in May to run the agricultural society. Eleven were from Longueuil, nine from West Hawkesbury, two from East Hawkesbury, one from Alfred and one man was not found in the assessment rolls. The 1844 re-formation of an agricultural society produces a list of 21 officers in which Longueuil was still over-represented, with ten out of the 21 being from that township. Caledonia Township was now represented by five men, and West Hawkesbury had dropped back to a more representative three. The remaining three men were from East Hawkesbury and Plantagenet (figures 9 and 10). There was no representation from Russell County in either the 1837 or 1844 society even though, with a population of 530, it had accounted for 30% of the District's inhabitants in 1834 (Table 1).

The exclusion of Russell County can be explained at least partially by poor roads and the fact that a relatively small population was scattered across four townships. But there must have been more at work within Prescott County. Two of its townships (Longueuil and Hawkesbury), making up barely a third of its 1834 population, accounted for the entire board in 1837 and a little more than half in 1844. As well, a full understanding must explain the dominance of American origin settlers. The ethnic origins of 332 tax payers in the 1836 Longueuil Assessment Roll and the 1841 Hawkesbury Roll

²¹ Thomas, 475; *Ontario Sessional Papers* 5 (1870-1): 149-50. Thomas reproduced the full Statement of Accounts from 1845. The Russell fair may have been a forerunner of the Russell Township Agricultural Society which was founded some time prior to 1867 and which continues today to run a fair at Russell.

Figure 9: Origins and Locations of 1837 District Agricultural Society Officers.
 Source: Assessment Rolls, Library and Archives Canada, reels M-5755/6, Map simplified copy of Wicklund Soil Survey of Prescott and Russell. Note location of officers in Longueuil Township are approximate as assessments for Longueuil Township do not give location. (Location of one director not found.)

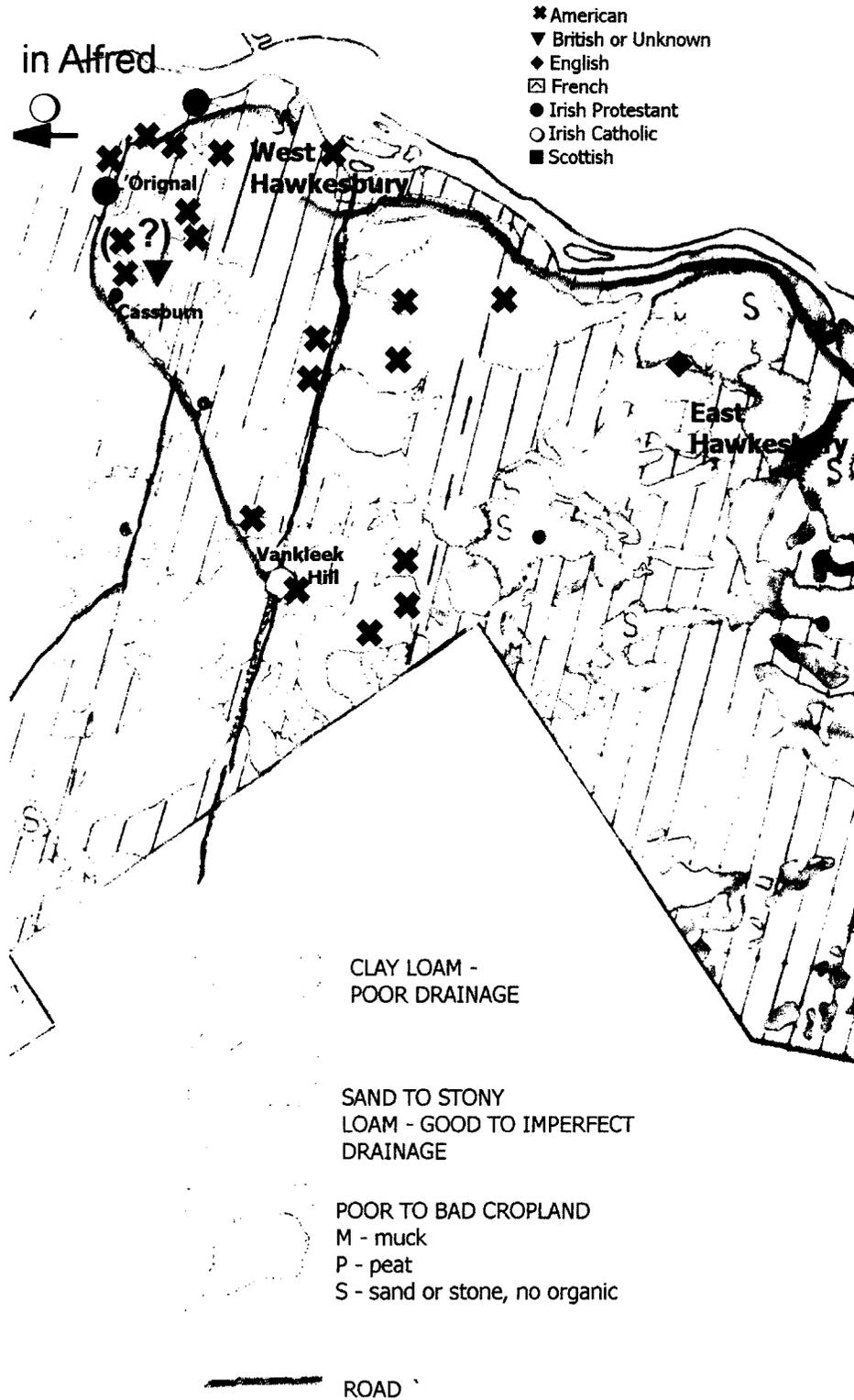
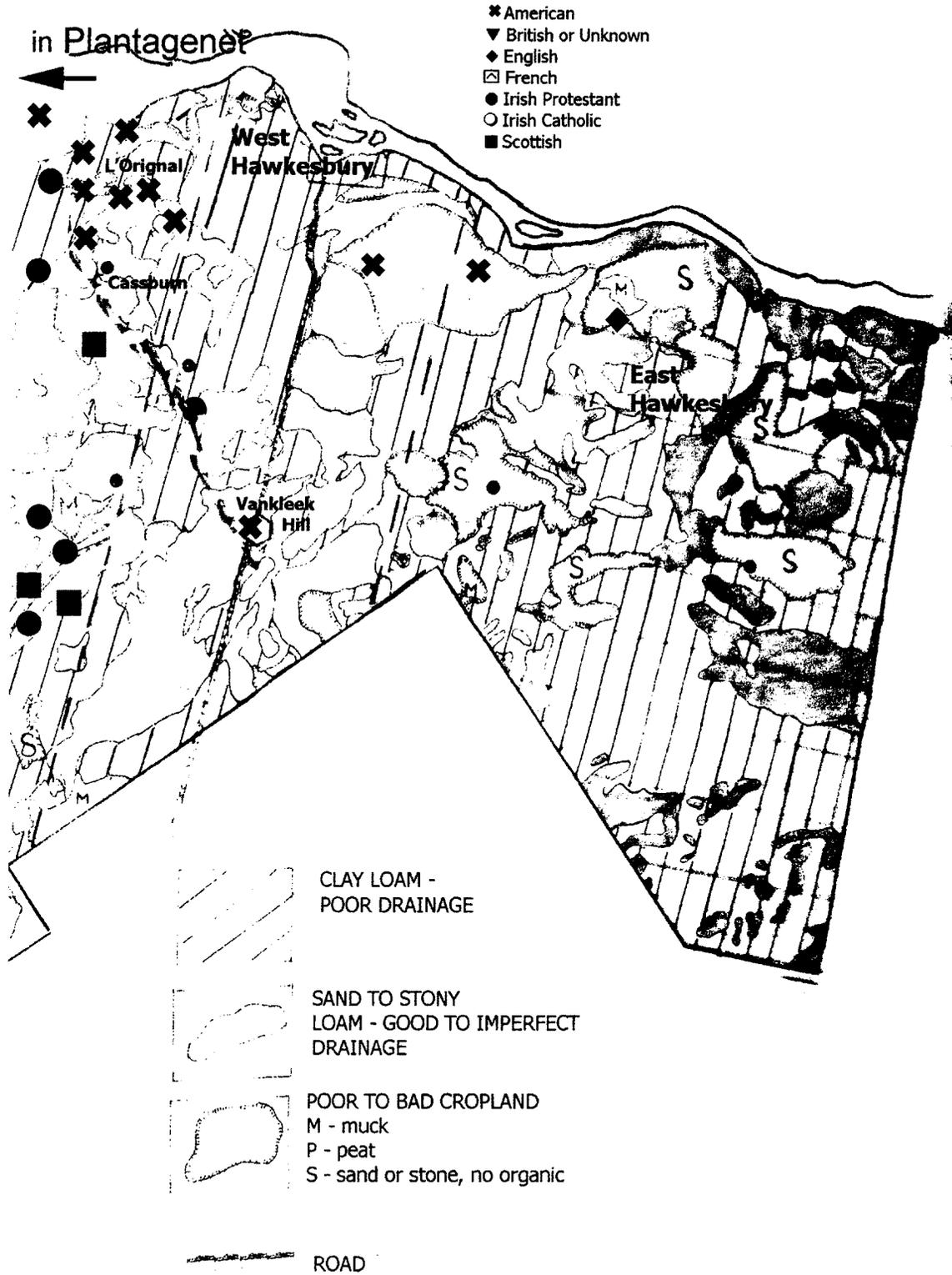


Figure 10: Origins and Locations of 1844 District Agricultural Society Officers.

Source: Assessment Rolls, Library and Archives Canada, reels 5755/6. Map simplified copy of Wicklund Soil Survey of Prescott and Russell. Note location of officers in Longueuil Township are approximate as assessments for Longueuil Township do not give location. (Location of one director not found).



were identified (out of a total of 417 entries). French Canadians, Scots, and Americans were the three largest groups (at 28%, 27%, and 24% respectively) but only the Americans were found in the 1837 agricultural society.²² Of the 24 organizers in 1837, 17 were of American origin, one was Irish Catholic, two were Irish Protestants, and two were English. The last two were of unknown origin, but one of them was married into a prominent American family. The American dominance began to dissipate after the 1837 Rebellions but did not disappear. In 1844, 14 of the 1837 officers did not continue as officers in the new society. One who went missing was the only representative from Alfred Township, the Irish Catholic John Brady. He had not left the area and remained a prosperous man in 1844, according to the assessment roll for that year.

More serious for American control was the departure from the board of seven officers from Hawkesbury and three from Longueuil. These men were Americans or, in the case of the one man of unknown origins, married to an American. Again all but two men, one of whom had died and another who has not been found in later records, remained in the District at least until the 1851 census. This suggests that it was not a change in population that led to a new ethnic composition but the slow growth of influence from other parts of the county and of the Irish Protestant incomers. The 13 who replaced the outgoing officers show greater diversity than the original board: four Americans, five Irish Protestants, three Scots (two from Caledonia and one from Longueuil Township), and again one man of unknown origins (figures 10 and 11).

While we lack the level of detail Ross Fair had access to with respect to the organization and proceedings of the Midland District Society, a case can be made that the

²² Irish Protestants made up 12% and Irish Roman Catholics made up 8%.

Prescott County society reflected local patron-client power relationships. The economic condition and municipal responsibilities of 37 officers of the 1837, 1844 and 1852 societies have been profiled (see Appendix 2 for the full list).²³ Twelve of the 37 were among the top 25% of property owners in Prescott County, based on the township assessment rolls, while one had been in the second quadrant in 1836 and had moved up to the top by 1844. Another 15 men fell below the top quadrant but still owned property valued at more than £100. Only five men owned less than £100 of taxable property.

The same picture arises if we look just at land ownership rather than all assessed property. For example, 17 men from Longueuil Township who were members of the 1837, 1844 and 1852 boards were traced in the only available Longueuil assessment roll for the fair period, that of 1836. These men accounted for 10% of all rateable individuals in the Township but owned 37% of the land and about 20% of all land that had been brought into cultivation.²⁴ They also represented the leading officials of the district, for seven of the men were ranked as esquire and held some militia, judicial, or municipal office. The president of the 1852 society, Charles Platt Treadwell, was the richest landowner in the American community as well as being the County Sheriff. Individuals with ties to the original Treadwell settlement, and thereby to the Treadwell family, are also very much in evidence. Among the incoming Irish Protestants, one, Godfrey Vallee or Valley, was married to a member of the Cass family who had been part of the original American Treadwell settlement. Valley partially “replaced” two missing society officers,

²³ Society officer lists for 1837 are from Byers, 13 and for 1844 from Thomas, 475. Property valuations are from Library and Archives Canada Assessment Rolls Prescott County, reel M-7735-6. Ranking into quadrants was made on the basis of the assessments of all residents with property assessed at over £100. Four men were not identified and can not be rated.

²⁴ The disparity between land owned and land in cultivation is the result of two men, Charles Treadwell and Elijah Kellogg, owning between them over 4,000 acres of land of which only 230 acres had been developed.

Josiah Jackson and Josiah Marston, who had also been married to Cass daughters. Yet another of the new officers from among the Irish Protestant settlers, Richard Allen, had purchased land from the Treadwell family.²⁵ Finally, one of the new American board members, Thomas Hall Johnson, was a son and a brother to two continuing officers, Chauncey Johnson Esq. and Chauncey Johnson Jr., who were both local magistrates.

It was the American-origin settlers residing in and around the administrative centre of L'Orignal and the northern part of the farming district of West Hawkesbury who controlled the financial power of the legislative grant in 1837. While American representation was reduced by 1844, the L'Orignal leading men still retained a good portion of their earlier control over how the grant would be spent. It is likely that they, like the Midland society, looked to the American model for an agricultural fair, rather than York's British model, given their origins in New York State and Vermont. A specific link to the Berkshire fair model is found in the range of competition in the 1845 Ottawa District fair. Butter, cheese and cloth were exhibited as well as livestock.²⁶ Unlike the Midland Society, however, there was potential for conflict over control of the Ottawa District Agricultural Society, given pre-existing signs of tension between Americans and Irish Protestants in Longueuil and Hawkesbury Townships.

The year when the Ottawa society was formed, 1837, was also the year of the Rebellions in the Canadas. Just across the river from Hawkesbury Township, the rebellion would erupt into armed warfare. In the township, the year brought overt conflict between two local power structures, as described in the previous chapter. Farming-

²⁵ *The Loyalists*, viewed on-line Ancestry.ca, accessed August 21, 2011; Allen family information from the Allen family in an email from Michelle Landriault to author, July 10, 2011.

²⁶ Thomas, 475.

oriented American settlers, among whom were a number of Reformers, were ranged against Irish Protestants led by the industrialist William Hamilton, who had been a Tory candidate. There are no records to reveal whether the wider tension spilled over into a contest over control of the society as had happened in the Home District, or whether one power elite chose to abandon the field to the other. There are, however, some important absences that suggest that the power politics seen in the Home District Agricultural Society may have been at work in the Ottawa District.

In 1837, the Scottish families of both West Hawkesbury and Caledonia had been entirely absent, while the three Scots on the 1844 Board still under-represented the 91 Scottish families that had been resident in Longueuil and Hawkesbury Townships in 1837. As well, a number of politicians stayed away from the Society, suggesting that it may have been a forum for potential contention, perhaps best played out through surrogates. Thus, we cannot find such leading men as Richard Hothiam who was the Tory member in 1836, Charles Waters, Reform member of 1837, or Neil Stewart, a prominent merchant of Vankleek Hill and Tory representative for West Hawkesbury to the District Council in 1841.²⁷ At the same time, we can surmise the politics of five of the 1837 and 1844 officers based on their later political careers. Not one was a Tory; four were Reform and one was Independent.²⁸

The Society also lacked the presence of the most prominent man, in terms of property, William Hamilton of Hamilton and Low Company, who was a Tory.²⁹ He was

²⁷ Armstrong, 108.

²⁸ Poll books for Prescott County have not been found to test this further.

²⁹ Hamilton's assessed property value, under the name of Hamilton and Low Co, was the highest in Prescott County in both 1836 and 1844 due to his land holdings (the lots and islands in what would become the town of Hawkesbury) and the value of a company store, a grist mill with four pairs of stones and three

the dominant partner in the Hamilton (or Hawkesbury) Mills as well as being the militia colonel who led a detachment of armed men to occupy Vankleek Hill the night after the burning of St. Eustache on December 14, 1837. This was just nine months after the L'Original American gentlemen had founded the agricultural society. Neither he nor anyone who might have represented his interests, such as a member of the Higginson family, was an officer in the society. Furthermore, we do not know who the ordinary members were. These would be people such as the brother of Thomas Tweed Higginson. Higginson recorded how his brother had competed in the Society's ploughing contest in 1844. The Higginsons were an Irish Protestant family who had been close allies of the Hamilton family since their arrival in the district.³⁰ We do know that the 1844 District Society took in subscriptions of £63.15.0.³¹ If all members paid an equal amount, we can speculate that the 1845 society had perhaps 85 members.³² Since we have the names of 21 elected officers for 1844, this means we lack information on perhaps as many as 60 ordinary members who might have altered the demographic make-up of the society.

What is clear is that, both before and after the 1837 Rebellion, the leadership of the society was substantially in the hands of the American Reformer community. It is possible that the situation in Prescott County was similar to that found by Glenn

sawmills. In 1836, the company was assessed for slightly more (at £2,500) than the combined property value of the next two highest valuations, of William McAlpine and Charles Platt Treadwell (£1,300 and \$1,000 respectively). In 1841, the company still was larger, at £1,900, than the Hawkesbury property of the Honourable Peter McGill (£1,700). McGill was a Montreal merchant who did not challenge Hamilton's position as the local leading man. William Hamilton was to die in 1839 and so cannot be blamed for not taking part in the 1844 Society. However, his company is not recorded as a sponsor at any point in the history of the fair.

³⁰ *Diaries of Thomas Tweed Higginson*, October 10, 1844, 8. See Cyrus Thomas for the connections between the Higginsons and the Hamilton company.

³¹ Thomas, 475.

³² In 1819, the Home District set an annual subscription of 10 shillings for membership which appears to have been later dropped to 5 shillings. Draft legislation in the 1830s set the subscription at 10 shillings for a district (Fair, 95). The calculations made here assume that the subscription in the Ottawa District in 1844 may have been 15 shillings. This divides evenly into the total subscriptions raised

Lockwood in “Temperance in Upper Canada as Ethnic Subterfuge.” If the temperance societies of Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Counties served the pre-1837 Rebellion American population as a cover for political activity, perhaps agricultural society activism had provided the same kind of cover.³³ Unlike temperance societies, however, the legislative grant made control of the agricultural society an object of desire in and of itself.

After this initial flurry of activity, little is known about the workings of the agricultural society. The reports quoted in the Ontario Sessional Papers provide limited information, and the first available records of the fair itself date from 1906. By this time, as described in Chapter Two, the agricultural crossroads at Vankleek Hill had grown as a retail central place while L’Orignal, the county seat, remained an administrative centre. More importantly, the county’s political structures had changed. First at the end of the Napoleonic Wars, there was an influx of new Irish Protestant and Scots settlers. Then, after the 1850s came a second wave of settlement that brought French-Canadians into the dominant position in the county. Vankleek Hill, where the fairgrounds had been located since at least 1872, was by then demographically divided. Francophones and Anglophones resided there in almost equal numbers, but even though a few Francophone mercantile families were part of the town council, municipal power was largely retained by Anglophones. In the West Hawkesbury countryside, which supported the agricultural side of the fair, equal numbers of Francophones and Anglophones had not resulted in sharing of municipal power to any perceptible degree. The next section will explore how the agricultural society reflected community in these changed circumstances.

³³ Lockwood, “Temperance in Upper Canada as Ethnic Subterfuge,” 43-69, *passim*.

The Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society in the First Half of the Twentieth century

On January 16, 1907 the Annual General Meeting of the Prescott County Agricultural Society was held in Vankleek Hill as in the years previous. But that year the Board announced without further explanation that “new” Ontario legislation respecting agricultural societies required the society to change its name.³⁴ It was then moved, seconded and carried that “in future the headquarters of this Society shall be at Vankleek Hill, Ontario and that the name of the said Society shall be the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society.”³⁵ This society was different from the original Ottawa District Agricultural Society, with many of the American families gone while representation of Scottish-origin families had grown substantially from the initial number of three in 1844. In 1911, members of Scottish descent made up the largest single ethnic group among the long-term (more than three-year members) of the society, with 59 out of 185 members, or 32%, in that one year.³⁶ But there was also continuity, particularly as to the geographic area of influence of the organization.

In the nineteenth century, the Prescott County Society was an umbrella organization with each of the townships having its own agricultural society. There was one exception. The townships of Longueuil and East and West Hawkesbury formed one society which seems to have been closely associated with the county organization. When the county society sent in its annual report to the Ontario Commissioner of Agriculture in

³⁴ The specific legislation has not been identified. 1906, however, was the year the Ontario government stopped their practice of distributing grants to township societies by flowing the money through the county societies, thereby eliminating the difference between the two; Scott, 4. This may have caused the Society to believe that it was also necessary to change their name.

³⁵ Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society Minute Book, 1906-1920 (after this Minute book). Minutes of Annual General Meeting, January 16, 1907, 78-80.

³⁶ Library and Archives Canada, 1911 census; Minute Book 1906-1912, Membership List; ascription of ethnicity based on birthplace of earliest ancestor where known (preferred method), census information or surname (where no other information is available).

1872, it announced that land had been donated to it for fairgrounds. Then, in 1874 it identified the subscriptions for the fairground buildings as belonging to the Longueuil and East and West Hawkesbury Township Society.³⁷ The close association of that particular township society with the county society is understandable, for the three townships involved had been the core of the 1837 and 1844 Ottawa District societies. By 1900, the lower-level Longueuil and Hawkesbury Townships Society had disappeared, but its association with the Prescott County Society was still visible in the geographic range of the membership of the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society after 1907. Membership also paralleled the geographic range of Vankleek Hill as a central place serving local agricultural interests, as found in the previous chapter.

There were about 1,600 members on the rolls between 1907 and 1930, bringing much of the lower Ottawa Valley into the orbit of the Society (Figure 11).³⁸ Most were members for a year or two and perhaps exhibited occasionally. For them, the fair was a place to go and socialize with people they knew while enjoying the sights. They cannot be said to have formed a community around the agricultural society, for there was no intensity of interaction. This was a lesser association, although it may have contributed to the building of a common rural identity as argued by Neely, that is, by a shared pride in collective achievement. I would argue that we should seek community among the longer-term members who were active participants as exhibitors and as Society leaders.

A proxy for intensity of interaction is length of membership. There are 568 individuals who remained members for a minimum of three years over the period 1906 to

³⁷ Ontario, *Sessional Papers* 5 (1870-1): 149-50; 5 (1871-2): 155; 1 (1874): 131.

³⁸ This number is inflated to some degree by the inability to decisively identify some individuals and who may therefore be double-counted from year to year.

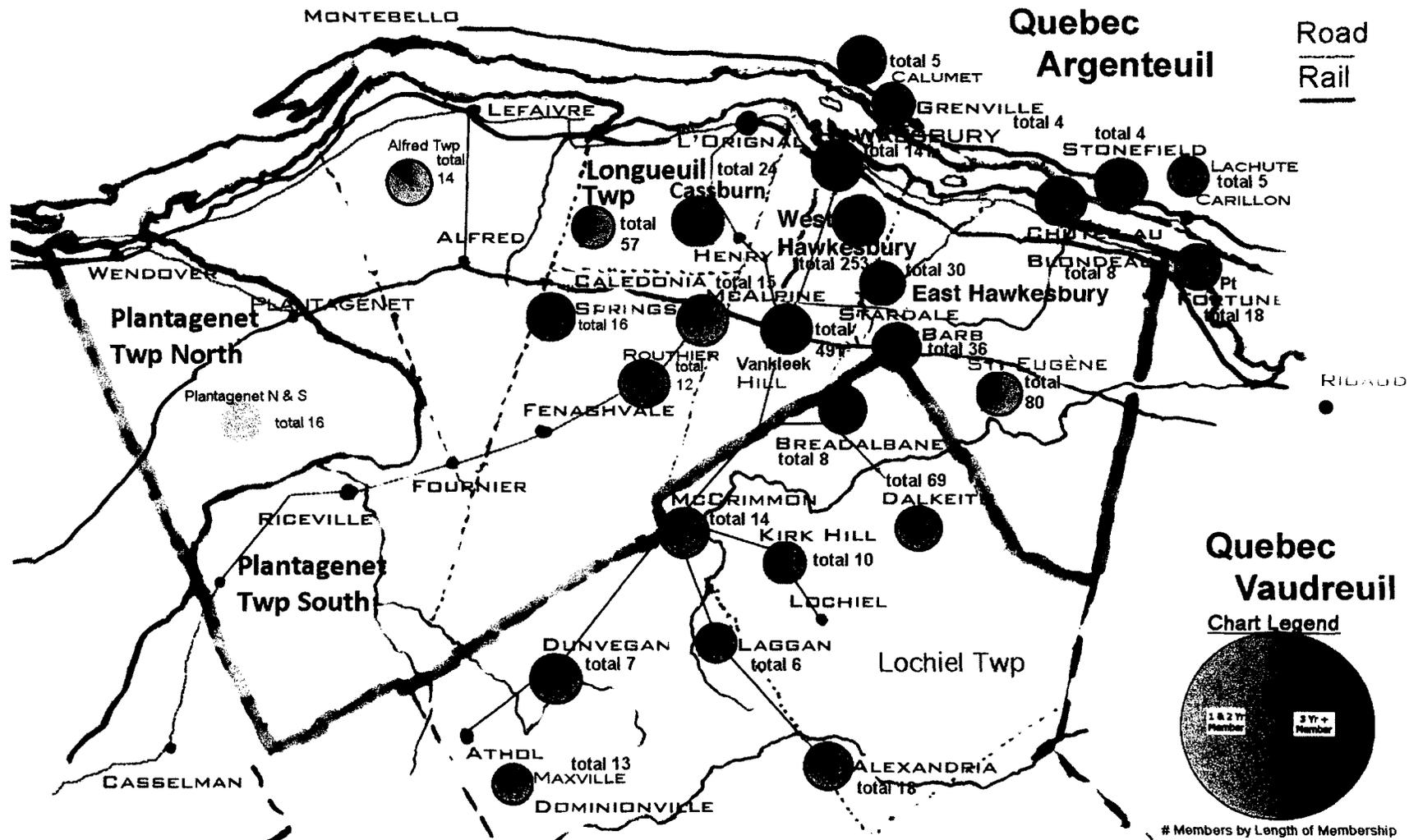
1930. These are assumed to be sustaining members of the society with a strong level of commitment. They came from a geographical area concentrated on the north-south axis along which early British and American settlement had penetrated Prescott County (figure 11).³⁸ It appears that the strongest level of commitment to the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society was centred in Vankleek Hill itself, the farms of the third to the eighth concessions of West Hawkesbury, the hamlets of Cassburn and Henry in Longueuil, and Barb and Stardale in East Hawkesbury. Generally, the society had few members from those parts of the county which had been filled by the incoming French-speaking migrants from Quebec. It also held little interest for the Anglophones of South Plantagenet. This may be because South Plantagenet had its own township fair, the Riceville fair, but it also reflects the history of the Vankleek Hill society as serving Longueuil and Hawkesbury agricultural interests.

Who, then, did the agricultural society represent in the first half of the twentieth century? Ethnically, there were a large number of members of Scottish ancestry, but there were three major clusters of membership in the form of a small number of extended families, some livestock breeders, (both of these representing country interests), and Vankleek Hill municipal leaders representing town interests. For the latter, the society may have been a way to show support for the agricultural community as well as providing a non-partisan forum in which to interact off the political stage. Finally, there were a few French-origin men who participated as leaders and a few women, mainly the wives of society leaders and a few exhibitors, who supported the fair with their off-stage work, running the dinner services and the fund raisers when requested.

³⁸ Membership lists were compiled from the minute books of the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society supplemented by a few names extracted for the nineteenth century from the local and fair histories.

Figure 11: Location of Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society Members 1906 to 1930. Sustaining members belonged for three or more years, short term for one to two years (1,385 out of approximately 1,600 members came from the immediate vicinity of Vankleek Hill with the rest being scattered from Ottawa to Montreal and to Cornwall while no address was found for 165 members). Only in rural West Hawkesbury, Cassburn in Lonngueuil, and in Stardale and Barb in East Hawkesbury do long-term exceed the number of short-term members.

Source: Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society Minute Books. 1906-1912. 1912-1919. 1920-1930.



The first clustering of members looked at are the small number of old families.³⁹ They accounted for only 6% of the total membership between 1907 and 1930 but 19% of the longer-term members, from whom a more intense sense of attachment is expected. As well, to the degree that multi-generational support is a sign of intense attachment, it is found in these families. In East Hawkesbury, there was a small Irish Catholic family network centred on the Hurley family as well as a much larger Irish Protestant and American network around the Mooney-LeRoy connection. In Longueuil, there was the Irish Protestant Allen family who traced their involvement back to one of the directors of the 1844 society, Richard Allen. (See Appendix C for family charts.)

Several members of the three extended families occupied positions on the board, and together they made up close to one-third of the officers of the society over the same period. This did not translate into continuing control of the society, for in any one year only a portion of the board came from any particular family. Nor is there reason to assume that family connections translated into commonality of purpose. It did mean, given the findings of the last chapter on family sociability in Prescott County, that there were on most boards in most years people who knew each other well. For example, there was a strong Mooney-LeRoy presence on the 1906 board. Alexander A. LeRoy was president, his sister's brother-in-law George Mooney was first vice-president (Mooney's wife was also first cousin to the secretary-treasurer Fred Thistlewaite), and a cousin, William LeRoy, was director. Yet these four men were a minority on a 12-person board. In 1912, the board included two from the Mooney-LeRoy family (George Ogden, husband of Amanda LeRoy, as first vice-president, and Gilbert LeRoy as director), one

³⁹ Families were reconstituted through the manuscript census, tombstone inscriptions, and Ontario civil registration of births, marriages and deaths. See Appendix A for methodology.

from the Allen family (Wellington Allen, director) and two with connections to the Hurley extended family (Con. E. Hurley and James M. Allison, directors). In 1940, the board size had grown to include 16, including “lady directors,” but the three families were still present. In that year, the board of 16 included Howard Allison from the Hurley extended family, Harry LeRoy of the Mooney-LeRoy family and Roy Barton, a descendent of Richard Allen.⁴⁰

The Vankleek Hill Fair families were only a tiny proportion of the respectable and successful farmers of the area, but they gave frequent and multi-generational support to the agricultural society in ways other families did not. Individuals from the Vogan, Fraser, and McRae connections of West Hawkesbury Township were also long-term members, but were less conspicuous in terms of family participation. One possible reason for the difference is that the “fair families” came from Anglophone pockets in townships that were majority Francophone by 1911, East Hawkesbury and Longueuil. Involvement in the English-dominated institution of the agricultural society may have provided an outlet for self-affirmation both as English speakers and as progressive farmers.

Prosterman’s 1980s study of agricultural societies and fairs concludes that for many “fair families” involvement in the agricultural society was a treasured tradition.⁴¹ Yet while societies needed such committed families to operate, too much family could become a chokehold. Mizener touches on this when he references John Kenneth Galbraith’s story of two farms in Elgin County dividing between them the prizes for cattle. Mizener also finds that there was frustration in Norfolk County with a family that

⁴⁰ Minute Book 1906-1920, Meetings of January 17, 1906, January 20, 1912, 11, 477.

⁴¹ Prosterman, 57-8, *passim*.

dominated the ploughing match prizes.⁴² Yet here the three “fair families” were not among the largest exhibitors. Only twelve of their number were among the 88 prize winners who won \$10 or more in premiums from exhibits (other than special events such as speeding in the ring) in at least one year between 1906 and 1924. And only two of the twelve with high prize counts, John McCann Barton (an Allen in-law) and William Leroy, ever brought home more than twenty dollars.

The fair commentators claimed that display encouraged others to also do their best. But display could have direct economic benefits, though it took work to acquire those benefits. Most prize winners accumulated their winnings in small increments of a quarter here and a dollar or two there. Even in 1925 the potential prize for any individual winning entry could be as low as 25¢ for third prize in the domestic science class, though most premiums ranged higher.⁴³ It was possible to earn a significant amount of money even in the relatively poorly paid women’s classes if the exhibitor flooded the categories with entries. Jennie Eaton, an Ottawa milliner related to a Caledonia family, won \$28 in 1906 and \$30 in 1907. She had entered at least 40 items in 1906 (likely more, since there were no doubt items that won no prize at all) and at least 29 entries in 1907.

The rural press pointed out the advantages of exhibiting for both advertising and sales. The *Ottawa Farm Journal* added that prize money could potentially come close to paying all expenses.⁴⁴ Even exhibiting the plebian potato could pay as a form of advertising. The *Eastern Ontario Review* claimed in an editorial to have heard such a

⁴² Mizener, 163,

⁴³ Minute Book. “Premiums Awarded and Paid” (1907); 17-37; *Commemorative History*. Reproduction of selected pages from 1925 prize list, 60, 72.

⁴⁴ Wade Toole, “The Advertising Value of the Fall Fair,” *Canadian Countryman*, September 28, 1918, 1232; “Why Breeders Should Exhibit,” *Ottawa Farm Journal*, July 28, 1939, 10 col. 7.

story from an exhibitor at the Vankleek Hill Fair. When he had been asked by a visitor whether his potatoes were as good as they looked, he had given her a few to cook at home. The visitor returned with her order for a winter supply.⁴⁵ The significant prize money, however, went to stockbreeders and particularly the horse and cattle breeders. They profited from the Society's privileging of pedigreed large animals, as was generally true in all agricultural societies.⁴⁶ These men were different from the average farmer. They had sufficient prize-worthy stock to fill a class, thereby ensuring a high return in prize money, plus the time and the manpower to train and prepare stock for showing. They also had an economic mind-set that saw the business profits to be made from exhibiting their stock:

If we were to ask the average exhibitor why he exhibited his stock he would probably give two reasons. One would likely be the chance it gave him to secure the money offered in prizes and the other would be the advertising which he so obtained. In fact, the main object of many exhibitors is to advertise their stock, the winning of money being a very acceptable incidental which helps to pay expenses.⁴⁷

The [Canadian] *Directory of Breeders* (1910) and *The International Directory of Pedigree Stock Breeders* (1928-9 and 1930-1) together produced a list of 32 stockmen from Prescott County, 19 from the two Glengarry townships with strong links to Prescott County (Kenyon and Lochiel) and 13 from all of Russell County. None of the last group was a member of the Vankleek Hill society, but four of the Kenyon and Lochiel stockmen and 21 of the 32 Prescott County stockmen were (see Appendix D for profile of

⁴⁵ *Eastern Ontario Review*. September 22, 1932, 1.

⁴⁶ In 1905 most livestock prizes ranged from \$1 to \$5 while other classes might pay as low as 25¢ for a third prize. The regular premiums offered for horses totaled \$182 and for cattle \$293, together making up a little more than half of the premiums offered that year of \$950 for all 20 classes of exhibits. The amounts did not change a great deal in prize lists published in the *Eastern Ontario Review* up to the 1940s.

⁴⁷ "Exhibiting Live Stock at the Fall Exhibition," *Ottawa Valley Journal*, Aug 26, 1913.

the 21 stockmen members of the society). The Prescott County members came almost entirely from within the geographic orbit of the early district societies of 1837 and 1844, from Vankleek Hill and the townships of Caledonia, Longueuil and East Hawkesbury. Neither the one breeder listed in the directories from Alfred nor eight of the nine Plantagenet breeders were members. This reflects a general absence of the western townships from the core district of the Vankleek Hill society. Of the stockmen who were members of the Vankleek Hill society, only three—Hector Allen (grandson of the 1844 director Richard Allen), James Proudfoot (son of one of the judges in the 1844 fair and son-in-law of an early director William Bradley) and the one Plantagenet representative, Albert Hagar—can be connected to the earlier societies. Most of the breeders listed, like many of the members, were descendants of the Scots whose families had not been found among the leaders of the Ottawa District Society. Yet, by 1906, Scottish names were a striking part of the breeder component of the Vankleek Hill membership.

The 21 Prescott County breeders had a greater impact than their numbers might suggest. Nine of them are known to have been long-term members of the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society. Twelve of the members filled positions on the board between 1906 and 1942 on at least one occasion. Five held board positions intermittently over a long period: D. A. (Donald) McPhee (1913 to 1933), McNabb Campbell (1918 to 1924), Lochie McRae (1915 to 1924), G. D. (George Drummond) Mode (1909 to 1933), and George Rennick (1912-1932). They also included exhibitors who won significant sums at the fairs. For example, Donald A. McPhee won \$31 in 1906 and \$116 in 1919 for his Holsteins, horses and pure-bred sheep. George M. Rennick won between \$25 and \$40 for his Ayrshires in different years and Peter Lefavre won \$28 in 1906 and \$50 in 1907. As

the *Ottawa Valley Journal* had said, there were good business reasons for exhibiting. It produced prize money that effectively paid for the advertising.

Society directors were also leaders of the local livestock associations. In 1948 Mr. W. Newton was a director of the Society but on August 16 of that year he spoke to the board on behalf of the Ayrshire Association.⁴⁸ When a livestock improvement association was established for Prescott and Russell Counties, the members in 1932 were or had been agricultural society board members: D. A. McPhee, George Rennick, Charles Proudfoot, and McNabb Campbell.⁴⁹ George L. Allen, a director of the society in 1919 and secretary-treasurer in 1920, was also secretary of the Vankleek Hill District Breeders Club in 1917.⁵⁰

D. A. McPhee is an example of a major stock breeder who was a member, an exhibitor, and a board officer. He was also the sole member of his family to be involved in the society. He was not, then, one who joined the society out of a sense of tradition. He was a national-level breeder, exhibiting his livestock under the name of Crystal Spring Farm as far as the National Dairy Show in Detroit, where he took two seconds.⁵¹ In 1920, he decided to retire from cattle farming. Four years earlier he had sold a herd which had set a record for its proceeds.⁵² Even after that earlier dispersal, the 1920 sale offered 70 Holsteins as well as farm implements. It was a sufficiently interesting sale that it attracted

⁴⁸ Minute Book 1948-1955, August 16, 1948, 17.

⁴⁹ Ontario Archives, Ferdinand Larose, Annual Report 1931-1932, 6. This association had been organized by Larose, who persuaded 20 of the 24 prominent local breeders to attend a meeting. Only the officers were named, all being officers or past officers of the agricultural society. It was short-lived. Larose states in his 1932-33 report that there had been no meetings that year, as the President (D. A. McPhee) felt that the purpose of meeting, obtaining a bonus for purchasing pure-bred bulls, had been met by the Ontario Government's Bull Bonus Policy.

⁵⁰ *Eastern Ontario Review*, June 1, 1917, [3] col. 1.

⁵¹ "Crystal Spring Holsteins Capture Awards at National Dairy Show," *ibid.*, October 15, 1926, 1 col. 1.

⁵² *The Ottawa Farm Journal*, November 9, 1920 and November 26, 1920.

a crowd estimated at 1,000 from throughout Eastern Ontario and from as far as the Eastern Townships. McPhee's operation was a significant agricultural enterprise. His standing in the society, with continued election to the board, reflects this.⁵³

Family tradition and economic interests among breeders account for 63 of the 153 members identified as directors and officers of the board for the period between 1906 and 1950. Another 21 board members, who had neither family nor economic interests to attract them to the society, shared a common trait in being involved in Vankleek Hill and West Hawkesbury municipal politics.⁵⁴ The result was that there was some overlap between the political leaders and the agricultural society leaders in each municipal council that has been identified. This is most striking in looking at the eleven Vankleek Hill mayors identified from the period 1897 to 1940 and the six West Hawkesbury Reeves from 1899 to 1948 (Figure 12).

Four of the eleven Vankleek Hill mayors identified for the period 1897 to 1940 were at some point agricultural society officers. So were three of the four Reeves. Another five of the eleven mayors were society members but not on the society board. Altogether only two mayors and one reeve have no recorded ties to the agricultural society. Every Vankleek Hill council whose members have been identified for the period 1906 to 1948 included agricultural society members. For example, five of eight members of the 1906 Vankleek Hill council had some connection with the agricultural society. Town clerk Fred Thistlewaite was the agricultural society secretary-treasurer. Councillors Alva

⁵³ Ibid., December 10, 1920.

⁵⁴ Ontario Archives, "Return of Officers to the Province" 1916 to 1948, Auditors' Report in Municipal Returns, 1899-1902, 1905, 1908-10, 1912, 1914 (for West Hawkesbury lists); Town of Champlain, Vankleek Hill Council Minutes 1897-1910 and *Eastern Ontario Review*, reports of elections results, January issue various years 1911-1950 (for Vankleek Hill lists).

Figure 12: Vankleek Hill Municipal - Agricultural Society Positions Held.

Source: Ontario Archives, Municipal Returns, Vankleek Hill Council Minutes, *Eastern Ontario Review*, Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society Minute Books

Dr. A. R. Metcalfe, mayor 1900-01 - president 1920-22
 P. S. Paquette, mayor 1904-06 & reeve 1907-10 - president 1912-13
 John Hartley, mayor 1925-26 –director 1924, first vice-president 1925
 W. R. Hall, mayor 1940 –first vice-president 1933
 William W. Tweed, reeve 1905 - director 1906
 Nathan D. McCann, reeve intermittently 1908 to 1920 - director 1899
 Alex Hunter, reeve 1914, 1921-40 - president 1920-21

Durant and Auguste Mercier were local manufacturers who were members and who exhibited industrial products at the fair. Councillor Thomas McCuaig, a local merchant, was a member and participated in the Annual General Meetings. The mayor, P. S. Paquette, was a director of the society in 1906. But, although he was an active member for many years, he appears to have exhibited only once. In 1909, he won a \$1 special for his spaniel in a dog show.

The picture is much the same in West Hawkesbury. In 1910 county clerk William T. Dunning had been an agricultural society member in 1906. County treasurer Gilbert A. Fitzpatrick was a member and a director in 1910. He won \$13 at the fair that year. Councillor Thomas Vogan was a farmer who had been a member and an exhibitor in 1907 and 1908 and would exhibit again in 1915. Councillor James E. Mooney was another farmer and small scale exhibitor in 1908, although it is likely that his wife was the producer of the point lace entered. Reeve Nathan McCann had been a director of the society in 1899 but was no longer a member in 1910. Only two members of the council, Robert Rennick and Henry Milner, have no known connection to the society.

The Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society provided the leading men of the town with a non-partisan and secular meeting place. For Francophones with political ambitions, it was also far less offensive to the Catholic church than, for example, the Freemasonry court. Only the horticultural society, the Farmers' Institute, and the sporting clubs offered the same benefit. Three Francophone residents of Vankleek Hill were recorded in the *Eastern Ontario Review* as members of fraternal orders, but only E. Z. Labrosse was a member of a non-parish based order, the Ancient Order of United Workmen. The other two men, J. L. Vincent and A. Matte, were members of the St. Gregory's Court of the Catholic Order of Foresters.⁵⁵ Labrosse had also been a member of the Catholic Foresters in 1897.⁵⁶ The Labrosse family had both commercial and political interests, while the Matte family manufactured carriages. The agricultural society, as a shared association for a large portion of the members of municipal council, was able to provide a neutral space to ease their interactions in the political sphere.

The three groups identified among the Society members—the “fair families,” the livestock breeders and the municipal politicians—do not exhaust the number of sustaining members of the society. But they do account for a little more than half (84) of the 153 board members and close to a third (171) of the 567 members with more than three years on the rolls, that is, those with strong, even intense, attachments within the social space of the agricultural society.

⁵⁵ *Eastern Ontario Review*, January 3, 1896, 1; January 1917, [3] col 1.

⁵⁶ “À Travers les Comtés – St.-Eugène,” *Le Ralliement*, March 18, 1897, 4 col. 3.

Participation of French-Canadians and Women in the Agricultural Society

Elspeith Heaman researched nineteenth-century fairs in Ontario and Quebec and found a significant difference in the response of farmers to the improving message of the elite organizers of the fair. While Ontario farmers had responded by demanding more entertainment to sweeten the pill, Quebec francophone farmers ignored the fairs entirely viewing them as projects instigated by Anglophone improvers.⁵⁷ I will argue that this is too simple a dichotomy, but it is true that Francophones were not prominent in the Vankleek Hill society. Among the total 1,600 members identified for the period 1906 to 1930 were 286 members with French-Canadian surnames. These 286 were in many respects a microcosm of the larger agricultural society membership. Most Franco-Ontarian members, like most British-origin members, had an irregular and limited association with the society. Those with stronger ties came largely from a few French-Irish families, some municipal politicians and Vankleek Hill's French-origin mercantile elite.

The Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society complained of a low interest in exhibiting by farmers generally:

We consider it peculiar that many of the leading farmers do not exhibit. A large sum of money has been spent to encourage every man with good stock to make an exhibit but many who might be expected to take advantage of this opportunity to help this district, this organization and also themselves do not do so. ... If the Exhibition is to remain a strictly agricultural show then the farmers in this district must make up their minds to help the exhibit by bringing out something to "make the show". It will not do for everybody to simply come to see.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Heaman, 53, 58-9, 322 table 3.

⁵⁸ "Exhibition Notes," *Eastern Ontario Review*, January 25, 1918, 1 cols. 5-6.

Given the necessity to press the readers of the English-language newspapers to exhibit, it is not a surprise that Franco-Ontarian farmers were of the same mind. When Orphir Beaulieu of Riceville died in December 1935, his obituary glowed with praise of his farming achievements which had made him “one of the leading farmers of the surroundings.” He was not only a progressive farmer but, with one of his children as deputy sheriff of the county, he could claim the Beaulieus to be a leading family.⁵⁹ Yet his name does not appear on the membership lists of the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society, nor on the prize winner lists for the 1926 Riceville fair.

The Francophones who participated in the agricultural society generally did so on a limited basis. Of the 286 members with French surnames, 208 were members for a year or two, won a few dollars perhaps, and then ceased to participate. Napoleon Lalonde was one such member. He was a farmer from Alfred who won \$4 and \$7 for a pedigreed shire stallion in the years between 1907 and 1909. And then he disappeared from the society record.⁶⁰ In 1916, among eleven exhibitors of Ayrshires, three had French names: William Gareau, D. O. Charbonneau, and A. Dupont.⁶¹ While seven of the eight Anglophone Ayrshire exhibitors named in the report were at some point members of the society board, only Gareau of the three Francophone exhibitors took a board position. He was a director in 1932.⁶²

There were three dedicated exhibitors with French names: Peter Paquette of Longueuil Township, Peter Lefavre and his sons George and Lawrence of West

⁵⁹ Ibid., January 2, 1936, 4 col. 4.

⁶⁰ Minute Book 1906-1912, Prize Lists 1906 to 1910.

⁶¹ Minute Book 1912-1919, “Report of Directors for the year 1916,” Annual General Meeting, January 20, 1917: 340.

⁶² *Eastern Ontario Review*, Jan 21 1932, 1 col 2.

Hawkesbury, and Thomas Leduc of East Hawkesbury. I would argue that the Lefaiivres and Thomas Leduc were anglicized for sufficient generations as not to be representative of the Franco-Ontarian population. Peter Lefaiivre was married to Catherine McCormick, a relative of the fair family, the Hurleys. His son George married a daughter of the Irish Protestant Vogan family. Leduc gave his maternal language as English in the 1901 census. He may have become an active member due to being both brother-in-law and cousin-in-law to the Hurleys. There is less question whether Peter Paquette of Longueuil Township was part of the French-Canadian community, for he identified himself as French speaking in the census records. But he also had family connections that took him across the language divide. His widowed mother had remarried the unilingual English-speaking mill owner, Thomas Henry Ayers, of Lachute, Quebec.⁶⁴

Cheesemakers were more likely than farmers to participate on a regular basis, though they usually only exhibited the product of their factory for, like livestock breeders, the fairs served to advertize their professional skills. Among the 32 cheesemakers who were members of the agricultural society at different times, eight had French surnames. But whether a cheesemaker was Francophone or Anglophone, he rarely took a leadership role. Peter Guindon, a Francophone cheesemaker in Vankleek Hill, was a member from 1906 to 1930. No record can be found, however, suggesting he was involved in the board or attended meetings.

The one exception to the non-involvement of cheesemakers in the running of the organization was Zotique Titley. He was a director in 1924, but this was an unusual year. Altogether six French-Canadians were elected directors that year: Titley; Bruno

⁶⁴ *L'Orignal-Longueuil*, (L'Orignal, Ontario: Patrimoine L'Orignal-Longueuil Heritage Book Committee 2011), 268-70.

Labrosse, a veterinarian from St. Eugene in East Hawkesbury; Zephirin Labrosse jr., Joseph St. Denis and Hilaire Methot, all Vankleek Hill businessmen; and Father J. O. Lapointe. Only Labrosse had been a director before 1924 and only he and St. Denis maintained a leadership position after.⁶⁴

It is clear that at least one of the new directors was specifically requested to stand for election. The previous summer, the board had taken a decision to speak to Father Lapointe about “races for the fair” and after the fair was closed had paid him \$5 for expenses. In a meeting just prior to the 1924 Annual General Meeting, the outgoing board directed the secretary to speak to Father Lapointe again, but the minutes do not state the board’s purpose.⁶⁵ A few days later, Father Lapointe was nominated and elected to the board. This activity suggests that the out-going board had orchestrated the inclusion of French-Canadians in 1924. The reason for this has not been determined, neither by searching the Vankleek Hill newspaper nor in the society minutes. More significantly, at the same meeting where the directors determined to “interview” Father Lapointe, they decided to seek permission from the province to add six new directors, just enough to equal the number of Francophones who joined the board at the following Annual Meeting. It seems that, even if Francophone participation was seen as valuable, the board was not going to lose control by ceding to the new directors a potential majority position. Nor was an Anglophone to risk losing his seat on the board in order to accommodate new directors. Control over the Vankleek Hill society was going to remain in the hands of the Anglophone community.

⁶⁴ Minute Book prize lists and minutes of annual general meetings.

⁶⁵ Minute Book 1920-1925, Meeting August 11, 1923, 168; Meeting September 15, 1923, 174; Meeting January 12, 1924, 178.

As four of the six Francophones named above were directors only in 1924, they had little association with the society. Along with the remaining two Francophone directors, there were three French-origin men who had significant involvement in the society in other years. Joseph Louis Felix Routhier was president of the society in 1898. His father, Felix Routhier, had owned a foundry in Vankleek Hill and been the federal MP for Prescott County between 1878 and 1883. Joseph Zephirin Labrosse Jr was a local merchant as well as reeve of Vankleek Hill from 1923 to 1926. Despite his father having been a member from before 1906 and his own active participation in Annual General Meetings, Labrosse became a director for the first time only in 1922.⁶⁶ He was later the society secretary-treasurer from 1926 to 1932. Mr. D. Theoret was a director between 1923 and 1933 as well as being a member of the Vankleek Hill municipal council.⁶⁷ P. S. Paquette was society president in 1912 and 1913 as well as being town councillor, reeve and mayor in those years and later. Joseph St. Denis was a society director in 1924 and vice-president in the 1940s. He had a varied career as a hotel keeper, a real estate speculator and, as a partner with Dr. Edward A Mooney, owner of a road contracting business. He was also at various times a town councillor, mayor and finally MPP for Prescott and Russell Counties.

Two of the five were connected to the Anglophone community by parentage or by marriage. Joseph St. Denis was the son of an Irish Catholic mother and was married to an Irish Catholic. P. S. Paquette (who was not related to the exhibitor, Peter Paquette) also had an Irish mother. The remaining Francophone members did not have family

⁶⁶ Active participation was tracked by who was moving and seconding motions.

⁶⁷ *Eastern Ontario Review*, September 26, 1929, 1 col. 1; September 25, 1930, 1 col. 1; September 24, 1931, 1 col. 1; January 19, 1933, [8] col. 3. D. Theoret has not been identified in the town assessment rolls or the 1901 and 1911 census records.

connections with the Anglophone community. Joseph Routhier had been the first member of the local French-Canadian elite to take an executive position. We do not have records for his presidency in 1898 but he served his full mandate, apparently without controversy despite it being only a decade after the language conflicts described by Gaffield in *Language, Schooling and Cultural Conflict*. Zephirin Labrosse Jr had a different experience. From 1929 to 1932 he occupied the paid position of secretary-treasurer, having previously been a director. His relationship with the rest of the board had deteriorated in 1933 to the point that he quit. The circumstances are unclear. The newspaper reported that he had delivered the financial report to the 1933 Annual General Meeting but the society minutes stated that he had refused to attend or to hand over the books. The board named a new secretary-treasurer who later reported to the government that Labrosse had left the books in total disarray and failed to pay suppliers. Yet he was named in the newspaper as the clerk for the races at the fair just nine months later.⁶⁸ Again, the local press does not help us understand the dynamics at work here, as it papered over the disputes in this case.

Certainly conflict was not unknown among the Anglophone members of the board. In 1917, H. C. Jones, being both newspaper editor and secretary-treasurer, was in a position to report on conflict to his own advantage, just as his successor as newspaper editor in 1933 would keep from public view Labrosse's dispute with the board. Jones commented as newspaper reporter on the refusal of the board to allow him as secretary-

⁶⁸ Guelph University archives, Reports from Agricultural Societies, handwritten notes on foolscap entitled "Vankleek Hill." These appear to be notes on individual societies kept by a Department of Agriculture employee.

treasurer to resign even though he declared he had many critics among the members.⁶⁹ It is possible that the Labrosse situation was also a personal dispute rather than a case of linguistic or political differences. Nevertheless, in this most French-Canadian county of Ontario, we can count the number of leading French-origin society members at less than a dozen. This suggests that the society was not of interest to the French-speaking community except to those few who already had business with English speaking Ontario or had personal contacts through Anglophone relatives.

Elsbeth Heaman has argued that in the nineteenth century French Canadians resisted the agricultural societies' hegemonic agenda of improvement by failing to participate, while English-speaking farmers resisted by making entertainment a prime part of the fair. Given that participation in agricultural societies was a minority activity in English Canada, I would argue that, in the twentieth century at least, French-Canadians in Quebec were only slightly less interested than Anglophones, as long as Anglophones were not controlling the board. An advertisement in *La Presse* for Canadian National rail excursions to exhibitions in Ottawa, Toronto, Sherbrooke and Valleyfield shows an expectation by the railway that the Montreal French-speaking public would be interested in attending fairs irrespective of which language group was in charge.⁷⁰ The Francophone-managed Alfred Township fair was a successful one-day fair that lasted until 1940.⁷¹ In Quebec, a large fair such as that at Valleyfield was equally French Canadian in character.

⁶⁹ *Eastern Ontario Review*, January 20, 1917.

⁷⁰ *La Presse*, August 16, 1926, 8 col. 2.

⁷¹ In 1935, the society was still holding a locally-important fair, "Many Attractions Draw Thousands Alfred Exhibition," *Eastern Ontario Review*, September 19, 1935, 3 col. 6; no fair was held in 1940, "Dormant and

The Valleyfield fair, on the south bank of the St. Lawrence across from Montreal, seems to have been a town event rather than a parish or farmer event, for the organizers (judging from their titles) were a doctor, a notary public and a lawyer. The society emphasized entertainment in its advertising (“parade et expositions d’animaux de race ... Courses de Chevaux ... Attractions Sensationnelles et amusements variés”) plus a good road connection with Montreal.⁷² Yet it had an agricultural component. A correspondent to *La Presse* sent a full description underlining the festive air visible both in the town and on the fair grounds, with local stores decorated, flags flying and people crowding into town along with “des milliers des citoyens” who attended the fair daily. While the fair had a midway from the United States, the correspondent also extolled the cattle competition, including the Holsteins exhibited by a M. Donat Raymond from Vaudreuil. Other agricultural exhibitors were named, and they show a range of geographical and linguistic origin, from British names from the Maritimes to P.-J Salle of Lachine Rapids, Quebec, and D.-T. Ness of Howick, Quebec. On the other hand, the correspondent pronounced the races the best part of the programme, with 150 horses taking part in heats over the four days of the fair.⁷³

Valleyfield was a fair run by Francophones but involving it seems exhibitors from both communities. The Vankleek Hill Fair remained in the tight control of a small group of Anglophone men and Francophone involvement remained low. At the same time, French-Canadians were not the only group whose participation was limited in Vankleek Hill. Women had been part of agricultural fairs since Elkanah Watson added the display

Dissolved Agricultural Societies,” undated list, Guelph Archives special collections, Agricultural Societies collection.

⁷² “Succès pour l’exposition de Valleyfield,” *La Presse*, August 18, 1926, 20 col. 5.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

of women's productive work to his Berkshire fair at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Neely has described how Watson organized a large display of domestic manufacturing at the winter fair of 1813 but had to resort to a special invitation from Mrs. Watson to bring the women themselves into the public space of the fair.⁷⁴ Women exhibited at the 1852 Vankleek Hill Fair, as seven premium categories out of 49 were devoted to women's production of textiles, butter and cheese.⁷⁵ By 1872, the categories for women's work had doubled to 14 with the inclusion of a "Fancy and Other Work" category offering prizes for coverlets, mitts and shawls. While in Vankleek Hill married women exhibited under their husbands' memberships, single women joined the society in their own right. This was both acceptable and desirable. The expectation was that women, no matter what their marital status, would uplift the public space of the fairgrounds with their presence by exemplifying moral and domestic virtues.⁷⁶ Where women's uplifting presence was not welcome prior to 1921 was in running the agricultural society.

Based on the society minutes, the board first called on the aid of women in 1913 when it asked three prominent exhibitors, Miss Bridget (Birdie) Metcalfe, Miss Laura McLaurin and Miss Ogden, to revise the ladies' classes.⁷⁷ During World War I the board apparently relied on the help of the organized women of the Women's Institute, for it moved a vote of thanks in 1918 for the Institute's handling of the refreshment privilege.⁷⁸ The next year, however, the board decided to run the refreshment privilege themselves under the management of Donald McInnis. He did so by convening a committee of three

⁷⁴ Neely, 63-4.

⁷⁵ *Commemorative History*, 14.

⁷⁶ Linda J. Borish, "A Fair, Without the Fair, is No Fair at All": Women at the New England Agricultural Fair in the Mid-Nineteenth century," *Journal of Sport History* 24 no. 2 (Summer 1997): 157-62.

⁷⁷ Minute Book 1912-1919, Meeting March 8, 1913, 82.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Meeting July 19, 1918, 376.

women, Mrs. T. McCuaig, Mrs. William Dunning and Mrs. Norman McLaren. The board solicited prepared food from members which again involved the work of women, this time as members' wives preparing the food. The food was then served with "the co-operation and assistance of the lady friends of the society." The board rewarded McInnis by presenting him with a turkey at Christmas, without reference to the women who had actually made this service happen.⁷⁹ In 1920, the board still put male directors in charge of placing fair exhibits in the Hall, but with the "assistance of two ladies chosen for the Ladies' Home Department."⁸⁰ That same year, the board took a decision at a meeting attended by "members and ladies" to raise money by holding a social organized by a special committee of the five women who had attended the meeting, along with two other women who had not been there.⁸¹ Five of the seven women were wives of society officers and the other two were a daughter and a niece of officers. The men would prepare the fairgrounds while the women prepared and served the food. The money earned went into the general revenue of the fair.⁸²

In 1921, the board voted to add three "lady superintendents" but at the same time increased the number of male directors from nine to twelve.⁸³ In 1922, they reduced the number of male directors back to nine and retained what were now three "lady directors" in addition to the male directors. We know the names of 26 lady directors from scattered years between 1921 and 1951. For the most part these women were members of families connected to the fair. Twenty four were married and only nine of this group were

⁷⁹ Ibid., Meeting Aug 23, 1919, 434-6; December 13, 1919, 456.

⁸⁰ Minute Book 1920-1925, Meeting March 30, 1920, 20.

⁸¹ Ibid., Meeting May 29, 1920, 24.

⁸² Ibid., Receipts in Detail, 52.

⁸³ Ibid., Meeting January 21, 192[1], 75.

involved on their own—that is, without their husband also being involved in the society as either an exhibitor or a board member—but three of the nine had other family connections. Marietta (Grout) Byers was a member of the fair family of the Mooneys, while Margaret (Taylor) Johnson was the daughter of James Taylor who had been a long-time member and a former secretary-treasurer of the society. The third woman, Mrs. J. L. Campbell, had been a director from 1930 to 1933 without accompaniment until her husband took the position of secretary-treasurer on the sudden resignation of Zephirin Labrosse Jr. Of the two single women, Bridget Metcalfe had long been an active exhibitor. Her father, Dr. Andrew Metcalfe, had been president in 1922, and she was elected director in 1923 but resigned within two months. The other unmarried woman director, Eliza Macadam, was elected in 1939. She was the daughter of William Macadam who had been a member and one of the Society auditors for many years, as well as Vankleek Hill postmaster and an officer in two local companies.

Yet the women remained invisible. They are recorded as attending Board meetings in the 1920s but as moving and seconding motions. Nor were they assigned management jobs outside of the ladies classes. Their invisibility was made graphic in a photograph printed in the 1932 *Eastern Ontario Review*. The caption read “The Officers of the Agricultural Society.” The executive, the directors and the secretary-treasurer were all in the photograph, but not one of the three women directors.⁸⁴

There appears to have been a concerted effort to involve both Francophones and women as members of the board after 1920. Only a very few Francophones, however, maintained a long-term and active participation in the society, the kind of interaction

⁸⁴ *Eastern Ontario Review*, July 14, 1932, 1 cols. 3-5.

intense enough to develop a sense of association and identity with the agricultural society. These men, for they were all men, had pre-existing ties into the Anglophone community, sometimes through family, sometimes through political and economic activity and sometimes both. The women who supported the agricultural society and took leadership positions in it also tended to have pre-existing family connections with the society. But whether Francophones or women, their entry in numbers onto the board was accompanied by steps to increase the number of Anglophone male directors. Majority status in the agricultural society was not going to be given up easily.

Conclusion

The agricultural society mirrored the divisions present in the community. The earliest society was dominated by a specific element among the leading men of the district: men from the American settler families and a sprinkling of British-origin men. The latter were not wholly outsiders, for a few of them had ties to the leading American families, by marriage or by the purchase of land from the Treadwell family. There were also geographic dimensions to the networks formed through the society. Whether before 1907, when it was the Prescott County Agricultural Society, or after as the Vankleek Hill society, the most active participants came from West Hawkesbury and the neighbouring townships of Longueuil, Caledonia and the western parts of East Hawkesbury. Geographically, the society reflected its 1837 origins in the north-south corridor of high sandy land that had first channeled settlement into the region.

By 1900, the society had become an amalgamation of a number of interests. A small number of Anglophone families from Francophone areas maintained a tradition of

involvement, possibly to be part of a sociable Anglophone organization that had some provincial status. But economic benefits also drew interested parties. In the early years, this included leading men who used the society to gain control of one of the few sources of government grant money available for local activities. Later, economic benefits extended to the marketplace, making the agricultural society a matter of interest to commercially-minded livestock breeders. Finally, there were political benefits. The agricultural society was one of the few town associations in which the economic and political elite could meet in an ostensibly non-political forum. With respect to religion, the society did not erect barriers, for Anglophone Roman Catholics and Protestants participated as members, exhibitors and society officers. Language was a dividing line but, as argued by Gaffield and in this study, it was social relationships in the form of family connections which drew the lines, as well as economic interests. There were Francophones who were active in the agricultural society on an on-going basis. These men were connected to the Anglophone community of Vankleek Hill through marriage or parentage, or had municipal and business ties. None were typical of the Francophone farmers of the district. Anglophone women were welcomed into the society as exhibitors and helpers. They only became members of the board, however, after 1920 and once on the board they were kept in the minority by differentiating between the regular directors and the much smaller number of “lady directors.”

The result was that the society was a place for exercising both Anglophone and male dominance. The Vankleek Hill Fair, even though it was the “county” fair in a majority French-language county, remained a performance of the English speaking community up to the 1940s. What the performance said is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4 – Being Rural

In 1912, as fall fairs in the Ottawa Valley were coming to a close, the agricultural society directors who had staged them looked to see how the *Ottawa Valley Journal* had judged their efforts. The directors of the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society must have been pleased to see the headline declaring they had put on a “model fair.”¹ The fair was their public face to a host of visitors who far outnumbered the town population, while press coverage spread the fair’s reputation throughout the Ottawa Valley.² The Society directors could claim validation for their efforts to use the fair to display what seemed important to them about rural life and about agricultural community.

These claims were made by loose networks of people within the broader communities of the township and town. This study seeks to understand the making of community based on the approaches taken by Walsh and High, along with others, of community as a combination of social networks and of the representations of those networks as a community. The social networks that bound a number of the long-term participants in the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society have been explored in the previous chapter. A small group of long-established British and American families along with large well-capitalized stock breeders and Vankleek Hill municipal officials controlled the board from at least 1906 up to World War II. Despite the tight control that allowed these men to retain a majority position on the Board of Directors, a handful of Francophones with family ties or economic and political interests across the linguistic communities,

¹ *The Ottawa Valley Journal*, September 27, 1912, 14 col. 3.

² The town’s population peaked in 1901 at 1,674 and steadily diminished after that date, Library and Archives Canada, Census of Canada 1951, Population by census divisions, 1871-1951, vol. 1, table 6; in 1926, 5,000 people entered the gates of the Vankleek Hill Fair on its second day. *Eastern Ontario Review*, September 24, 1926, 1 col. 4.

along with a number of women, participated in the society and on the board. The making of a community, however, involves both the intense social networks that were possible among long-term active participants in the agricultural society and a sense of what being involved in those networks meant: that is, a representation of agricultural community as it was envisioned by the board up to World War II.

Gerald Creed and Barbara Ching argue that “people live the rural/urban distinction.” In discussing the ways in which rural identity is gendered, classed, valorized and disparaged, they highlight how claims of what it means to be rural reveal as much about the speaker as they do about rural life.³ This chapter is concerned with how “being rural” has been represented in understandings and expectations around modernity and gender. These two words intermesh in a complex web of reinforcing *and* contradictory ideas only two aspects of which can be examined here. Left aside, for example, is the question of how modernity and gender reflected class, with prosperous, investing farmers being represented as the modern face of rural Ontario while disparaging an older sense of rural in which independence and ingenuity was valued more than expenditure. What this chapter will examine are two aspects of the different ways in which progress and family roles were represented.

The questions for this chapter focus on the meaning of the agricultural society to those who participated in it. What the vision of rural life and agricultural community was represented at agricultural fairs in the first half of the twentieth century? What roles were children, women and men expected to play as part of being rural? The chapter is organized around three subsidiary questions. First, to what extent was the agricultural

³ Creed and Ching, 2.

fair, with its atmosphere of general sociability, a part of addressing issues of rural decline and marginalization? Second, how was gender incorporated in the representation of the rural community? Third, how did children understand the vision of rural life as they experienced it when visiting the agricultural fair and as apprentice agrarian workers at the rural school fair?

In answering these questions, like Sherlock Holmes's curious incident of the dog in the night-time, there is significance in absence. The press did not expect agricultural societies to have a role in combating rural decline and marginalization despite the fair being a recognized place for socializing. The Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society expressed its desire to be seen as the face of a modern and progressive agricultural district in the bricks-and-mortar of fairground buildings. No signs have been found of an interest in rural revitalization. The society only acquired a greater visibility as a social space within the district when financial necessity required year-round fund raising. Gender is a topic that can be followed in the farm press, as it commented on the appropriate role for women being in the home and out of the barn. The gender expectations of the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society were so deeply embedded that no justification or defence was required for privileging men's activities over women's. The rural vision of appropriate women's roles, as presented by the agricultural society, must be inferred from their actions and not their words. Children were learning a gendered vision of rural life through a mix of words and actions at agricultural and school fairs, but this was not the rural reformers' message that farm production was an adult male activity.

Public display of skills was not new in the first half of the twentieth century.

Neither were public performance of gender roles by men and women and the

development in children of an understanding of rural life and their future roles in it through a mix of observation and participation. Catharine Ann Wilson studied early nineteenth-century Ontario work bees as mechanisms for creating social relationships that crossed class boundaries in “Reciprocal Work Bees and the Meaning of Neighbourhood.” Bees were events which combined public display of skills, performance of gender roles, and recreation. The latter was an intrinsic part, not just of the bee, but of the bee’s function in greasing the wheels of community. Wilson viewed bees as instances of what historian Rhys Isaac called “interaction episodes.”⁴ These episodes intensified normal discourse around social relationships and thereby made visible the meanings within the public displays and performances.⁵ The agricultural fair was not intended to be disruptive of societal expectations. Even the fair midway, with its tumult and fraud, served to reinforce rural and middle class comfort with their own “rightness.” But the fair was a periodic event that brought together in one place, as both participants and audience, crowds of people who might not normally interact.

The events and activities of the fair brought into high relief the values of the Society that managed it and the gender roles that participants played out in public. As studied by Elspeth Heaman, in the *Inglorious Arts of Peace*, these were expressed in power relationships. Mizener, however, found neither Wilson’s focus on community social relations nor Heaman’s focus on hegemonic power relations helpful for understanding the social and cultural meaning of these events. Mizener’s preferred frame

⁴ Wilson, 431-464.

⁵ Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia 1749-1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1982). Isaac applies the ethnological use of metaphor for understanding culture in conjunction with charting links between individuals to explore social power and authority. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie’s *Carnival in Romans* is another example. Ladurie looked at an outbreak of mardi gras violence between factions in the French medieval town of Romans in order to study relationships between peasant, artisan, merchant and town official.

was to examine rural fairs as social texts, as in Clifford Geertz's deep play study of Balinese culture.⁶ Geertz was highlighted by John Walsh and Stephen High, in their 1999 article, as an example of an anthropological understanding of community such as that which inspired Royden Loewen's study of immigration and change in a Mennonite community.⁷ While it is enticing to try to read the fair as cultural text, it is a difficult frame to use given the sources available. Loewen used memoirs and diaries to get under the surface of events and see the inner life of the members of the community he was studying. Linda Borish similarly used diaries and literature to present how women experienced the fair in the mid-nineteenth century.⁸ Mizener, however, was largely restricted to prize lists and society reports in carrying out his study. Even though he supplemented this with oral interviews, his findings were largely about the contradictions between the intent of agricultural societies and rural reformers and the reality of the fairs and ploughing matches. The experience of being at the fair does not come to the forefront as clearly as one could achieve through diaries.

This chapter seeks to understand the representations made about rural life by an agricultural society in a linguistically bifurcated community, Vankleek Hill and West Hawkesbury. Assessments of various Eastern Ontario fairs, including Vankleek Hill's Fair, were published by *Ottawa Valley Journal* between 1906 and 1920, while the local newspaper, the *Eastern Ontario Review*, published reports on the Vankleek Hill Fair. As well, agricultural societies showed in their ads and in prize list illustrations the values and experiences they believed their fairs offered. We also have indirect references to

⁶ Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," *Rethinking Popular Culture* ed. Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press 1991), 239-77.

⁷ Walsh and High, 268.

⁸ Borish, 58-63.

community expectations in the reports of the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society from the period after 1906 (prior records have not been found). There are a remarkable set of letters to the *Ottawa Farm Journal* which provide first person accounts of how children experienced the fair. It is hoped that together these will provide insight into what the agricultural society and exhibitors thought the fair said about rural community.

Socialization, Community and Being Modern in the Face of Rural Decline

This section focuses on the relationship between the sociability of the agricultural fair and early-twentieth-century concerns with rural decline and marginalization. This was a period of change in agricultural technology, agricultural economics and rural demography. Commentators on rural affairs in Ontario were concerned that the province was losing more than farmers as farms consolidated and farm labourers and threshing crews were replaced with combines. Between 1916 and 1919, the *Farmer's Advocate* ran letters to the editor and at least two articles on the perceived loss of rural community and the exodus from the land by the new generation.⁹ What was lamented in the press was the loss of a sense of “rural community,” largely conceived of as the sociological concept of *gemeinschaft*: the warmth and intimacy supposedly found only in pre-industrial, non-urbanized social relations.

Wayne Neely, writing in 1935, was responding to the same sense of lost community when he argued that the agricultural fair was a solution to rural “psychosocial” isolation: that is, not the physical isolation of poor transportation but

⁹ “Organized Play and Recreation,” *Farmer's Advocate*, December 21, 1916, 2109 cols. 1-3; “Building a Community Spirit,” July 19, 1919, 1299 col. 2; letters, December 28, 1916: 2153; January 25, 1918, 128-30; February 1, 1918, 218; August 7, 1919, 1445-6.

social isolation. Fair exhibits, as displays of individual and collective achievement, provided a sense of rural solidarity and common social interests on which community could be built.¹⁰ *The Ottawa Valley Journal* also claimed that the agricultural fair represented “a community of interest” based on “knowledge of [the community’s] own resources and capabilities,” or its collective achievement.¹¹ The newspaper did not make the leap to community building as a function of the fair. As well, few historians of the fair have focused on whether the fair could have addressed rural marginalization through the fostering of a social identity.

Leslie Prosterman does look at the agricultural fair as an agent for celebrating rural values and, thereby, rural community in the American midwest in the mid-1980s. In her period, the rural fair had come to be seen as the keeper of small-society values, sociability and shared identity based on common interests. David Jones, in his study of early-twentieth-century fairs in Western Canada, like Neely, gives “socialization” as a function of the fair, but as a means to assimilate new immigrants into Canadian society. Mizener identifies sociability as important for “renewing the ties that formed the basis of kinship networks and communities.”¹² In support of this, he quotes from speeches made between 1914 and 1970 at the Ontario Association of Agricultural Society conventions, as well as from oral history interviewees who remembered the pleasure of putting on their best clothes and going to the fair.¹³ He gives, however, a restricted consideration of the function of sociability at the fair with more of his focus on the contradiction between entertainment and education. He does not address the extent to which the fairs themselves

¹⁰ Neely, 230-1.

¹¹ “The Country Fair Merits Firm Support,” *Ottawa Valley Journal*, August 23, 1912, 10 col. 7.

¹² Mizener, 124.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 125, 128-9.

did or did not act as Neely suggests: as creators of psychosocial bonds offsetting rural marginalization.

Mizener gives greater attention to how rural Ontarians reacted to the message of rural reformers. This makes him one of the few historians to have studied the *small* agricultural fair as a modernizing agent. Keith Walden in *Becoming Modern in Toronto* looked at Canada's largest fair, the Canadian National Exhibition, in just this way: as a place in which Ontarians of the 1890s came to terms with many elements of the twentieth century. This is also an argument made in studies of world fairs.¹⁴ Heaman also relegates a discussion of the modern to large fairs. In *The Inglorious Arts of Peace*, she looks at identity and modernity in her chapters on Canada's participation in World Fairs while focusing on power relationships in the chapters on small Ontario and Quebec fairs. In contrast to these historians, Mizener's focus on rural reform at the small fair allows him to bring out the contradictions that resulted when ploughing matches and agricultural societies juggled traditional divisions of rural labour with the reform concept of agriculture as masculine, industrial work.¹⁵

This chapter will look at what the press expected of the fair by examining three different journals: the local Vankleek Hill newspaper the *Eastern Ontario Review*, the *Ottawa Valley Journal* (after 1919 the *Ottawa Farm Journal*), and a farm journal, the *Farmer's Advocate*. These sources together show two discourses prevalent about the agricultural fair. The local newspaper and the *Journal* were both concerned with the

¹⁴ See Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 1984); James Burkhardt Gilbert, *Whose Fair?: Experience, Memory, and the History of the Great St. Louis Exposition* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press 2009).

¹⁵ Mizener, 18-21 *passim*.

materiality of the fair, its buildings, as evidence of a modern and progressive agricultural community. The *Advocate*, along with the *Journal*, also stressed the role of the fair as an educator and treated the sociability of the fair as a by-product of little interest.

The Eastern Ontario Review was a weekly whose reach, in terms of size and geographic range of subscription, is unknown but its correspondents wrote about activities in the various townships of Prescott County and neighbouring villages in Glengarry County. During the period examined, 1906 to 1920, H. Carl Jones was owner-editor. Jones was a professional journalist who had been city editor of *The Ottawa Journal*. He was also related to Vankleek Hill's establishment: by his first marriage to the McLaurin merchant family and by his second marriage to a prosperous farm family, the Modes. As well, he was secretary of the local branch of the Liberal Party and secretary of the Cheese Board. He became secretary-treasurer of the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society in 1906 when his wife's cousin, Fred Thistlewaite who was town clerk, resigned the position.¹⁶ Jones rarely printed letters from readers and then only if they supported issues he saw as important: for example, in December 1910, he published letters in favour of local option. The voice of the public is largely extinguished in this local newspaper. As described in the introduction, this privileging of the professional journalistic voice was one of the developments of the press in the late nineteenth century. It is also part of a general shift away from a journalism of opinion to a journalism of news.¹⁷

The Ottawa Valley Journal (the *Ottawa Farm Journal*) was a semi-weekly newspaper edited in Ottawa and sold throughout the Ottawa Valley. It claimed to provide

¹⁶ "The Review's History" *The Review On-line* <http://www.thereview.on.ca/history.html>. Accessed January 19, 2010; 1901 and 1911 census; the *Eastern Ontario Review*.

¹⁷ John Cameron Sim, *The Grass Roots Press: America's Community Newspapers* (Ames, Iowa State University Press 1969).

both the news that was printed in the daily *Ottawa Journal* plus “Expert information on Farm Topics,” as well as crusading for farm and rural interests. It gave itself credit for a number of improvements in areas ranging from agricultural societies (where, it said, it had initiated the expert judge system, and organized both livestock judging classes and the Eastern Ontario Fairs Association), to good roads (claiming to have built twelve miles of model roadway), to cleaning up country cemeteries. The pamphlet making these claims also gave circulation statistics for Eastern Ontario showing that it outsold its competitors (the *Montreal Weekly Star*, the *Farmer’s Advocate*, *Farm and Dairy*, *Canadian Countryman*) by a substantial margin. Prescott County was a minimal purchaser of all these English-language newspapers, but nearly half (455) of the 981 Prescott County addresses who took at least one of the five newspapers subscribed to the *Ottawa Valley Journal*. While the *Journal* was not the way to reach the bulk of Prescott County residents, who were Francophones, it could present the Vankleek Hill Fair to over 15,000 subscribers from Lanark to Peterborough.¹⁸ Between 1906 and 1920, the *Journal* reviewed fall fairs from across the Valley. Some of these appear to have been written by local town and fair boosters. Others were written by a staff representative. After 1920 its in-depth coverage of both Valley events and local fairs decreased substantially.

The Farmer’s Advocate was a weekly established in 1866 to publish farming news. It had two editions, an Ontario version printed in London, Ontario and a Western version out of Winnipeg. Founder William Weld’s intent was that it be a forum for

¹⁸ Advertising Pamphlet, “The Ottawa Farm Journal. The Ideal Rural Home Newspaper and the Key to Successful Farming. Ottawa Ontario” (no publ. information, held in private collection).

sharing agricultural information.¹⁹ It regularly set topics on which readers were invited to write, as well as publishing enquiries on agricultural questions and sharing responses to those questions by other readers. The *Advocate*, as its name implied, was concerned with a range of social issues, including a concern about rural depopulation and farmers' sons abandoning eastern farms. It ran editorials from 1893 through 1919 on what farmers ought to do to make farming attractive to young men, recommending machinery to eliminate needless physical toil, agricultural education to make farming as intellectually stimulating as other pursuits, and increased leisure to be spent in organized, and morally up-lifting, recreation.

Rural schools and churches were named by both the *Ottawa Valley Journal* and the *Farmer's Advocate* as existing institutions that should have encouraged young people towards rural life and farming. They recommended building new facilities in the form of community centres as a means of providing what they declared a missing element in rural life, recreation and sociability.²⁰ It is significant that neither the *Farmer's Advocate* nor the *Ottawa Valley Journal* mentioned the agricultural society in these discussions. This, along with the continued emphasis on the educational and economic functions of the fair, suggests that agricultural societies were not viewed as social institutions despite their fairs being recognized as a place in which socializing was a significant activity.

¹⁹ Senita O. Kyermateng, "The Farmer's Advocate" Collection Update no. 19, 2002, Rural History (University of Guelph Special Collections). http://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/resources/archival_&_special_collections/collection_update/19/farmersadvocate.htm. Accessed September 20, 2011.

²⁰ Examples of articles carried in *Farmer's Advocate*: "Building a Community Spirit," July 10, 1919, 1299 cols. 2-3; "The Country Needs More Sociability," January 25, 1917, 128 cols. 1-3; "The Rural Church Status," November 16, 1916, 1884 cols. 3-4; "Organized Play and Recreation," December 21, 1916, 2109 cols. 1-2; also "What the Social Centre Does for a Community," *Ottawa Valley Journal*, Ottawa 24, 1913, 9 col. 4.

Sociability was recognized by the Ontario Commissioner of Agriculture and Public Works as one aspect of the fair as early as the 1870s but as a lesser function than education: "If the Exhibitions of some of the Township societies amount to little in themselves, they at least afford an opportunity to the people for relaxation and social intercourse, and for estimating the rate of progress of agricultural and other industries in their localities."²¹ A somewhat more enthusiastic view of fair sociability was expressed by W. D. Watson in a letter to the *Farmer's Advocate* in 1907. He argued that the agricultural fair could be educational and still be a place of relaxation from the autumn work, a place to meet neighbours, a place for courting, and a place for boys to enjoy rides, candy and a game.²²

What is being spoken of, though, is not a fostering of a sense of rural community or identity. Rather it is a meeting of neighbours and a strengthening of existing friendships.²³ This is what Mrs. James McMartin of Finch remembered about her experience at the Berwick Fair in a letter to the editor: "Everyone seemed to be in a jovial mood, and there was a good time of hand-shaking and renewing of old acquaintances."²⁴ In 1903, G. C. Creelman, then the government-appointed superintendent of the Farmers' Institutes, questioned the value of this sociability. He agreed that farmers as a group could benefit from a meeting place on the fairgrounds, but the reality was that the farm community went to the fair as individual families to enjoy the attractions.²⁵ Yet only ten

²¹ Arch. McKellar, "Annual Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture and Public Works for the Province of Ontario Agriculture and Arts" Ontario Sessional Paper 1 (1874): vi.

²² W. D. Watson, "Fall Fair Judging," *Farmer's Advocate*, September 19, 1907, 1487 col. 3.

²³ "Support the Fall Fair," *Ottawa Valley Journal* August 29, 1913, 14 col. 1-2; the Winchester Fair is lauded as a meeting place for old and young in "Exhibition at Winchester," September 11, 1908, 10.

²⁴ *Ottawa Valley Journal*, September 14, 1906, 12 col. 5.

²⁵ G. C. Creelman, "How the Different Agricultural and Horticultural Organizations May Assist Fall Fairs," *Ontario Sessional Papers* 26 (1903): 35.

years later, Creelman suggested that the agricultural societies were missing an opportunity to contribute to the sociability of rural life “supplementary” to the improvements being made in rural life by the telephone, rural mail delivery and electric power.²⁶

The Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society increased its profile as a community social space only slowly over the first half of the twentieth century despite its claim to be a progressive institution. In the early 1900s, the fairgrounds were empty except for the days of the fair in mid-September and those summers when they were able to rent out the grounds as pasture.²⁷ The society board seems almost to have run the fair as if the town were not there. They made few references to town events or interests in the society minutes and the only references to the society in the local newspaper, the *Eastern Ontario Review*, were to the January Annual General Meeting and the September fair. When the county agricultural representative, Ferdinand Larose, undertook a campaign to improve the local livestock, he does not appear to have sought out the local Agricultural Societies as potential partners in his work.²⁸ Instead he conducted a census of the pure-bred cattle in the United Counties through the cheese inspectors. While this makes sense for cattle, he again worked through the cheese inspectors and the cheese factories when he wanted to know the number of poultry breeders.

The Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society began to reach out to the community after World War I. In 1925, the society president, D. A. McPhee, appealed for people to

²⁶ “Social Side of Fall Fairs,” *Ottawa Valley Journal*, September 23, 1913, [6] col. 1.

²⁷ Vankleek Hill Minute Book 1906-1912, Meeting minutes and Detailed expenditure and revenue statements.

²⁸ Ferdinand Larose, Annual Reports to Ontario Department of Agriculture, 1919, 1. A qualification is that Larose was writing these reports to justify his activity (and his salary) to his superiors and may have been at pains to put a stronger light on his own importance to agricultural improvement in Prescott-Russell.

exhibit so as to “make the Vankleek Hill Fair a credit to our Town and community.”²⁹ Only in 1926 did the appeal go further, to the whole town, asking citizens “interested in our success” to put up decorations.³⁰ The first project that went beyond the fair was when the society board worked in 1931 and 1932 with agricultural representative, Ferdinand Larose, to install a seed cleaning plant which non-members could also use for a fee.³¹ They also allowed Larose use of the fairgrounds for the school fair in 1920.³² By the 1940s, the Agricultural Society had developed a stronger community presence. In 1942, the fairgrounds were in regular use through the summer with a social evening and dance as a fund raiser for the society on July 23, a fund-raising dance for the Red Cross on August 3 and a number of unsponsored dances.³³ In 1949, the society agreed to allow the Vankleek Hill Soft Ball Club to have a diamond on the fairgrounds, saying that “every facility should be extended to provide for well organized recreation for the young people of the community.”³⁴ At the same time, the local business people were now supporting the fair with more than flow-through funds for special prizes. The Vankleek Hill Chamber of Commerce came to a board meeting to ask how they could help the society and agreed to take on certain activities. In return, the Chamber of Commerce was given space at the fair to show off prizes they would give away on the last night.³⁵

In many of these cases, there was overlap between the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society leadership and the groups with whom they partnered. For example, J. B. Hurley from the softball delegation was a member of a long-time fair family while a

²⁹ “An Appeal for Support,” *Eastern Ontario Review*, September 4, 1925, 1 col. 4.

³⁰ “The Vankleek Hill Fair Will Be a Big Affair,” *Ibid.* September 10, 1926, 1 col. 6.

³¹ Larose, Annual Report 1930-31, 7.

³² Minute Book 1920-1925, Meeting September 4, 1920, 35.

³³ *Eastern Ontario Review*, June 11, 1942, July 9, 16, 23 and 30, 1942.

³⁴ Minute Book 1948-1955, Meeting March 15, 1949, 34.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Aug 16, and Sep 1, 1949, 45-6, 48.

representative from the Chamber of Commerce, Howard Allison, was connected to the same fair family as well as being a former agricultural society member. But there had long been overlap between the agricultural society board and other groups in Vankleek Hill. What had changed was the economics of the agricultural society and this was driven by the society's understanding of what being modern meant.

The Board of the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society declared themselves in 1914 to be "one of the most progressive and successful Agricultural Exhibitions devoting itself exclusively to Agriculture and Stock Raising exhibits."³⁶ But it can be argued that what the agricultural society articulated was a nineteenth-century understanding of progress. This is the kind of progress summed up by Cyrus Thomas in his Prescott County history when he described Vankleek Hill's stores and, in the countryside, brick farm houses and silos.³⁷ In the same vein, when the *Ottawa Valley Journal* commended the Vankleek Hill Fair, it described the society executive as "strong and progressive," the fairgrounds as "fit for their purpose" while the surrounding countryside had excellent livestock.³⁸

Fair infrastructure and layout were important, as the fair relied on the visual as an educational tool. For if judges could not see to judge and if spectators could not see what was being judged, what was learned? That was the problem with the old exhibit method of leaving smaller animals in their pens and larger animals in a yard. It was complained of in the newspapers: "We have been at fairs where the judge was obliged to climb first into one wagon and then into another in order to pick out the winning sheep or pig, and to judge the cattle in a yard where the entries in all the classes were running together, giving

³⁶ Vankleek Hill Minute Book 1912-1919. Annual General Meeting Jan 17, 1914, 182.

³⁷ Thomas, 564, 566-70, 603 *passim*.

³⁸ *Ottawa Valley Journal*, September 25, 1914, 7 col 3.

him no opportunity to make a just comparison.”³⁹ The press made suggestions on how to improve facilities. For example, a fenced ring for judging cattle would allow the spectators to see but not to jostle the judges as they worked. Lacking such facilities could result in public embarrassment. One newspaper account put the unruly elements of Vankleek Hill on display, not just to those present, but to the entire Ottawa Valley: “[t]he cattle judge ... several times had his view impeded by the crowding around of several persons who wanted to handle the cattle.”⁴⁰

But building the infrastructure required to be “progressive” and “modern” cost money, and the ostensible business of the fair, exhibiting, was not a revenue-creating enterprise. Exhibitors cost the society money, for they took back on average \$5 in prizes for every \$1 paid in membership. The society’s main revenue came from the quarters paid by the public to enter the gates. For Vankleek Hill, grants from all levels of government between 1906 and 1919 averaged \$400 per year while revenue from admissions and payments by concessionaires was an average of \$900.⁴¹ Members got in free, but the Society assured itself of a basic amount of membership money by deducting the next year’s membership fee of \$1 from winnings that equaled or exceeded that amount.⁴² The result was that throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the society was on a financial roller-coaster, careening each year from surplus to debt. This led the society, as the century progressed, to pay increasing attention to the town as it sought both community support and an audience.

³⁹ *Farmer’s Advocate*, July 17, 1919, 1399 col. 3.

⁴⁰ “Prescott Co. Annual Fair,” *Ottawa Valley Journal*, September 18, 1908, 12 col. 3.

⁴¹ Minute Books 1906-1912, 1912-1919, Detailed Expenditure Statements. Between 1905 and 1919, the society received an annual average of \$221 in membership fees while paying an average of \$1,000 per year in prize money. Over the same period, it took in an average of \$91 in concession fees and \$827 in admissions.

⁴² Minute Books, comparison of prize lists and prize money paid out with the detailed revenue statements.

To have a performance or to make a display assumes an audience. Walden used newspaper reports to examine the modernizing effect of the Toronto exhibition on the audience in 1890s Ontario. James Gilbert studied the experience of the audience of the St. Louis Fair from fair archives, memoirs, and the records of an oral history project. Much less has been done about the audience of the small agricultural fair, although Borish used diaries and literature to look at the experience of women at the fair in the mid-nineteenth century. No direct information has been found about the audience at the Vankleek Hill Fair, but the defensive remarks published in *The Eastern Ontario Review* on September 23, 1910 suggest that the townsfolk were capable of delivering strong statements on what they expected.

The September 23, 1910 report leaves a sense of listening to half a dialogue. This report was likely written by the fair's secretary-treasurer and owner-editor of the newspaper, H. C. Jones. In the section sub-titled "About Amusements", the writer agreed that the public wanted amusement at the fair but then justified the lack of entertainment. There were no horse races because they were illegal under provincial law and so risked losing the society's legislative grant. Bands must have been desired by the public, for an explanation was given as to why the directors failed to engage one that year. The lack of a merry-go-round also must have been commented on in town, for the writer stressed the lengths to which the directors had gone to try to acquire one. The failure of the fair went even further. One element of "amusement" at a fair, which was also educational as it encouraged emulation, was the parade of prize-winning livestock. In 1910, this did not happen, even though spectators had paid to sit in the grandstand to see a parade. The blame was put on the livestock judges. In the concluding assessment under the subtitle

“An Agricultural Fair”, the writer drew a clear distinction between an agricultural fair and entertainment:

As an Agricultural Show the Fair of 1910 was a marked success.
As a circus, or a horserace, or a day of sport, it was not a success.
That is not what the directors were aiming at. They would like to
have it both but they are not permitted to do so.

What the writer meant by “not permitted” is not clear. Only horseracing was in fact forbidden. It is possible that finances did not allow for other amusements, except that bands, merry-go-rounds and a livestock parade were the kind of basic entertainment the Vankleek Hill Fair had provided the previous year and only the most puritan of fair managers objected to merry-go-rounds.⁴³ The September 23, 1910 report did have positive news under the sub-title, “Harmony Prevailed,” with respect to the good behaviour of exhibitors. What is noteworthy here is that good order was worthy of mention and that order “prevailed *this year*” (my emphasis) with the judges remarking on the “system and harmony which was seen everywhere.” Likely the intent was to emphasize that the directors and, in particular, the secretary-treasurer who was responsible for the organization and “system” found at the fair, had done their jobs correctly.

Historians of the Canadian fair, in particular Walden and Heaman, have addressed the tension that existed between entertainment and education in the fair in the period prior to 1900, while Mizener has extended their findings up to 1950. As Heaman has pointed out, quite aside from financial necessity, a show with no audience was “a sad joke” and

⁴³ The missing rides and sideshows should not have been a question of finances. Normally these were provided by concessionaires who paid a fee for the privilege of being on the grounds. Despite all the reasons given, it is hard not to suspect simple mismanagement in organizing the fair that year.

so a means had to be found to attract crowds.⁴⁴ Walden also notes that the draw for rural visitors to the Toronto exhibition was not the chance to see improved livestock. It was the scantily clad women trapeze artists and dancers.⁴⁵ In the 1910 *Eastern Ontario Review*, we have an example of directors who had put on a strict agricultural fair but, seemingly, were being criticized for leaving out amusement in the forms of bands, rides and horseracing. Despite asserting the society right and its critics wrong, the board quietly made changes. In the report on the year 1911, the Vankleek Hill board announced that they had expanded both prize offerings and the entertainment aspect of the fair. Specifically, they declared they had spent \$254 on outside entertainment in order “to meet a general demand and according to instructions.” Moreover, they had invested heavily in a building campaign to modernize the grounds with toilet facilities for ladies and children and a stage to better accommodate entertainment.⁴⁶

Whether the September 23, 1910 press report was endorsed by the board or written solely by Jones as secretary-treasurer of the society, it was a definitive statement to the Vankleek Hill public on the difference between an agricultural fair and entertainment. Opposing views were not given formal airing in the *Review*. A small town in which one man was both the paid official of the agricultural society and the owner-editor of the only local press was effectively denied the kind of dissent and debate that Jeffrey McNairn had argued was part of the creation of a public sphere in early Upper Canada.⁴⁷ Instead, the Vankleek Hill newspaper tried to structure public opinion by

⁴⁴ Heaman, 106-7, 128-31.

⁴⁵ Walden 281-6.

⁴⁶ Minute Book 1906-1912, Annual Report of the Board January 20, 1912, 466-474.

⁴⁷ Jeffrey McNairn, *The Capacity to Judge: Public Opinion and Deliberative Democracy in Upper Canada, 1791-1854* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 2000).

telling readers how to assess a fair based on a particular vision of being modern. As the society expressed this vision in the infrastructure of the fair, it was led into costs which forced it to respond to audience demands for the less educational pursuits of entertainment.

Sociability was part of the atmosphere of fall fairs but, as once-a-year events, fairs were not structured to deliver the kind of on-going community activism called for by the press to improve rural life. Neither could the fairgrounds be a community public space as the press urged that the rural school, church or a community centre be, for fairgrounds were privately-owned spaces with one over-arching purpose: to improve the economic competitiveness of individual farmers. This single-minded focus of the agricultural society started to change after World War I. By the 1930s and 1940s financial necessity had caused the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society to do more in the town than just put on a fair for three days in the fall.

The Gendered Rural Community and the Agricultural Fair

The question in this section is how was gender incorporated in the representation of the rural community? The agricultural fair was a creation of agricultural improvers who believed emulation could change attitudes and improve rural skills. The exhibits and fair competitions did more, however. By displaying skills, whether the making of a quilt or the raising of cattle, the fair turned these skills into representations of rural life. Gender was deeply embedded in this process. Men performed at the fair, leading livestock in the show ring and in livestock parades, and saw their names printed in the newspaper as winners. In some fairs women, too, were able to demonstrate their skills, but these

opportunities were limited at the Vankleek Hill Fair before the 1930s. There, quilts were hung on the wall but often, if the maker was married, it was the husband's name that was published as the winner. Just as women remained invisible members of the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society's board in a photograph taken in 1932, women's productive work was displayed but under the cover of the family economic unit.⁴⁸

David Mizener points out in "Furrows and Fairgrounds" the conflict between traditional farm gender roles, as seen in home butter-making exhibits, and the rural reform message that women had no place in farm productive work. Women, in the new agriculture, were expected to contribute to the farm through their efficient house-keeping and not through agricultural work, based on what Mizener called an "urban middle class" expectation of gender and production.⁴⁹ Mizener's evidence is mixed. He argues that when the leader of the Women's Institutes, Edith Chapman, enumerated the characteristics of a "satisfying home" without naming income-producing farm activities, she was relegating women to the home. At the same time, he quotes from a speech by the Ontario Minister of Agriculture, the Honourable J. S. Martin, in which Martin described his wife as his "partner" who ran the farm in his absence.⁵⁰

There is, however, evidence for the new vision for farm women in the comments of the *Ottawa Valley Journal* staff representative in July 1908. A self-confessed "city chap", he described what he saw on a trip in the Gananoque countryside. In particular, he noted how few women were in the fields, helping with the harvest, and few were milking: "the men are getting along without having to call on women to help do the milking. This

⁴⁸ *Eastern Ontario Review*, July 14, 1932, 1 cols. 3-5.

⁴⁹ Mizener, 223-4.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 238-9, 242.

is as it should be. It is certainly no disgrace for women to help milk cows, but her place is in the house, man's in the field."⁵¹

The contradiction spoken of by Mizener was the difference between this new construction of women's roles and the continuation of women's productive classes at the fair. But it was a muted contradiction. Heaman has shown through analysis of prize lists how the types of exhibits privileged at the fair gave greatest prominence to men's work but the privileging also occurred in press coverage.⁵² The *Ottawa Valley Journal* believed that good fairs had strong educational exhibits. But there was only one kind of exhibit that mattered: livestock exhibits. This is apparent in the 1906 reporting on the Carp fair: "Agricultural Exhibits are of a Splendid Nature," or the Winchester fair: "A Splendid Exhibit of Live Stock" or reporting in 1920 on the Renfrew fair: "Good Live Stock Show at Renfrew – Keen Competition in All Classes."⁵³ Press judgment could also be brutal in headlines such as "Poor Exhibit of Live Stock."⁵⁴ Even a midway could be forgiven if the livestock exhibits were strong. In commending the Renfrew fair, the newspaper was able to treat the presence of entertainment as secondary, given the quality of the exhibits:

[A]lthough there were many side attractions on the grounds the number of people that watched the livestock judging spoke highly of the interest behind the Renfrew Fair. Thousands of people crowded around the ringside daily and watched the placing of the livestock awards.⁵⁵

⁵¹ *Ottawa Valley Journal*, July 31, 1908, 12 col. 1.

⁵² Heaman, 266-7.

⁵³ "Fair at Carp Big Success" and "Exhibition at Winchester," *Ottawa Valley Journal*, October 5, 1906, 8 col. 1; September 11, 1908, 10 col. 4; "Good Live Stock Show at Renfrew," *Ottawa Farm Journal*, September 28, 1920, 8 cols. 1-2.

⁵⁴ "Poor Exhibit of Live Stock," *Ottawa Valley Journal*, October 9, 1906, 10 col. 3.

⁵⁵ "Good Live Stock Show at Renfrew."

The same day the *Journal* condemned another fair with the headline: “Richmond Fair Social Gathering – Very Little Live Stock Shown.”⁵⁶ Neely may have viewed sociability as an important function of the fair, but the *Journal* here agreed with G. C. Creelman from a decade earlier that sociability was not its prime purpose.⁵⁷

It is striking how few of the headlines in the *Journal* between 1906 and 1920 and how little text is given to exhibits other than the big two: horses and cattle. This goes beyond the privileging of male work, for pigs, sheep and grain were equally neglected.⁵⁸ The *Journal* called horses and cattle “the upper classes of live stock” in 1913 and commended the Renfrew fair on a prize list that had given “more than ordinary attention to [their] relative value.”⁵⁹ The few times the *Journal* mentioned other exhibits, there was little enthusiasm. In 1920, it made a broad brush condemnation in headlining the Beachburg fair “A Small Exhibit This Year,” even though the text reported that exhibits in vegetables, fruit, ladies’ work and poultry were good.⁶⁰

The privileging of horses and cattle, whether in Beachburg in North Bromley or Vankleek Hill in Prescott County, was sufficiently natural that it was rarely commented upon. The importance accorded to cattle made economic sense, given the shift to dairying in the period and the price differentials between cattle and sheep or pigs.⁶¹ The case is not as clear for horses. Prescott County was not a noted horse-breeding area where there

⁵⁶ “Richmond Fair Social Gathering,” *Ottawa Farm Journal*, September 28, 1920, 8 cols. 2-3.

⁵⁷ G. C. Creelman, “How the Different Agricultural and Horticultural Organizations May Assist Fall Fairs,” *Ontario Sessional Papers* 26 (1903): 35.

⁵⁸ This was not an absolute exclusion. For example, one headline emphasized the fruit class of exhibits even though the text shows that all exhibits, including livestock, were of a high quality. See “Display of Fruit Proves One of Features at Spencerville Fair,” *Ottawa Valley Journal*, September 23, 1913, 3 cols. 3-4.

⁵⁹ “Renfrew Prize List Particularly Good,” *Ottawa Valley Journal*, August 29, 1913, 14 col. 3.

⁶⁰ “Awards at Beachburg Fair – A Small Exhibit This Year,” *Ottawa Farm Journal*, October 1, 1920, [12] cols. 1-2.

⁶¹ Larose, *Annual Report 1927-8*, 1. “[T]he general trend is toward dairying and specially winter dairying.”

could be justification from interested stockmen in showing their horses' capabilities.⁶²

Furthermore, given that this era marks the start of the shift to motor power, the importance placed on horses could not have been purely economic. There is one comment on why horses were viewed as special. The *Ottawa Valley Journal* noted that exhibitors showed more care in showing horses than in any other livestock and asked if this was due to the size of the premiums offered or a "man's pride in a good horse."⁶³ Another non-economic explanation lay in the visual quality of these exhibits, their spectacle. It cannot be denied bulls and horses are more exciting than chickens and quilts. But, as well, the latter were women's farm production while the largest animals were men's work.

The emphasis on cattle and horses is also evident in the illustrations of exhibits used to "prettify" the prize lists by a number of agricultural societies. Prize lists from 92 fairs, mostly from southern Ontario between the years 1891 and 1983, were examined for how they were illustrated. Almost all the societies who ornamented the covers of their prize lists used a drawing or photo of a horse. Of the two exceptions, one fair used whimsical drawings, such as a rooster in overalls. Only one illustration portrayed women's work, in the form of the head of a bull surrounded by baked goods and preserves (Figure 13). Again, however, livestock were central even if this one case included a representation of women's work.

Despite the number of women who exhibited, competition at the fair could still be seen as a masculine activity. The *Journal* claimed: "[competition] appeals to the

⁶² No records have been found in the *Eastern Ontario Review* of sales of horses to American buyers, as was found for cattle.

⁶³ "Some After Thoughts On Eastern Ontario Fairs," *Ottawa Valley Journal*, October 15, 1907, 10 col. 1.

Figure 13: Premium Book Cover, 1895.

Source: Guelph University Special Collections, Walter's Fall prize list, Ontario fairs prize lists and programs collection.



gambling instinct which appears to be inherent in the human race. Every man who has any salt in him has it...⁶⁴ Yet there were many exhibitors competing in traditional women's classes for decorative arts, baking, sewing, and home textiles and butter making. Even though the 158 prize winners in the horse classes suggest it was the most popular class at the Vankleek Hill Fair between 1906 and 1912, in the same period 115 people won in the traditional women's classes.⁶⁵ By using an analogy of gambling, a recreation that relates to rough masculinity, the *Ottawa Valley Journal* both ignored the

⁶⁴ "Exhibiting Live Stock at the Fall Exhibition," *Ottawa Valley Journal*, August 26, 1913, 10 cols. 1-2.

⁶⁵ The numbers of these two sets of exhibitors overlap in that the same person could have won prizes in both classes.

competed and contradicted the reformer message that farmers were to be rational economic producers and not gamblers.

Occasionally the women's classes were discussed in press reports on fairs, but messages were often mixed. In 1908, the *Ottawa Valley Journal* gave a full report on the display of women's work at the Ottawa Exhibition. This was a special year, though, for it was the first year in which the "fancy work and fine arts building" was open. As a result, the article focused on the space of the building and the glass cases housing the exhibits.⁶⁷ More typical were the reports in 1907. Coverage was given to each of the exhibit classes in turn until the dairy classes had been described, and there coverage ended without continuing on to the decorative work.⁶⁸ Here, women's productive work was recognized. Another article in the same issue, but on the women's page, commented on the decorative classes but questioned the value of the fine work.⁶⁹ Later, the ploughing match organizers would attempt to soften the challenge from women who entered the match. In introducing each woman competitor, the announcer stressed her involvement in the more traditional activities of baking and Women's Institute work.⁷⁰

At the Vankleek Hill Fair, patriarchal practices hid the presence of women even as their obviously feminine products were on public display. This was not true everywhere. When the *Ottawa Valley Journal* published the names of prize winners in women's classes at the Metcalfe Fair in 1913, married women such as Mrs. A. H. Hope, a winner of lacework, were visible even if their own names were not.⁷¹ At Vankleek Hill,

⁶⁷ "Big Display of Women's Work," *Ottawa Valley Journal*, September 25, 1908, 9 col. 4.

⁶⁸ *Farmer's Advocate*, September 12, 1907, 1449-56, 1469-70; September 19, 1907, 1488-91.

⁶⁹ "What Dame Burden Saw at the Fair," *Farmer's Advocate*, September 12, 1907, 1460 col. 3.

⁷⁰ Mizener, 253-62.

⁷¹ *Ottawa Valley Journal*, September 23, 1913, 6 col. 2.

however, very few women were visible even as an appendage of a husband. Between 1906 and 1912, there were 115 prize winners in the classes of butter, baking, textiles, sewing and crafts. The butter and textiles were income-producing activities on a farm while plain sewing and cooking were income-replacement activities. Craft work was the same as those practised by urban women. Of the 115 winners, 23 won for their productive farm work in homemade butter, flannel, etoffe or spun wool but only two were identifiable as women. Both were unmarried: Miss Gladys Trafford and Miss Jennie Eaton. Male dominance becomes even more apparent when looking at the full group of 115. Ninety-two exhibitors in this group won in the classes of the traditional female domestic work of baking, sewing and crafts. About 70%, or 65 of the 92, entered under the name of a male member of the household without the identifier of "Mrs" to indicate a woman's presence. For example, John Caines Newton won in 1910 for a carriage horse, etoffe, spun wool and hand-made ladies' underwear. Albert G. Cross won for women's work throughout the period as well as for penmanship by a child under the age of 15 and needlework by a girl under 15.

It is probable that the motivation was partially economic, for the family spent one dollar, and not two or three, to enter their exhibits. Even where it was clear that women were the exhibitors as in the case of the Sisters of St. Mary, the work exhibited in their name was likely created by a number of people within their Vankleek Hill convent school. For instance, the Sisters were named as winning in the children's penmanship category between 1906 and 1909, hiding the work of pupils. A student might also have been the producer of an even more anomalous entry, a fascinator entered by the nuns in 1909. I would argue, however, that being economical was only a part of the explanation.

Patriarchal control over the economic unit of the farm was also an important factor.

Twenty prize winners won *only* in women's classes and yet exhibited under the name of the male householder. In the case of Robert Stirling or Sterling, this went on for several years. Had both he and his wife been exhibiting, there should have been at least one win in a traditional male exhibit class, but there was not. The casual visitor who saw John C. Newton's win for hand-sewn ladies clothing would have recognized that a female relation was the true producer. Since textiles and buttermaking were usually, but not necessarily, female work, the visitor would not have been as certain as to who was the producer behind the 23 winners in those classes. Locals knew, but for the rest of the audience, the person responsible became invisible.⁷¹

Gender could be muffled in exhibiting but was on display in the entertainment of the horse competitions. The rural press was willing to accept entertainment in the form of a merry-go-round or a brass band, but what the public really wanted was a good horse race. As studied by Walden, Heaman, Mizener, Jones and Neely, horse races were the major site for debating education versus entertainment at the fair. Despite being a part of the fair since its beginnings in the early-nineteenth century, it had come under increasing disapproval over the course of the century and in 1894, legislation was passed in Ontario banning horseracing, although later amendments allowed "speeding in the ring." In 1906, the Department of Agriculture clarified the difference: in horse racing the winner was decided solely on speed, whereas speeding in the ring required the winner to show all of speed, conformation and style.⁷² While fair historians have thoroughly covered the ground of horse racing as a particular target for reformers in the nineteenth and twentieth

⁷¹ Minute Book, 1906-1912.

⁷² "Horse Racing at Exhibitions," *Ottawa Valley Journal*, July 10, 1906, 10 col. 4.

centuries, it is not as clear why it was as popular with the public as it was, beyond transgression always having its selling points.

I would argue that the lure of the horse race was not the horse. The *Farmer's Advocate* stated in 1907 that the general public was interested in horses when they were driven in harness. Only farmers and horsemen were said to care about stallions and fillies in the livestock classes.⁷³ In Toronto, in 1907, the shift of the horse judging to the grandstand left the sections empty closest to where the draft horses and breeding classes were being judged.⁷⁴ A bad year on the racetrack at the Vankleek Hill Fair helps to clarify what the public did want. The board of the agricultural society reported to the Annual General Meeting that the speeding in the ring contests in 1918 had been a disappointment, because the races “were not very exciting.” The directors quoted a visitor, Professor H. Barton, Dean from MacDonald College, who said that they would have been better off to have put the prize money into the regular livestock competition. Yet, the board’s report states they had held the trials of speed to meet the demand of “many members.”⁷⁵

It seems that the members and the public wanted the excitement of a close competition between well-matched horses moving at full speed. But what kind of horseracing was it, and what role was being performed by the human part of the equation? A drawing from a 1911 prize list for a fair at Walter’s Falls shows jockeys on horseback in full gallop. But thoroughbred racing appears to have been a minority event as most of the pictures and references found referred to pacing or trotting: that is, to

⁷³ “Horse Judging Programmes,” *Farmer's Advocate*, October 17, 1907, 1634 col. 3.

⁷⁴ “29th Canadian National Exhibition,” *Farmer's Advocate*, September 12, 1907, 1452 col. 1.

⁷⁵ “Prospects Very Bright,” *Eastern Ontario Review*, January 24, 1919, 1 col. 5.

harness racing. This was the case at Vankleek Hill, based on a photograph of harness racing from about 1948 and a child's comment about a sulky in a letter to the *Ottawa Farm Journal* in 1920.⁷⁶ The prize lists from 1901 to 1920 listed trotting races along with a class for "running" which might have been jockey races.⁷⁷ By 1930, only harness racing appeared. There were prizes totaling \$500 that year for trotting and pacing races to be run under Dominion Harness Horse Association rules.⁷⁸

Much of the literature discussing sports and horses is focused on the rodeo where there is a performance of a heightened form of the day-to-day masculinity of the work of the cowboy.⁷⁹ But driving a sulky was not an enlargement of any activity found in the productive world of agriculture. A history of harness racing places its origins as an urban sport out of New York City in which gentlemen showed off the paces of their "roadsters" (light carriage horses) on the public highway. It developed as a structured sport with rules during the period 1825 to 1870, although there are records of informal matches prior to 1825.⁸⁰ For rural areas without any claim to be horse breeding centres, it was sport pure and simple. It can be argued that Vankleek Hill was such a place. When Ferdinand Larose trained teenage boys for junior judging competitions at the Ottawa Fair, he had good examples in the district of dairy cattle to work with but only poor examples of

⁷⁶ *Commemorative History: Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society and Fair*, 38; "Interesting Fall Fair," *Ottawa Farm Journal*, November 5, 1920, 5 col. 2.

⁷⁷ *Eastern Ontario Review* (Prize list reports were published in the week following the fair in the second or third week of September each year); Minute Books.

⁷⁸ "Many Specials for Vankleek Hill Fair," *Eastern Ontario Review* August 10, 1933, 1 col 1; "Sport Contests at Vankleek Hill," August 24, 1933, [5] col. 4.

⁷⁹ Elizabeth Atwood Lawrence, *Hoofbeats and Society: Studies of Human-Horse Interactions* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1985).

⁸⁰ Melvin L. Adelman, "The First Modern Sport in America: Harness Racing in New York City, 1825-1870," *Journal of Sport History* 8, no. 1 (Spring, 1981): 5-32.

horses.⁸¹ Racing provided the Vankleek Hill audience with the kind of emotional build-up and release found in a closely-fought soccer or rugby game, as described by Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning:

[T]he tension of the play communicates itself visibly to the spectators. Their tension, their mounting excitement in turn communicates itself back to the players and so on until tension reaches a point where it can just be borne and contained without getting out of hand.⁸²

The objections to horse races could well have been partially due to the gambling that went with them. At the same time, the intensity of excitement engendered by a closely matched, all-out horse race made it unlikely to be viewed as a rational and improving activity. Further, mastery of the horse did not create the same improvements in the health of the “race” claimed for other sports at the time, while the individualism of horse racing went against the cooperative training provided in team sports.

The men performing the role of a daring sportsman in Vankleek Hill appear not to have been professionals in the early part of the century, even though in 1932 a point was made about the wide region from which the field came: “Many of the horses have met previously this year at Cornwall, Iroquois, Belleville and other points.”⁸³ A list of 36 winners was produced for the period 1906 to 1913 from *The Eastern Ontario Review* and the Agricultural Society Minute Books. Twenty-five men out of the 36 were identifiable in the 1911 census with eleven men being unidentifiable. Sixteen of the 25 were local farmers with six from the vicinity of Vankleek Hill, and six from East Hawkesbury (five of the last being members of one extended family, the Mooneys). Eight of the 25 appear

⁸¹ Larose, Annual Report 1921-22, 27.

⁸² Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning, *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1986), 86-7.

⁸³ “Vankleek Hill Fair Now in Full Swing,” *Eastern Ontario Review*, September 8, 1932, 1 col. 8.

not to have participated in any other aspect of the fair or the agricultural society. Three exhibited but only in the horse classes. As well there were nine racers who were townsmen from a variety of backgrounds. A hotelkeeper, a liveryman and a veterinarian could be expected to be horsemen. But there were also three merchants, a member of a manufacturing family, and two cheesemakers. Only four had French surnames, suggesting that the same divisions which determined who was likely to be a society member also determined who would take up the harness racing challenge. Two were from the town: Emile Labrosse, a clerk working for his father Eustache Zephirin Labrosse, and Bruno Labrosse, a veterinarian in Alfred Township. The Labrosses were a leading family who participated in most town activities, including fair activities. The two farmers were Peter Lefavre, an Anglophone despite his surname, and Peter Paquette who had marriage contacts across the language barrier. Yet prior to World War I, it was not necessary to be a member of the society to compete in the horse race contests. All that was needed to try for a prize of \$5 to \$15 was a fast, light horse and a small sulky-like cart. That the local French-origin population did not try for the prize suggests that the agricultural society and active fair participation were “an English thing” in the district.

The races where speed alone determined the winner were male events. Women’s horse competitions generally added a requirement to demonstrate skill in hitching as well as driving. Unfortunately, little has been found to explain this difference. “Female equestrian” contests had started in the mid-nineteenth century in the face of condemnation by the press. Yet women drove carts and rode horses on the public roads,

even if this was not a universal practice in eastern Canada.⁸⁴ Borish records the nineteenth-century condemnation and gives possible explanations. One was the competitiveness of the contest. Women were taking men's roles as competitors. There was, also, the public physicality as evidenced in the press reports' emphasis on the women's physical grace. As well, though, it was only in these events that women escaped the bonds of men's judgment in the nineteenth-century fair. Unlike the domestic entries, where local men were the judges prior to the appearance of outside expert judges, winners of these equestrian events were judged solely on time, thereby undermining male authority.⁸⁵ By 1906, this last explanation no longer applied, as women judges had naturalized the escape from men's judgments. Even in Vankleek Hill in 1906 the wife of a prosperous farmer, Mrs. Nehemiah MacCallum, was paid to judge the ladies' classes. While her credentials as an expert judge are unknown (she was actually first cousin to the secretary-treasurer, Fred Thistlewaite, whose job included arranging for judges), she was a woman judging women's work. But by this time, the original alarm over female equestrian competitions had turned to a general disregard. Not only has no hostile comment to female equestrianism been found in the rural newspapers reviewed, there was no comment at all. It is as if these events had not happened.

Men and women who competed at the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Fair, whether as exhibitors in the regular classes or as competitors in horse races, were not participating in the same way. A few women were visible. Others were hidden to all except those who

⁸⁴ Nancy Young, "The Reins in Their Hands: Ranchwomen and the Horse in Southern Alberta 1880-1914," *Alberta History* (Winter 2004): 2-8. Young has recorded the necessity to learn to ride for young wives coming to Alberta ranches from England and from Ontario, but argues that acquiring this new skill gave the women confidence as well as empowering them as productive members of the ranch.

⁸⁵ Borish, 164-71.

knew them to be the producers of the products on display under the name of the male head of household. In describing the good qualities of the Vankleek Hill Fair, the *Ottawa Valley Journal* noted that “the ladies of Vankleek Hill and neighborhood give the officials of the fair a strong and loyal support.”⁸⁶ But unlike the situation at church socials described by Lynne Marks in *Revivals and Roller Rinks*, women worked when invited by the male board and male directors were in charge. Welcoming the support role offered by women required a slow change in the society and one that the board kept carefully under its own control. In the early-twentieth century, the visible face of the agricultural community as presented by the Vankleek Hill society was resolutely masculine.

Developing Rural Skills and Rural Pride: Children at the Fair

The theory behind the fair was that any man or woman could become a skilled farmer or rural craftsperson by simply seeing and comparing examples of livestock, crops and crafts and would be encouraged to do so by the public prestige involved in competition. Prior to the 1930s and the beginnings in Eastern Ontario of a significant youth program at agricultural fairs, children attended them largely as visitors. What they saw at the fairs was the agricultural societies’ vision of rural life. It was the school fairs which gave children of this period actual experience in exhibition culture. It was believed that they would learn here not just the exhibiting and judging skills of the fair but would learn to be proud to be rural. Neither David Mizener nor David Jones, both of whom studied the agricultural fair in the twentieth century, has looked extensively at children at the agricultural society fair, and they did not look at all at school fairs. Mizener relied on

⁸⁶ *Ottawa Valley Journal*, September 12, 1913, 13 col. 5.

the reports of the provincial association of agricultural societies to argue that societies “placed considerable emphasis upon expanding their initiatives and classes reserved exclusively for school children.” He used speeches to connect activities held by the ploughing association to the “campaign to rekindle interest among boys and girls in farm life.”⁸⁷ The experience of the Vankleek Hill Fair is somewhat different.

Even though many agricultural fairs took place in the middle of the week, children were part of the audience whether the local fair took place in August or in mid-September, as was the case with the Vankleek Hill Fair. But prior to 1920, the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society showed only intermittent interest in involving children in the fair. There was usually an exhibition class for a sample of penmanship by a boy or girl under the age of 16 and occasionally a special prize for hitching and driving a horse by a girl under the age of 16. In 1924 the prize list included a “Children’s Department, Boys & Girls, 16 yrs or under” that offered a condensed version of the categories in which adults competed. It does not seem to have been a success, for there was only one winner in the entire 24 classes: Janet Mooney, a daughter of one of the long-term fair families.⁸⁸

What the children took from the agricultural fairs, as evidenced in their letters to the *Ottawa Farm Journal’s* children page, was an undigested mix of spectacle, both agricultural and entertainment. John MacAloon identified spectacle as a “spectacular” event that embodies far more than the event itself and was generally a mix of display and performance.⁸⁹ In the case of the fair, we are speaking of a series of sensory delights, as

⁸⁷ Mizener, 148-153.

⁸⁸ Minute Book 1920-1925. Prize list, 240.

⁸⁹ John J. MacAloon, “Olympic Genres and the Theory of Spectacle,” ed. John J. MacAloon. *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues 1984): 243, *passim*.

captured in a letter from Edna Blaney of Prescott County describing what was likely the Vankleek Hill Fair:

I am going to tell you about our fall fair. There were cattle and big horses, sheep, ducks, hens, geese. They had racing. A man was racing and had a wheel come off his sulky. He said he wasn't hurt. There was a tent to take pictures and you could get dinner and supper both at the fair grounds. You could get ice cream and chocolates, oranges and salty peanuts. There was a lot of people there. And then there was a house with all kinds of fruit in it, and fancy work. I enjoyed the fair very much. There were two negroes, one was playing and one was dancing. He was dancing on a box. The box broke right in two. They had a banjo. They had lovely voices. We had to pay 15 cents admission for the little ones and 25 cents for big ones. They were playing the bagpipes at the Fair.⁹⁰

Including the above letter on the Vankleek Hill Fair, 11 letters in October and November 1920 and five in October and November 1919 recounted stories of trips to an agricultural fair. All gave the same sense of experiencing one entertaining sensation after another. As Mae Pruner of Stormont County was 15 years old, she likely knew what she was expected to enjoy at the fair for she specified that her first stop was in the hall to see the exhibits of ladies' hand work, baking, vegetables and cheese "and all." But she finished her letter by describing the excitement of the horse races and the enjoyment of listening to the bagpipes.⁹¹ When Christena Ross of Glengarry County described the Maxville fair she listed in detail, and in the order seen, the vegetable exhibits and the women's work of handcrafts. But then she focused on the horse races and the concession stalls: "We then went outside where we watched the races. There were counters all over the grounds where they sold rings, whips, baloons (sic) and beads. At other counters they

⁹⁰ "Interesting Fall Fair," *Ottawa Farm Journal*, November 5, 1920, 5 col. 2.

⁹¹ "Fancy Work Delights," *Ottawa Farm Journal*, November 12, 1920, 5 col. 6.

were telling fortunes.” Only then did she return to the agricultural element of a tractor and blower threshing machine demonstration and a list of the kinds of poultry on display.

While Christena appears to have been telling a linear story of what she saw, the letter gives the sense that it was all equally interesting, with no distinction between visual entertainment from gazing at agricultural exhibits or seeing the races and the concessions.⁹² Two girls from Renfrew County, Ivy Bell Tucker and Viola Myrtle Tucker, each wrote a letter about going to their local fair. The specific element of the fair that they remembered or considered worth commenting on was the horse race, which they presented as an enjoyable visual spectacle. From Ivy Bell’s letter: “I just love the horses that race: they look so very nice and they go so fast ...”⁹³ Anna Isabel McLeod, from Northumberland County, enjoyed the poultry exhibit but also compared elements of the Cobourg Fair: “...the live stock was good and so was the poultry, but the ladies’ driving was better. One lady got a brass jardiniere for being the best driver ... I don’t know what claimed my attention most unless it was a little girl with a pony that she drove and rode both.”⁹⁴ Helen Riddell of Renfrew County mentioned two rides, the whip which was new to that fair and the Ferris wheel, as well as a snake pit side show.⁹⁵ Only one letter showed a continued place for home-grown entertainment. Ruby Magee of Victoria County, in giving her linear account of what she saw at the fair, said:

There was not much horseracing; just three horses hitched to carts and two fellows on horse back. One of the fellows who was on horseback went half a way around the race course and then his horse jumped the fence and ran away through the field. Then there

⁹² “The Maxville Fair,” *Ottawa Farm Journal*, November 21, 1919, 8, col 5.

⁹³ “Was at the Fair” and “Enjoys Horse Racing,” *Ottawa Farm Journal*, November 14, 1919, 6 cols. 4 and 5.

⁹⁴ “Prefers to Take in the Exhibits,” *Ottawa Farm Journal*, November 12, 1920, 5 col. 8.

⁹⁵ “Visited Fall Fair,” *Ottawa Farm Journal*, November 12, 1920, 5 col. 1.

was tug-of-war (sic) between the Kinmount boys and the Galway boys, but the Kinmount boys won three times. After they finished pulling, they cheered so loud they scared one fellow's horses. When the men's races started there were three men going to run. One weighed about 225 pounds and the other ones weighed about 135 pounds. Both of the little men fell down and the big man won the race.⁹⁶

There was also the excitement of going somewhere. Most of the letters commented on how they got to the fair. Winnie Purtelle had the most exciting trip. Her family drove from Prince Edward County to Toronto along the highway then being built. They left in the morning and arrived only after dark, having passed many things she found worth describing along the way.⁹⁷ Even Christena Ross highlighted her trip of fifteen miles to Maxville in a car hired by her uncle. The children who went to city fairs (Winnie Purtelle to Toronto's Canadian National Exhibition and Florence Jackson and Eileen Castleman to Ottawa's Central Canada Exhibition) enjoyed spectacle entertainments they could not see at local fairs, such as fireworks and, in Toronto, a re-enactment of the taking of Jerusalem by General Allenby. They also reported on the big city pleasures of the theatre and, for Winnie Purtelle, the escalators and elevators in Toronto's Eaton's stores. These events took up the bulk of their letters, although they also mentioned going through the exhibit buildings.⁹⁸

School fairs were introduced in the early twentieth century as a means for transposing the agricultural fair ideal of practical, visual education to the school. The intent was to address rural depopulation by teaching school children pride in agrarian activities as well as learning about livestock breeding and raising, vegetable production

⁹⁶ "Drawing and Fancy Work," *Ottawa Farm Journal*, November 12, 1920, 5 col. 4.

⁹⁷ "Trip to Toronto at Fair Time," *Ottawa Farm Journal*, November 14, 1919, 4 cols. 1-2.

⁹⁸ "Enjoyed Ottawa Fair," *Ottawa Farm Journal*, October 10, 1919, 13 col. 5; "Trip to Ottawa," *Ottawa Farm Journal*, November 21, 1919, 8 col. 4.

and craft production. They took the hit-and-miss efforts of local fair authorities to encourage youth in agricultural pursuits and brought them under the care of the provincial agricultural representative. Ferdinand Larose was the first agricultural representative for both Prescott and Russell Counties, appointed at the very late date of 1919, and so a school fair was not organized there until 1920. When he introduced the fairs to Prescott County in 1920, he wrote to the school boards saying that these would “develop in [children] agricultural habits that will fit them to become the leading farmers of tomorrow.”⁹⁹

Children were not actually taught agricultural skills as part of the school curriculum in the way city children were taught about gardening and nature in the school garden, as described by Peter Anderson.¹⁰⁰ Education at the school fair was modeled on the form of education found at the agricultural fair since the late eighteenth century. A visual display in which the poor, the good and the best of a class competed against each other was expected to be followed by emulation. Competitiveness would drive the child to improve his or her work to match the best seen at the fair. But school fairs involved the children in performing the adult roles of producer, even as reformers desired modern rural children to resemble middle-class city children, passively observing income-producing work. Again there was a difference from the city school gardens of the same period. Those gardens engaged the children in healthy outdoor activity and, as part of the curriculum, allowed the teacher to lead lessons about nature. But it was not intended to teach the children gardening as a future career, much less to promote gardening as the

⁹⁹ Larose, Annual Report 1919-20, 8.

¹⁰⁰ Peter G. Anderson. “Ottawa School Gardens in the early 1900’s,” Bytown Pamphlet Series no. 76 (Ottawa: Historical Society of Ottawa, 2010): 4-6.

only career they should consider. Nor were city children asked to exhibit examples of productive work, in the way the farm children brought their income-producing calves and poultry to the rural school fairs. These exhibits highlighted the role of farm children as productive members of an economic unit, a role which separated them from middle class town and urban children.

Some, however, questioned the efficacy and motivations behind school fairs. The agricultural representative, Ferdinand Larose, was concerned that the school fairs could lose their value as teaching mechanisms in the way he appears to have thought the agricultural fair had. In his report of 1923-4, he warned that the school fairs were in danger of “fall[ing] in the same rut as the Fall Fairs, and they will eventually loose (sic) their importance.”¹⁰¹ The school fair was held at a convenient place for the various school sections participating. It might be the site of the township hall, but it could also be held as a special day at the local agricultural fair. This last venue was not uncontroversial. The writer of a 1920 *Ottawa Farm Journal* editorial claimed that agricultural societies were trying to bolster their own sagging fortunes by swelling the gate with the parents and other relations coming to see their infant prodigy excel.¹⁰² Larose also objected to the combination on grounds that anyone can understand. One school fair was held at the Russell Agricultural Fair. He found it difficult to hold the children’s attention in the afternoon, as they “run all over the place attracted by side shows, merry go rounds, etc.”¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Larose, Annual Report 1923-4, 5.

¹⁰² “Development Rural School Fairs,” *Ottawa Farm Journal*, October 19, 1920, 9 col. 4-5.

¹⁰³ Larose, Annual Report 1928-9, 23.

The *Ottawa Farm Journal* editorial referred to above did argue generally for the value of the rural school fairs. The problem with the school fairs being held in September, a busy time of year for farm families, was noted. For all that the exhibits were supposed to be the work of the child, the writer's experience was of hours spent helping prepare what had been gathered into a presentation, as well as training the calves the child would be showing to walk on a lead. "[The children] supply the enthusiasm, gather an agglomeration of exhibitable (sic) stuff around them and then call for assistance." His argument with respect to the value of the school fair mirrored arguments on behalf of the agricultural fair, but with additional stress on the importance of inspiring a child's pride in agricultural achievement. It is "a real educator in the community. It interests the farm children in the work going on about them every day, develops a pride in that work, and at the same time brings home to the youngsters as can be done in no other way the value of quality in a product..." He believed that this would give the children the desire to excel due to "that peculiar instinct, rivalry."¹⁰⁴ The same theme of developing an interest in farm work in children, and particularly in boys, had been presented in the French language press: "inculquez à vos enfants le gout pour les choses agricoles ... c'est par l'instruction agricole dans les écoles primaires que nous attacherons nos fils au sol natal."¹⁰⁵

Descriptions of the school fairs suggest a more or less standard approach was taken, although in Nepean Township children participated in livestock judging while

¹⁰⁴ "Development Rural School Fairs."

¹⁰⁵ "Instruction elementaire et instruction agricole," *Le Ralliement*, December 10, 1896, no pagination.

elsewhere comments show the teachers and agricultural representative were the judges.¹⁰⁶

At the school fairs, the pupils first placed their exhibits: crafts, baking, vegetables and flowers, smaller livestock such as colts, calves, and chickens, plus displays on topics such as common weeds. Then they ate a picnic lunch that they had brought with them. The formal festivities started with a parade in which each school marched in procession carrying a banner identifying their school. Races would follow and at the end of the day they would go home with their ribbons and prizes.

Children came to the school fairs with a stronger sense of why they were there than they did to the agricultural fair. The *Ottawa Farm Journal* published 23 letters in November 1920 as part of a writing competition in which children were required to describe their school fair and to suggest improvements. The letters came from various locations in Eastern Ontario as well as one from Manitoba. The children emphasized the marching competitions, the prizes won, and a sense of festivity. It was, after all, a day away from normal school activities. At the same time, they showed an awareness that the event was intended to be educational even if they were only saying what the teacher had said and what they thought adults wanted to hear.

They also clearly saw that expected roles in the agricultural community differed for boys and girls. Jean Bingham, age 15, of Lanark County, showed this as she stretched to describe each part of the day in educational terms:

¹⁰⁶ Larose, Annual Reports 1919-20 to 1928-9; Bruce S. Elliott, *The City Beyond: A History of Nepean, Birthplace of Canada's Capital 1792-1990* (Nepean, Ont.: City of Nepean 1991), 173. Larose reported to his managers on his efforts to train teenage boys as judges, but this was a separate exercise from the school fair. Larose organized a team of teenage boys to compete against boys from other counties as well students from the agricultural colleges in judging competitions held in conjunction with the regional fairs and then, if they won, in Toronto.

The things the boys learned in the matter of live stock and agriculture will always help them in their after life. It learns the girls to take an interest in sewing, fancy work and baking. In the matter of the parades, the training which they receive now will maybe help them to train somebody else in the future.¹⁰⁷

An eleven year old from Hastings County, Bernice Gordon, also understood the educational element and focused on a practical bit of agricultural folklore. What she found most interesting was how the judges handled the poultry in such a way that they could see whether the eyes projected beyond the head, said to be the sign of a good layer. Beatrice Roberta Hyndman in Manitoba indicated that the school fair encouraged children to become interested in agricultural competition. What is unclear from her letter is whether the children were genuinely enthusiastic about agricultural work or were more impressed by some children taking home over \$10 in prizes.¹⁰⁸ Evelyn Mae Brown of Stormont County said that the livestock on exhibit made their school fair “a real young farmers fair.”¹⁰⁹ But most of the children, whatever their age, found the parades and the sports the most interesting elements.

Grace Norma Bethel Wilson of Carleton County was old enough at age 15 to describe dutifully all the exhibits, but both she and Margaret Wilson, age 11 of Carleton County, found the races most entertaining: “[t]here were races for children, for fat men, and for teachers, and it was hard to say which of the latter two was the most laughable.”¹¹⁰ One boy of 13, Leon McMahan of Grenville County, thought “[t]he School fair might be improved by horseraces and the driving” although he recognized the

¹⁰⁷ “Suggest That Pupil Judge Speech Contest,” *Ottawa Farm Journal*, November 5, 1920, 5 col. 3.

¹⁰⁸ “President Must Be Energetic Worker,” *Ottawa Farm Journal*, November 5, 1920, 5 col. 6.

¹⁰⁹ “Real Young Farmer’s Fair,” *Ottawa Farm Journal*, October 15, 1920, 8 col. 4.

¹¹⁰ “Suggests Care in Placing Exhibits.” and “Use Number, Not Name, On Ticket,” *Ottawa Farm Journal*, November 5, 1920, 5 cols. 3-4, 5.

serious intent in teaching how to judge excellence: “[i]t is intended to help the breeding of animals and Grading of other things. Also to encourage the children to be Industrious.”¹¹¹ The children accepted both the message of industriousness and the message of gendered work, with Mary F. Waddell of Carleton County referring to “the boys [having] poultry, lambs, and colts in livestock [exhibits].” Only two girls, Margaret E. Alguire of Stormont County and Bernice Acres of Pontiac County, said they had exhibited livestock. In both cases, they showed their chickens, which fitted with traditional female farm work. Bernice also mentioned that she milked two of the family’s cows, highlighting that she was not an urban child separated from the father’s work but a contributor to family production.¹¹² These children heard and repeated the message that the farmers of tomorrow were men, but at least a few of the children were producers themselves without commenting on the contradiction of exhibiting their productive work at the school fair.

The children who wrote about their local fall fair saw it as a great spectacle. There, noise, colour, and exotic sights were juxtaposed with displays of all the kinds of agricultural and domestic material they saw in their daily lives. The agricultural society may have intended the fair to present a vision of rural life that was modern and progressive. The children in the audience never spoke of how modern or progressive their fair was or how theirs was a leading livestock district. They did not carefully separate from the agricultural displays the non-agricultural elements of rides, harness racing, and strangers singing songs. For the children, the fair was spectacle to be experienced. The

¹¹¹ “Poultry Best Feature,” *Ottawa Farm Journal*, November 5, 1920, 5 col. 2.

¹¹² “School Won First” and “Won Three Prizes,” *Ottawa Farm Journal*, November 5, 1920, 5 col. 1; October 10, 1919, 13 col. 3.

school fairs, where the didactic intent was doubtless spelt out for the children prior to the day, made the message clearer. There the children repeated the gendered lesson of male producers and female domestic supporters. But a few girls coupled this with references to their own productive roles caring for poultry and milking as part of the economic unit of the farm family. As with the adults discussed by Kline in *Consumers in the Country*, the reform messages were being heard only to the extent that farm people chose to do so.

Conclusion

The experience of one agricultural fair in eastern Ontario indicates that, despite fairgrounds being recognized as a place of sociability, agricultural societies did not seek a community leadership role. As a result, sociability was not transformed into Wayne Neely's concept of socialization, or development of a social identity, that might have used exhibits of rural achievement as a counter to rural decline and marginalization. Instead the society focused on building the kind of infrastructure that would meet rural press expectations for the fair as a visual education. The goal was to present a vision of rural life and agricultural community that was modern and progressive, as expressed in the nineteenth-century boosterism of bricks-and-mortar.

What roles were children, women and men expected to play as part of being rural? Traditional gender roles were on display, with the most privileged exhibit classes involving men's work with horses and cattle over other exhibits but particularly over women's exhibits. While the greatest controversy around entertainment continued to be focused on the horse races, what is most noteworthy about those races is that they were originally an urban sport that provided excitement without any link to agricultural

pursuits. Perhaps the closest equivalent today is the demolition derbies that every small fair now seems to run. Meantime, children were observing the fair as visual entertainment with no distinction made between what was intended to be educational and what was not. They attended the fall agricultural fairs where they were observers of a series of visual delights which they enjoyed without drawing moral lessons. When school fairs were introduced to develop agrarian pride in children in the one-room schools of the farming districts, the agricultural fair with its gendered values and educational intent was taken as the model. Many children were participants in these fairs where they were presented with a lesson on their future gender roles in farming. Men were to be the economic producers of the countryside. But the children accepted that work on the farm was gendered while ignoring the rural reformers' intent of imposing urban, middle-class standards of domesticity on women and children.

Conclusion

In 1952, the Agricultural and Horticultural Societies Branch of the Ontario Department of Agriculture made a claim for the importance of fairs for Ontario's communities:

Fairs and Exhibitions under the sponsorship of Agricultural Societies have been recognized as the 'Show Windows' for the communities they represent. While they have undergone many changes since their humble beginning close to 138 years ago, they keep revealing to rural and urban folk alike the story of our country's past and point the way toward greater achievements in future.¹

The agricultural fair indeed had traveled a long way from its origins which were further in the past than the provincial bureaucrat had chosen to commemorate in his speech. It had been born in the Enlightenment and had been transported to Canada in 1792 as a means to encourage farmers to become rational economic producers using the latest scientific techniques. In the 1890s, alternative means of disseminating agricultural information were being introduced in Ontario. The farmer who wished to improve his farm could attend courses at agricultural colleges or read the farm press. Starting in 1907, the provincial government placed agricultural representatives in rural counties to deliver improvement programs directly to the farm population. But the fairs could still be called on to serve a serious educational purpose.

David Mizener argues in "Furrows and Fairgrounds" that rural reformers in the early-twentieth century, both in the government and in the farm press, saw the fair as a forum for teaching farm families modern, urban values. Chief among these was a rural application of the middle-class cult of domesticity: the idea that farming was the business

¹ Ontario, *Sessional Papers*, 21 (Department of Agriculture Annual Report 1951-1952), 59.

of a male breadwinner, rather than a way of life for the entire family as an economic unit. By 1950, this purpose too had faded. Thirty years later, Leslie Prosterman found in her study of 1980s Midwestern fairs that they were a showcase of rural life and “traditional” values. All agree, however, that the agricultural fair had serious purposes, and that these were under siege throughout its history. Agricultural society leaders knew the public expected the fair to be a holiday and an opportunity for general sociability. At the same time, farm families accepted only the elements of the reform message that seemed most likely to give a reasonable return on their investment, whether the investment was counted in money or in terms of changing their values and goals.

The fair has been examined as a point of encounter between the two forces of improvement and entertainment, largely as a study of hegemonic power by historians Elspeth Heaman, David Jones and David Mizener. This study has focused instead on the agricultural society and the fair as a social space: an institution in which people interacted and thereby acquired a common sense of identity as members of a rural community formed through both social network and social representation. A combination of long-lasting, intense social interactions and a common sense of what was important in the ties that bound the group resulted in a sense of community built around the agricultural society. Networks can be traced and identified but the sense of being in community is subjective and elusive. Where the historian lacks introspective memoirs and diaries to highlight the importance found in belonging, it becomes necessary to rely instead on how networks represented to the world an association’s vision of the rural community they claimed to represent.

I have attempted to probe both elements of community, social networks and social representations, in a specific location, Vankleek Hill and West Hawkesbury Township in Prescott County. Locality, or place, mattered in this study. The community that organized the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society was geographically concentrated in the same region of sandy loam soil and high land that had attracted the first settlers to the area. For some groups, inclusion happened in the nineteenth century. The earliest society of 1837 had been dominated by one group, the leading American families who had first settled the northern part of Longueuil and Hawkesbury, but the second society of 1844 had opened the door to a few Scots and to the Irish Protestants who had started to arrive in some numbers after the Napoleonic Wars. By 1911, Scottish-origin families had become a prominent part of the membership and the Board of Directors, making up close to half of the long-term members that year.²

Exclusion of others happened quietly. The early settlement of the high land that was a feature of West Hawkesbury had left little land open for the parish settlement projects of the Montreal and Ottawa Roman Catholic dioceses. Instead the second wave of settlement, bringing French Canadians from Quebec, filled in the surrounding townships and penetrated through diffusion into West Hawkesbury.³ By the 1870s there was a new demographic balance in Prescott County, leading in the 1880s to the British families being shifted from their political prominence in the county as a whole. In West Hawkesbury, however, the descendants of the early British-American settlement were not

² Library and Archives Canada, 1911 census; Minute Book 1906-1912, Membership List; Ascription of ethnicity based on birthplace of earliest ancestor where known (preferred method), census information or surname (recognizing that there is not 100% correlation between surname and identity but errors in ascribing French identity to English speakers will be offset by opposite errors).

³ See Cartwright on organized Catholic colonization that was prevalent through much of Prescott County whereas he characterized their migration into Glengarry County as one of diffusion. As shown in this study, Hawkesbury Township followed the Glengarry pattern due to the topography of the township.

easily dislodged from their position of municipal prominence, creating a place that was an anomaly. The Francophone and Anglophone populations of Vankleek Hill and West Hawkesbury were in rough equilibrium in a county where Francophones had become the majority. While Francophones dominated at the county, provincial, and federal levels, Anglophones continued to dominate town and township politics.

The Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society was, up until 1907, the Prescott County Agricultural Society. Yet, neither before nor after its name change did it reflect the county. The most prominent exclusion was the descendants of the second, French Canadian, wave of settlement. Anyone could join the society, but its management was another question altogether. In general, Francophones who were elected to the board had parental, marriage, business or political ties to the Anglophone community. Even though Joseph Felix Roucher was elected president of the society in 1898, another leading Francophone family, the Labrosses, supported the society from at least 1906 without any of their number being elected to the board until 1922. The one family member who was elected, Zepherin Labrosse Jr., was also employed as secretary-treasurer from 1926 to 1933 but resigned the post in an atmosphere of conflict. Most importantly, both when women were brought onto the board and when six Francophones were recruited to stand for election in 1924, the outgoing board took steps to increase the number of director positions and thereby counter the newly elected board members.⁴ They made sure that it would be impossible for the newcomers to assume a majority position.

⁴ Two of the men recruited to stand for election in 1924 were already well known to the society for their long-term support as sponsors and exhibitors: Zepherin Labrosse Jr. and Joseph St. Denis. The veterinarian Bruno Labrosse had also been an exhibitor for some years. Both he and the cheesemaker Zotique Titley were in occupations that made them known to the farmers on the board.

The women persevered as supporters of the society but were themselves a reflection of the male board, being Anglophone and members of prosperous farm families. In a number of cases they joined their husbands on the board. The Francophones did not bother. The result was that the society reflected the municipal political balance with its membership made up largely of the descendants of the British and American settlers. Among the nearly 600 long-term sustaining members were three networks that intersected that of the fair: a few old British-American settler families from Anglophone pockets in the surrounding townships, professional stock breeders and the town's municipal politicians.

Defining community goes beyond identifying who in a place was connected to an institution. We learn from the membership lists what types of people were exhibitors for a year or two. We can name the longer-term members from among whom came the most committed exhibitors and the society leaders. We identify the latter as the social networks which had sufficient intensity to form the basis for community, but we need to know more than a common membership to understand this association as a community. Anthony Cohen argued in *The Symbolic Construction of Community* that members of a community seldom have exactly the same understanding of a symbol that marks community boundaries, but the members are part of a community because they agree that the symbol is important as a representation of the community to which they belong.

The long-term and sustaining members of the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society agreed that the society and the fair were important enough to dedicate time and energy to it. They worked hard to fund the buildings that would be reported in the farm press as examples of a modern and progressive agricultural community. The society and fair were

important enough to the men, all members of the Anglophone community, to ensure that they kept control of the managing board. For some of the men, membership in the society was a matter of family tradition and it formed a place of sociability. Other motivations were economic or political. Those Francophones who gave their time and energy to the society, for the most part, shared with Anglophone members the political motivation. But in a number of cases they were men with family ties to the Anglophone community. Overall, however, the social structures that kept the Anglophone and Francophone communities apart in the township despite their geographic closeness, also set boundaries around the social space of the agricultural society. The Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society and Fair was structured around the same linguistically-defined group that had operated the society and fair since its beginnings in 1837 but it was the social and economic ties of family, business and politics that formed the division. As a result, those Francophones who shared those ties were able to cross the gap and participate fully in the society.

The Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society sought in the first half of the twentieth century to present the face of a modern and progressive agricultural community by running a serious fair exhibiting the best livestock. This led the society into financial decisions that necessitated a more frivolous fair offering a range of entertainment to attract and amuse visitors. It also led the society to take on an increasingly stronger community role after World War I. As a result, by the 1930s, the fairgrounds had become part of the year-round recreational spaces in the town.

At the same time, individual exhibitors were presenting skills that had implications beyond that of the rational male producer or that of a middle-class female

homemaker divorced from family finances. Children were increasingly drawn into exhibiting at fairs, starting with the school fairs, as one solution to rural depopulation. It was believed that exhibiting would develop both agricultural skills and pride in possessing those skills. Their reaction, as found in letters to a children's page in the *Ottawa Farm Journal*, shows that they were oblivious to the expected message when attending the agricultural fair but recognized that message with respect to their own school fairs. Here the children repeated the lesson they were being taught. Yet both boys and girls wrote about their productive work that contributed to the economic unit of the family within the traditional gender roles of the farm and, like rural adults and the agricultural societies, chose which parts of the rural reform message they would adopt.

Appendix A

I - Primary Source Material

In order to look in depth at one Eastern Ontario Agricultural Society and Rural Fair, I used the records of the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society as found at the Township of Champlain town hall and which are now in the keeping of the Vankleek Hill and District Historical Society and Museum. These consist of four minute books kept by various secretary-treasurers in the years between 1906 and 1955. Content includes minutes of meetings, prize lists, lists of sponsors, membership lists, the annual reports to be sent to the Ontario Department of Agriculture and detailed expenditure and revenue statements. The series is not complete as the books for the period 1930 to 1939 are missing. As well, the content provided for any particular year varies greatly.

It is possible to track membership in three of the books for the years 1906 to 1930 with three gaps. 1906 and 1921 are incomplete and 1926 appears not to have been recorded in the minute book. The minute book for the period 1906 to 1919 has full lists and financial reports but the minutes give only sketchy references to decisions taken. Controversy can be scented in references to, for example, a discussion on entertainment but it is impossible to determine the range of concerns around the issue. On the other hand, the minute book for the period from February 1948 to August 1955 gives more detailed meeting minutes but lacks the membership records and financial reports. Nevertheless, taken together the books provide some insight into the working, the membership and the direction of the society. For example, the books for the period 1906 to 1930 allow an analysis of membership which is not possible from prize lists published in newspapers which are the usual surviving evidence of fair participation.

II – Approach to Central Place

This study assumes that a proxy for a town's area of influence is the size of its market area, which itself is influenced by a number of factors. Economic price models built on Christaller's central place theory assumed that consumers would travel longer distances for high-price items than they would for low-price items. Metropolitan places also have an impact on a local place's market reach, which can reflect changes in transportation. For example, the coming of the railway had a significant impact on the relationship between Carp, Arnprior and Ottawa with locally created goods and services replaced by products delivered from the larger centres nearby.¹ In Prescott County, language is another consideration. A central place that offered customers the range of goods desired, at the price desired and in the language of service desired, is expected to have a different market reach than a place that was missing one of these elements.

At the same time, due to variations in what is counted (for example, physicians can be found in Dun in 1870 and 1890 but not later) there is a danger of comparing baskets of goods that are not the same. For this reason, it is best to use central place theory to identify broad changes in the nature of a town as seen in the functions offered there (agricultural, for example, versus recreational), and in its commercial draw as seen in whether merchants sell low-demand, high-value goods such as jewelry, or are restricted to high-demand but low-value goods such as food.

¹ Bruce S. Elliott, *The Origins and Early History of Carp Village* (Carp, Ont.: Huntley Township Historical Society 2003): 51-7.

The methodology used in this study assumes that changes in a town's market reach can be measured by changes in the number of well-capitalized businesses and the number of companies selling specialized goods or services. Capitalization will capture complexity better than simply counting the range of goods or services (or functions) offered; that is, the department store, the five-and-ten and the variety store are much more complex businesses than a general store even though all provide one-stop shopping for widely differentiated products. But functions still need to be accounted for as the changing nature of a town can be determined by looking at the nature of the goods and services sold in a place.

The Dun Mercantile Reference Books do not capture all the economic activity in a town. For example, Gilles Bélanger and Jean-Louis Diamond of the Centre franco-ontarien des enseignants franco-ontariens identified in their 1981 study 178 Vankleek Hill enterprises not found in Dun in at least one of the years 1870, 1890, 1912, 1921 and 1934. They made their list by recording newspaper advertisements. Tax assessment rolls are another possible source in which to identify a town's business activity and has the benefit of including a property valuation. Dun was chosen as the sole source, however, because it exists for all three towns studied. Thus, it allows comparison of complexity between locations in a way not offered by the other two sources. In addition, while the Dun books are limited in that not all company capitalizations are listed, no basis for a financial assessment can be made based on newspaper advertisements and the tax rolls are no more consistent than Dun in providing such information.

The study proceeded by listing each business and the expected language of ownership based on the surname of the owner. Functions offered in each town were

counted separately. The difference between businesses and functions is best explained by an example. If one store sells jewelry and a second store in the same town sell jewelry and women's wear, there are two enterprises but three functions one of which is available in two competing places. For this reason, John Marshall compared the number of functions and the number of places in which the function occurs, rather than number of enterprises, in his study of Owen Sound and Barrie in *The Location of Service Towns*. As part of my question is the degree to which companies were Anglophone or Francophone, I counted both enterprises and functions.

The various functions offered in each place were counted and weighted to reflect the level of specialization (that is, any instance where the company offered only that function, it was counted as two) and capitalization (each count of a function was multiplied as per the following table). This allowed an analysis of the full range of services and goods provided irrespective of how many companies were in a place. At the same time, by weighting functions according to the capitalization of the company offering the service, places with higher-order companies, as measured by investment in the company, were made visible. The functions were categorized as listed in the following table.

Weighting for complexity – Dun Rating Range A-C multiplied by 4 , C-E by 3, F-J by 2. No capitalization and K-M by 1; Weighting for specialization – single functions offered multiplied by 2 (except general stores)			
Category	Functions	Category	Functions
Agricultural & Rural	ag implements blacksmith	Food	groceries meat, bakery, milk
	carriage repair	General Stores	diverse
	dairy supplies drover flour & feed harness repair hides lime mfr cheese cheese cold storage mfr cheese pasteurizing mfr cheese boxes mill, grist	Household Furnishings	furnaces & stoves furniture appliances
		Industrial (* branch Montreal company)	grinding, custom mfr aerated water mfr gloves * CIP paper* mfr tea, yeast etc*
		Misc.	ice road construction coal gas oil “job / job tob” electricity production
Automotive	auto accessories auto repair automobile sales garage service station	Medical	drugs optician optometrist
	Building	Recreation	bicycle repair confectionary hotel (with bar) hotel photo & supply restaurant tobacco
building material contractor electrician hardware lumber mfr sash & door mill, wood paint plumber tinsmith woodworker		Specialty Items	jewelery monuments novelties printing publisher radios smallwares stationary undertaker watch repair
Clothing	children's wear dry goods men's & women's wear millinery shoemaker shoes tailor	Transportation	livery taxi trucking

III – Family Matching

Family reconstitution helps us to understand who was an active participant in an agricultural fair. It also helps to understand the links between, for example, the 16 members of the LeRoy family who were members at some point between 1906 and 1930 and the additional 25 people who, like the LeRoys, came from around Barb, Ontario to participate as society members. An additional question was the origins of key families. Were they American, British, French-Canadian or of mixed linguistic ancestry? Answering this question required tracing families back to an original immigrant ancestor to determine that person's place of birth.

Family reconstitution was accomplished using Ontario civil registration and the Canada census. The starting points were the censuses of 1901 and 1911 in which the individuals who were members between 1906 and 1914 could be expected to be found with their nuclear families. As well, these censuses established the address or lot number of the members, although that information was not always given or, where given, was not always legible. Marriage and birth registrations resurrected the surnames of the wives who were thought to be exhibitors based on the categories for which prizes had been won. Knowing a wife's surname began the process of finding links between members through extended family. Death certificates of members sometimes gave their parents' names. This helped to connect the early 1900s agricultural society members to the immigrant generation. It also made it easier to use the 1851 census to track the immigrant generation and to link together, or sometimes to distinguish between, various branches of the same surname. The 1851 census was particularly helpful for identifying place of origin based on the oldest family member's place of birth, often confirming and

sometimes extending what was said about various families by Cyrus Thomas in *History of the Counties of Argenteuil, Quebec and Prescott, Ontario*. The 1861 census was too late to capture some of the original American settlers but still allowed the later British immigrants to be visible and it gave a location for the family through which some families could be matched to their descendants on their 1901 and 1911 farms.

The most secure identification of families happened when the individual in the agricultural society membership list and the individual in the census record could be matched as to surname, given name, occupation and, sometimes, date of death. However, this generally was achieved only with members who belonged to the smaller families and had distinctive names. Many individuals could only be identified on the basis of partial matches. For these, it was the cumulative layering of matching through several records, combined with there being no other potential matches, that permitted a link to be argued. One problem encountered was that many members of the society were named only by their initial or were members of extended families where many people had the same name. One example is seen in two separate agricultural society members named Gib LeRoy who cannot be linked to their specific branches of the LeRoy family due to the name's popularity in that family in the generation around 1900. The most difficult links were the Scottish Mc's, Mac's, Frasers and Campbells, all of whom were parsimonious in their use of given names. While it is possible, with time, to separate out Scottish family threads, in this case it would have required local interviews which was not part of the original plan for this research. For these individuals, no matching was attempted.

The most secure ascription of family origins came by linking individual society members to a specific immigrant ancestor whose place of birth could be found through

the combination of the Thomas history and the 1851 census. In practice, where there were a number of members of the same family with several branches, one member would be linked and the remaining individuals with the same surname were given the same family origin. This method of linking to one ancestor obscures the mixing of origin over the course of the century as families intermarried, although settlement patterns did to some degree reinforce distinct family patterns. The Irish Catholic families largely remained Irish Catholic due to the small marriage pool of English-speaking Catholics. Many of the Irish Protestant or American families who remained in settlements of closely aligned families, for example Cassburn settled by the Cass and Marston families, the Allen settlement, and the Mooney settlement, maintained endogamous marriage connections in the nineteenth century that allowed one origin to be ascribed to each family.

The methodology for identifying family origin also obscures the degree to which some families altered their ethnic identification as stated in the census over the course of the nineteenth century. While this phenomenon is useful for understanding how the family saw itself—that is, how it had defined or sometimes redefined its identity—given the time available family origin was identified based solely on place of birth of the original immigrant. Exceptions to this practice were made with respect to one significant family in the Agricultural Society history. It was not possible to find the original immigrant ancestor for the LeRoy family. Two early LeRoy migrants were found who listed their birth place in the period just before 1800 as Halifax, in one case, and New Brunswick in the other. The only certainly is that the family identified its origins as German in the census and this is how I have tracked them.

Appendix B: Profile of Officers of the 1837 and 1844 Ottawa District Agricultural Societies

Source: Tax Assessment Rolls 1836 and 1844, Hawkesbury Township, reels M-7735/6; *Commemorative History: Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society and Fair 1844-1994*, ed. Michelle Landriault (Hawkesbury Ont., Imprimerie Thibert Printing, 1994)

Place	Origin	name	assessed prop value 1836 / 1844	ranking among (£100+) assessed properties 1836 / 1844	Ranking by Quadrant	Positions Held / Politics	Fair Position Held
Longueuil	IP	Allen, Richard	£93 / n.a.	Below top values			1844 director
Hawkesbury W.	A	Beer, Peter Sr.	£232 / £443	27 / 12	1st		1837 director
Alfred	IRC	Brady, John Esq.	£126 / £140	81 / 95	3rd		1837 official Spring Cattle Show
Caledonia	IP	Bradley, William	£40 / £148	Not ranked / 88	2nd		1844 vice president
Hawkesbury W.	A	Brown, Elijah	£364 / £328	14 / 19	1st		1837 director
Longueuil	S	Cameron, Ewen	£148 / n.a.	62 / -	3rd		1844 director
Caledonia / Plantagenet	A	Chesser, John	£167 / n.f.	52 / -	2nd	House of Assembly 1835	1844 director
Longueuil	A	Cozens, William Z.	£36 / n.a.	Below £100			1837 1844 secretary
Hawkesbury W.	IP	Cross, George	£111 / £100	102 / 182	4th		1844 director
Caledonia	IP	Cross, James	£88 / £218	Not ranked / 41	1st		1844 director
Not Found		Cushman, S. M.	n.f.,				1852 Secretary
Longueuil	A	Dunning, William 1	£67 / n.a.	Below £100			1837 director
Hawkesbury W.	A	Eastman, Simon S.	£134 / £147	71 / 90	3rd / 2nd	Merchant; House of Assembly 1820	1837 official - collector

A=American, E=English, IP=Irish Protestant, IRC=Irish Roman Catholic, S=Scottish (n.a.=assessment roll post 1836 not available, n.f.=individual not found)

Place	Origin	name	assessed prop value 1836 / 1844	ranking among (£100+) assessed properties 1836 / 1844	Ranking by Quadrant	Positions Held / Politics	Fair Position Held
Longueuil	Unkn.	Gale, John	£79 / n.a.	Below £100			1837 director
Hawkesbury W.	A	Griffen, Joseph	£226 / £209	29 / 45	1st		1837 director
Hawkesbury W. & E.	A	Hersey, Charles	£371 / £512	18 / 7	1st	Merchant; unsuccessful run for House of Assembly post 1841. Reform	1837 official - treasurer, 1844 vice president
Longueuil	(mar to A)	Jackson, Josiah	£106 / n.a.	107 / -	4th quadrant		1837 director
Longueuil	A	Johnson, Chauncey Esq.	£229 / n.a.	28 / -	1st	Magistrates Ottawa District, Member For Longueuil to District Council, Warden	1837 vice president, chairs org meeting, organizer of Spring Cattle show, 1844 director
Longueuil	A	Johnson, Chauncey Jr.	£101 / n.a.	117 / -	4th quadrant	JP, Municipal Councillor & Warden Of Prescott Russell, Postmaster Of L'Original 40 Years, Crown Timber Agent	1837 1844 director

A=American, E=English, IP=Irish Protestant, IRC=Irish Roman Catholic, S=Scottish (n.a.=assessment roll post 1836 not available, n.f.=individual not found)

Place	Origin	name	assessed prop value 1836 / 1844	ranking among (£100+) assessed properties 1836 / 1844	Ranking by Quadrant	Positions Held / Politics	Fair Position Held
Longueuil and Hawkesbury W.	A	Johnson, Thomas H	£308 / n.a.	18 / 23	1st	Merchant; (son of Chauncey esq), 1847 House of Assembly. Independent	1844 official - treasurer
Hawkesbury E.	E	Kirby, William	£202 / £498	41 / 8	1st		1837 1844 vice president
Longueuil	A	Kellogg, Elijah Esq.	£473 / n.a.	10 / -	1st		1837 1844 vice president
Longueuil	A	Marston, Josiah		n.f.		father Jacob assessed at £196, was clerk of the District court and registrar of surrogate court in 1846. Reform	1837 director
Longueuil	IP	Murray, James	£158 / n.a	55 /	2nd	Militia 1837 under Col Kearns, Colonel for 20 years, road & bridge builder.	1837 director
Hawkesbury W.	A	Pattee, David Esq.	£532 / £597	7 / 6	1st	County attorney for United Cos.; Reeve West Hawkesbury. Reform	1837 President

A=American, E=English, IP=Irish Protestant, IRC=Irish Roman Catholic, S=Scottish (n.a.=assessment roll post 1836 not available, n.f.=individual not found)

Place	Origin	name	assessed prop value 1836 / 1844	ranking among (£100+) assessed properties 1836 / 1844	Ranking by Quadrant	Positions Held / Politics	Fair Position Held
Longueuil	IP	Ramsay, John	£103 / na	113 / -	4th		1837 official - collector, 1844 director
Not Found	E?	Smallbone, William		n.f.			1837 director
Caledonia	S	Sterling, Peter	£180 / £186	46 / 61	2nd		1844 director
Not Found		Thomson, W. A.		n.f.			1844 director
Longueuil	A	Treadwell, Charles P	£1,042 / n.a.	3 / -	1st	Sheriff of County	1844, 1852 President
Caledonia	IP (mar to A)	Valley, Godfrey	£143 / £230	63 / 37	3rd / 1st	farmer	1844 director
Hawkesbury W.	A	Vankleek, Peter	£131 / £184	77 / 64	3rd / 2nd		1837 director (has died by 1844, widow carries assessment)
Hawkesbury E.	A	Wade, John jr	£107 / n.f.	106 / -	4th quadrant		1837 director (not found 1844)
Hawkesbury W.	A	Waite, William	£222 / £174	33 / 70	2nd	tannery	likely one of the organizers of the Spring Cattle show
Hawkesbury W.	A	Whitcomb, Joseph S.	£174 / £360	50 / 30	2nd / 1st		1837 director, 1844 vice president

A=American, E=English, IP=Irish Protestant, IRC=Irish Roman Catholic, S=Scottish (n.a.=assessment roll post 1836 not available, n.f.=individual not found)

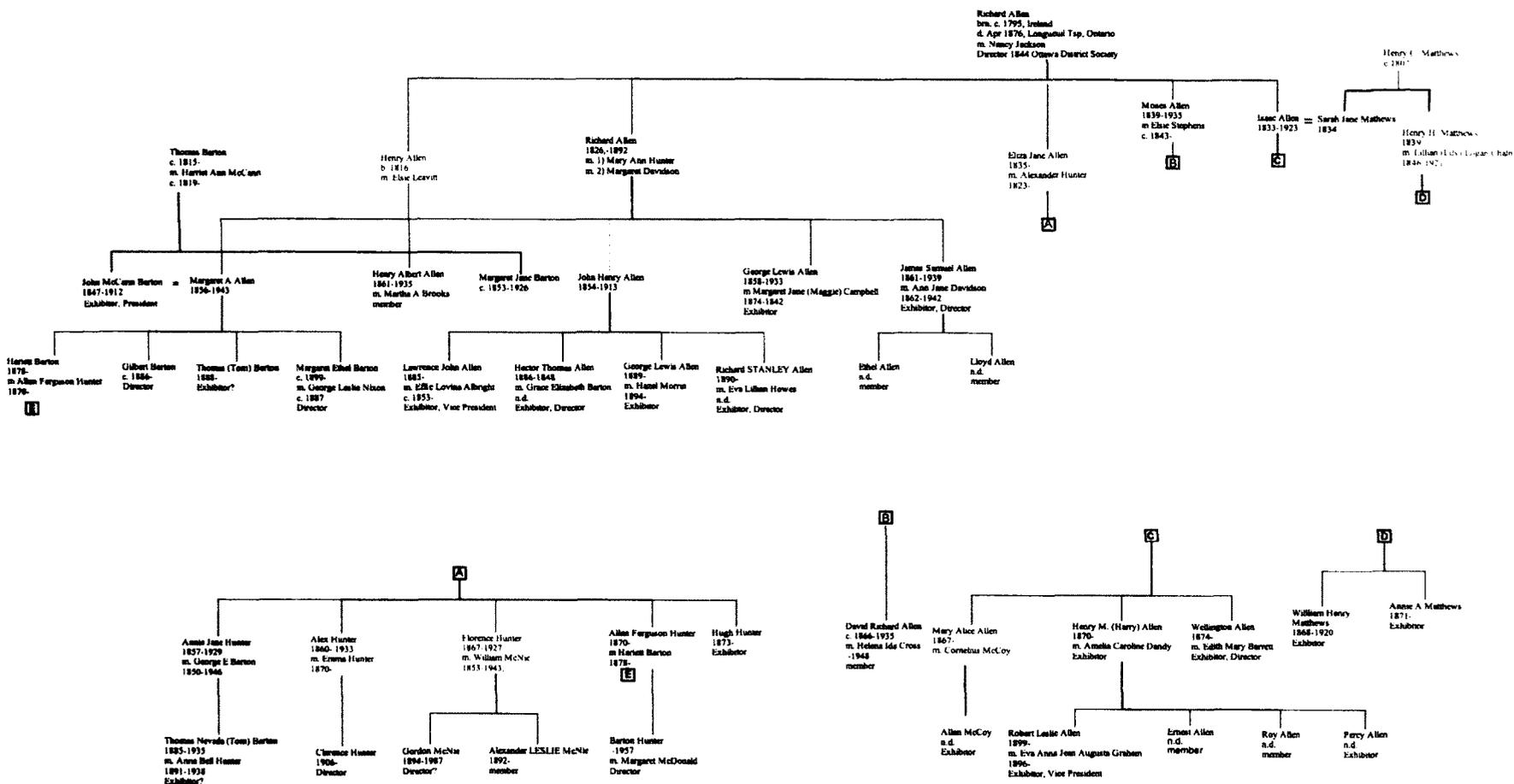
Appendix C: Profiles of Prescott County Stockbreeders

Source: *International Directory of Pedigree Stock Breeders*, (London: Vernon Press 1928-9, 1930-1); *Directory of Breeders of Purebred Livestock in the Dominion of Canada*, (Ottawa: Canada Department of Agriculture, 1910); Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society Minute Books, membership lists.

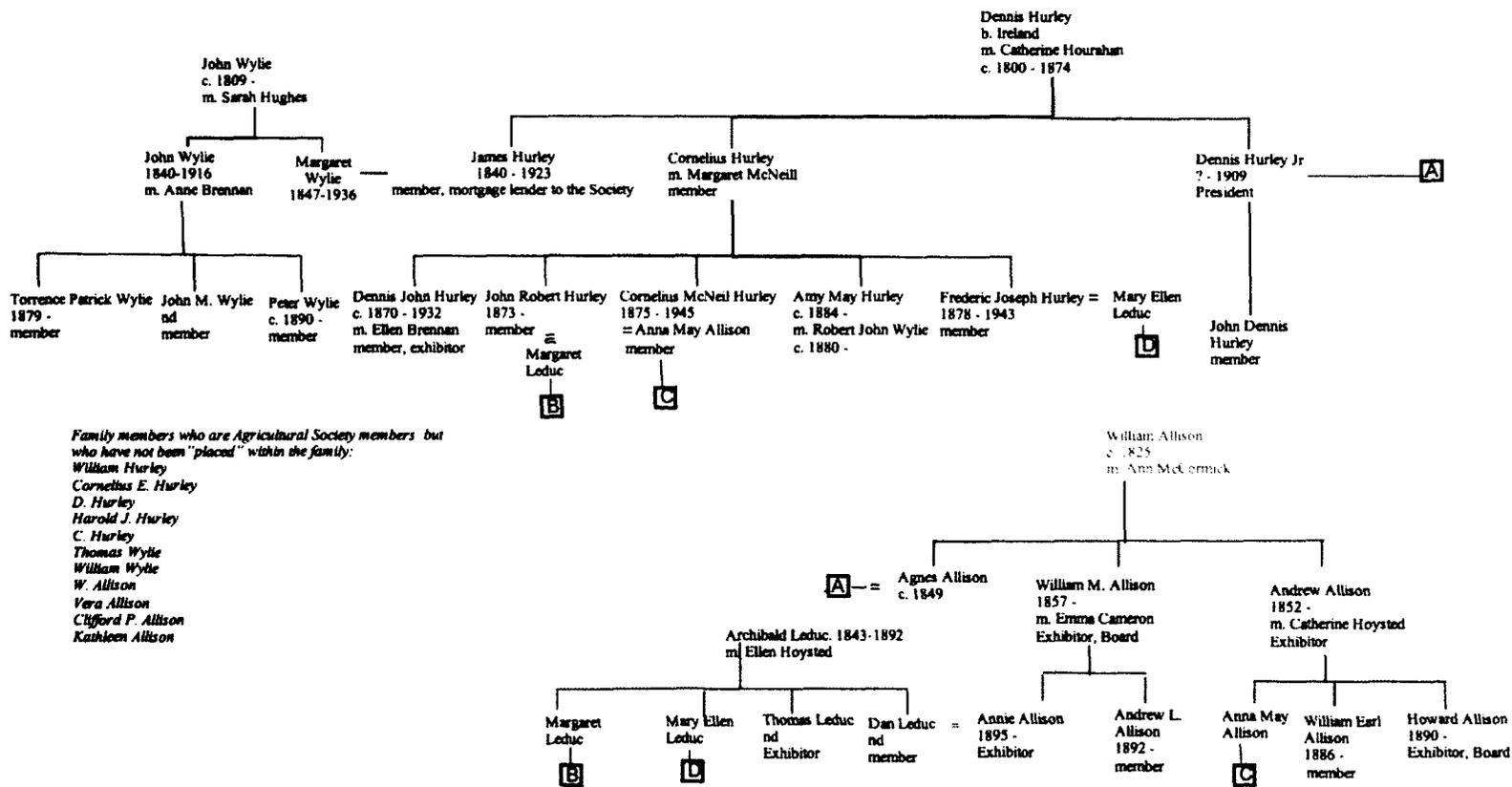
Members of Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society advertising as Prescott County Livestock Breeders			
	Known Years of Membership	Board Positions Held / Years on Board	Largest Known Prize Money
Hector Allen (Longueuil Twp)	1906 to 1922	Director 1913	1907 \$13
Samuel Burwash (East Hawkesbury Twp)	1906 to 1928	-	1908 \$12
McNabb Campbell (West Hawkesbury)	1912 to 1930	Director intermittent 1918 to 1924	-
Miss Eliza Eaton (Caledonia Twp)	Bro. James 1906 to 1913	-	1906 \$8
Albert Hagar (Plantagenet Twp)	1914 to 1918	President 1886-1887	-
Earl Hunter (West Hawkesbury Twp)	1906 to 1930	Director 1918	1919 \$20
Peter Lefavre (West Hawkesbury Twp)	1907 to 1910	Director 1906-1908	1907 \$50
Alex McCaskill (East Hawkesbury Twp)	1906 to 1914	-	1912 \$26
Duncan McGillivray (West Hawkesbury Twp)	1906 to 1930	-	1919 \$30
Thomas McIlwain (West Hawkesbury Twp)	1908 to 1930	Director 1923	1919 \$19
Wm. E. McKillican (West Hawkesbury Twp)	1906 to 1910	-	1909 \$62
Donald A. McPhee (West Hawkesbury Twp)	1908 to 1951	Director intermittent 1906 to 1923, 1930 to 1940 President 1924-1925	1914 \$116
J. N. McRae (West Hawkesbury Twp)	1914 to 1924	-	-

Lochie McRae (West Hawkesbury Twp)	1910 to 1924	Director 1915-1919 2 nd and 1 st Vice President 1920-1924	1912 \$18
Kenneth McRae (West Hawkesbury Twp)	1907 to 1912	Director 1909-1912	1907 \$18
G. Drummond Mode (West Hawkesbury Twp)	1906 to 1933	Director intermittent 1909 to 1931 President 1933	1910 \$98
James Proudfoot (Caledonia Twp)	1906 to 1912	-	1908 \$48
Harold Reeves (West Hawkesbury Twp)	1921 to 1924	Director 1924	-
George M. Rennick (West Hawkesbury Twp)	1906 to 1933	Director intermittent 1912 to 1922 Vice President 1925	1914 \$55
T. W. Smith (West Hawkesbury Twp)	1919 to 1922	-	Unknown
John S. Taylor (East Hawkesbury Twp)	1908 to 1930	Director 1922	1918 \$22

Allen-Barton family: Individuals who were members of the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society for at least one year prior to 1950.

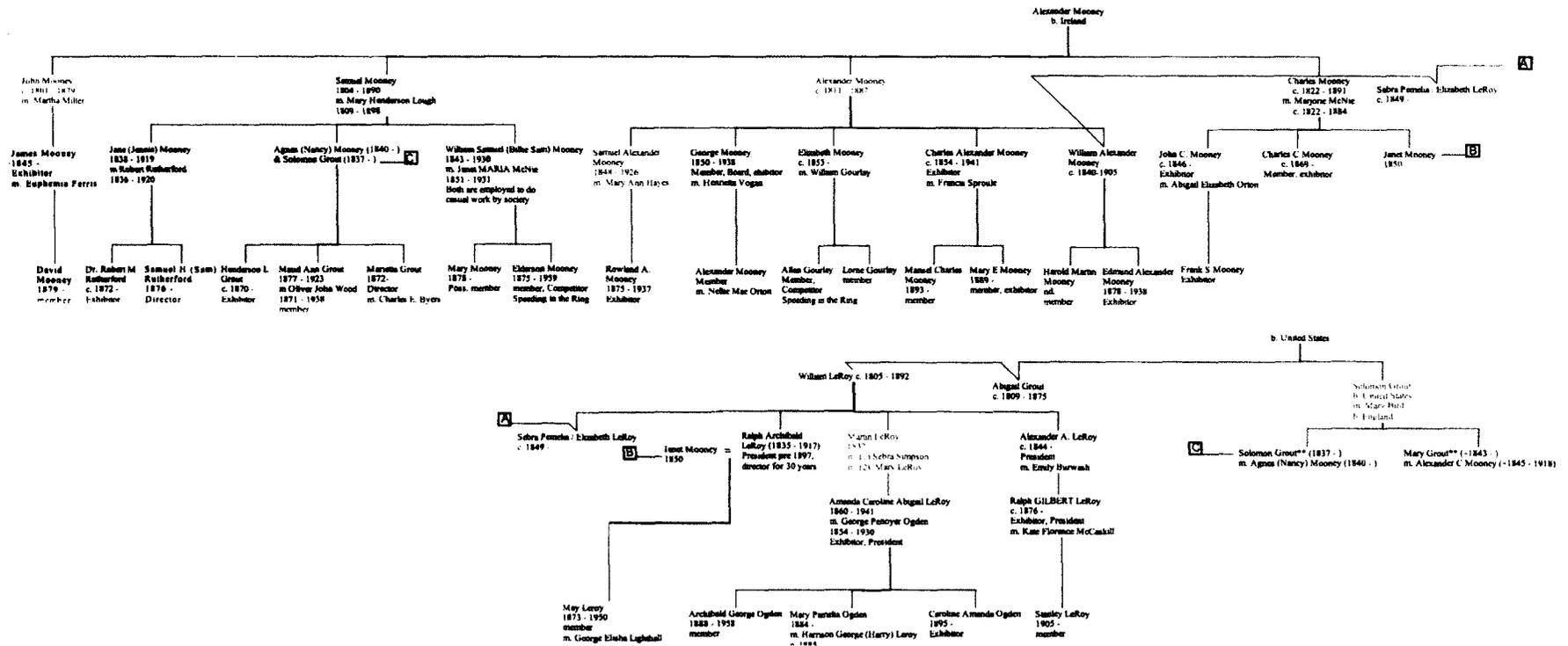


Hurley-Allison family: Individuals who were members of the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society for at least one year prior to 1950.



Family members who are Agricultural Society members but who have not been "placed" within the family:
 William Hurley
 Cornelius E. Hurley
 D. Hurley
 Harold J. Hurley
 C. Hurley
 Thomas Wylie
 William Wylie
 W. Allison
 Vera Allison
 Clifford P. Allison
 Kathleen Allison

Mooney-LeRoy family: Individuals who were members of the Vankleek Hill Agricultural Society for at least one year prior to 1950.



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